



Novena in Honour of the **SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY**

Beginning 6th September

1. Preparatory Prayer

Bid me bear, O Mother blessed,
On my heart the wounds impressed
Suffered by the Crucified!

6th SEPTEMBER: DEVOTION TO THE SEVEN SORROWS OF MARY

2. Meditation

From the dolorous way of Our Lord's passion Holy Church selected fourteen incidents to place before us for consideration, which are called the Stations of the Cross. In the same manner the pious devotion of the faithful selected seven events in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and gives itself to their religious contemplation.

They are: (1) Simeon's prophecy in the Temple; (2) the flight into Egypt with the divine Child; (3) the loss of the divine Child at Jerusalem; (4) Mary's meeting with her Son bearing the cross; (5) Mary beneath the cross; (6) Mary receives the body of her Son from the cross; (7) the placing of Jesus' body in the tomb.

3. Practice

Forget not the sorrows of thy mother." (*Ecclus. vii. 29*) According to this exhortation of Holy Scripture it is our duty to remember and meditate often on the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We ought never to forget that our sins were the cause of the sufferings and death of Jesus, and therefore also of the sorrows of Mary.

Holy Church celebrates two feasts in honour of the sorrows of Mary; she approved of the Rosary and of many other devotions in honour of the Seven Dolours, and enriched them with numerous indulgences. Let us practise these devotions to enkindle in our hearts a true and ardent love for our sorrowful Mother.

4. Prayer of the Church

Grant we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that the most blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, may intercede for us before the throne of Thy mercy, now and at the hour of our death, through whose most holy soul, in the hour of Thine own passion, the sword of sorrow passed. Through Thee, Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

Lord, have mercy on us. *Christ have mercy on us.*

Lord have mercy. Christ hear us. *Christ graciously hear us.*

God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, Mother of God, *pray for us.*

Holy Virgin of virgins, *pray for us.*

Mother of the Crucified, *pray for us.*

Sorrowful Mother, *pray for us.*

Mournful Mother, *pray for us.*

Sighing Mother, *pray for us.*

Afflicted Mother, *pray for us.*

Forsaken Mother, *pray for us.*

Desolate Mother, *pray for us.*

Mother most sad, *pray for us.*

Mother set around with anguish, *pray for us.*

Mother overwhelmed by grief, *pray for us.*

Mother transfixed by a sword, *pray for us.*

Mother crucified in thy heart, *pray for us.*

Mother bereaved of thy Son, *pray for us.*

Sighing Dove, *pray for us.*

Mother of Dolours, *pray for us.*

Fount of tears, *pray for us.*

Sea of bitterness, *pray for us.*

Field of tribulation, *pray for us.*

Mass of suffering, *pray for us.*

Mirror of patience, *pray for us.*

Rock of constancy, *pray for us.*

Remedy in perplexity, *pray for us.*

Joy of the afflicted, *pray for us.*

Ark of the desolate, *pray for us.*

Refuge of the abandoned, *pray for us.*

Shield of the oppressed, *pray for us.*

Conqueror of the incredulous, *pray for us.*
 Solace of the wretched, *pray for us.*
 Medicine of the sick, *pray for us.*
 Help of the faint, *pray for us.*
 Strength of the weak, *pray for us.*
 Protectress of those who fight, *pray for us.*
 Haven of the shipwrecked, *pray for us.*
 Calmer of tempests, *pray for us.*
 Companion of the sorrowful, *pray for us.*
 Retreat of those who groan, *pray for us.*
 Terror of the treacherous, *pray for us.*
 Standard-bearer of the Martyrs, *pray for us.*
 Treasure of the Faithful, *pray for us.*
 Light of Confessors, *pray for us.*
 Pearl of Virgins, *pray for us.*
 Comfort of Widows, *pray for us.*
 Joy of all Saints, *pray for us.*
 Queen of thy Servants, *pray for us.*
 Holy Mary, who alone art unexampled, *pray for us.*

✠. Pray for us, most Sorrowful Virgin.
 ✠. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O God, in whose Passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of grief pierced through the most sweet soul of Thy glorious

Blessed Virgin Mother Mary: grant that we, who celebrate the memory of her Seven Sorrows, may obtain the happy effect of Thy Passion, Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen. Amen.

6. Final Prayers

“Ever glorious Blessed Virgin Mary, queen of martyrs, mother of mercy, hope, and comfort of dejected and desolate souls, through the sorrows that pierced thy tender heart I beseech thee take pity on my poverty and necessities, have compassion on my anxieties and miseries.

I ask it through the mercy of thy divine Son; I ask it through His immaculate life, bitter passion, and ignominious death on the cross. As I am persuaded that He honours thee as His beloved Mother, to whom He refuses nothing, let me experience the efficacy of thy powerful intercession, according to the tenderness of thy maternal affection, now and at the hour of my death. Amen.

Hail Mary. Mother of Sorrows, queen of martyrs, pray for us!

Let us pray. Vouchsafe, O Lord, that we may be helped by the merits of Thy most holy Mother’s spouse; that what of ourselves we can not obtain may be given us through his intercession. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

7th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S FIRST SORROW - SIMEON'S PROPHECY IN THE TEMPLE

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

Forty days after the birth of our divine Saviour, Mary His Mother fulfilled the law of Moses by offering Him to His divine Father in the Temple. “And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in Him.

And he received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now dost Thou dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples. A light to the revelation of the gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

And His father and mother were wondering at these things which were spoken concerning Him.

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His Mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; and thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.” (Luke ii. 25-35).

3. Practice

Mary was familiar with the predictions of the prophets and knew that ignominy, sorrow, and suffering would be her divine Son’s portion throughout His earthly career. But to have this secret of her anxious soul thus publicly and solemnly declared by Simeon, was a sharp thrust of that seven-edged sword which was to pierce her loving heart. In spirit she viewed that boundless, surging sea of trials, pain, and death on which her Son was to be tossed about, and was willing to be engulfed in its bitter waters.

Her affliction would have scarcely been greater had the death sentence of her divine Son been pronounced then and there and put into execution. What a sorrow, what an affliction, what a trial for such a tender Mother! Well might she exclaim with the Royal Prophet: “My life is wasted with grief, and my years in sighs.” (Ps. xxx. 11)

Let us often contemplate this sorrow, and excite our hearts to a tender compassion with the Mother of Sorrows.

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, in the grief thy tender heart underwent when the holy old man Simeon prophesied to thee. Dear Mother, by thy heart then so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of humility and the gift of the holy fear of God. *Hail Mary, etc...*

8th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S SECOND SORROW - THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

For the second time the sword of sorrow pierced Mary's heart when she was commanded to fly into Egypt with her divine Child. Without manifesting undue perplexity or discontent, she hastily gathered a few necessities for the journey, while St. Joseph saddled the beast of burden. Then taking the infant Jesus into her arms and pressing Him to her throbbing heart, the holy pilgrims set forth into the cold, starry night, away to a foreign land, through the trackless desert, and into a heathen country. Arrived in Egypt, the experience of Bethlehem was renewed; no one gave them shelter.

3. Practice

During this second great sorrow, what was Mary's behaviour? She was content to fulfil the will of God; she did not ask for reasons, or complain of the

fatigues of the journey, but preserved her peace of heart amid all the trials of this severe probation. She is poor, but her poverty does not render her unhappy or querulous. If God sends us trials, we ought not murmur or complain. Following the example of Mary, let us bear them submissively. If we suffer patiently with Mary on earth, we shall enjoy eternal bliss with her in heaven.

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for the anxiety which thy most tender heart underwent during thy flight into Egypt and thy sojourn there. Dear Mother, by thy heart then so sorrowful, obtain for me the virtue of liberality, especially toward the poor, and the gift of piety. *Hail Mary, etc...*

9th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S THIRD SORROW - JESUS LOST IN JERUSALEM

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

Who can describe Mary's sorrow when, returning from Jerusalem, she missed her divine Son? With St. Joseph she retraced her steps in anxious search of Him whom her soul loved. She went to all her relatives and acquaintances in Jerusalem, but heard no tidings of her lost Child. She passed three long days of anxiety in her search, and this constitutes her third sorrow. Of it, Origen writes: "On account of the ineffable love of Mary for her divine Son, she suffered more by His loss than the martyrs suffered amid the most cruel tortures."

3. Practice

In meditating on this sorrow of Mary, we ought to remember how indifferent so many Christians are after having lost God by sin. They feel no compunction, no sorrow at having offended Him,

and yet they can weep at the loss of a trifle; they shed copious tears when their will is crossed, or when they receive a deserved reprimand; but for the loss of their God they have not a tear. They have lost Him, perhaps years ago, and never make the least effort to find Him. Pray to the sorrowful Mother that she preserve you from such a deplorable fate!

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for the terrors felt by thy anxious heart when thou didst lose thy dear Son, Jesus. Dear Mother, by thy heart, then so agitated, obtain for me the virtue of chastity, and with it the gift of knowledge. *Hail Mary, etc...*

10th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S FOURTH SORROW - SHE MEETS JESUS CARRYING HIS CROSS

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

The time was at hand when mankind's redemption was to be accomplished. Already the divine Victim of our sins is bearing the instrument of our salvation. Torn by the cruel scourging, crowned with thorns, and covered with blood He proceeds on His way to Calvary, and in this pitiful condition meets His blessed Mother.

What a spectacle, what a sight for a Mother such as Mary! Anxious to look upon her, and with one fond glance to thank her for her heroic, unselfish love, He made an effort to change His bowed position beneath the cross, feebly raised His head, and directed toward her one loving glance of ineffable

anguish, mingled with grateful recognition and humble resignation. Then the sad procession moves on, Mary following her divine Son on His way to death.

3. Practice

We, By our sins, placed into the hands of the Jews and executioners the weapons by which Jesus suffered, and thus we thrust the sword of sorrow into Mary's heart. We repeat this, in a certain sense, as often as we commit a grievous sin, because we thereby number ourselves among those whom the Apostle describes as "crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery." (*Heb. vi. 6*)

Cardinal Hugo writes: "Sinners crucify, as far as is in them, Christ our Lord, because they repeat the cause of His crucifixion." Doing this, we thrust anew the sword of sorrow into Mary's heart. Let this consideration fill us with hatred for and fear of sin.

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

11th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S FIFTH SORROW - BENEATH THE CROSS

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

At the crucifixion of Jesus the soul of Mary was plunged into a sea of sorrow when she stood three hours under the cross. Writhing in excruciating pain, the Son of God hung upon the tree of disgrace and infamy, yet Mary continued to stand at its foot, tearful, grieving, yet persevering, filled with anguish because she could do nothing to help Him.

Another great sorrow befell the heart of Mary when she slowly withdrew her tearful gaze from the face of Jesus, and cast her weeping eyes upon the cold and indifferent world that lay in darkness around and about Calvary.

And yet, "When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother, Woman, behold Thy son. After that He saith to the disciple, Behold thy Mother." (*John xix. 26, 27*)

3. Practice

These words, "Behold thy son, behold thy Mother," contain and express the mystery of unbounded

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for the shock thy mother heart experienced when Jesus met thee as He carried His cross. Dear Mother, by that heart of thine, then so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of patience and the gift of fortitude. *Hail Mary, etc...*

love, which Jesus has for all mankind, but more especially for the Church, which is appointed and authorised to lead men to salvation. O blessed, O happy bequest! It was not enough for the love of Jesus to have restored heaven to us by His atoning death; He wished also to give us His dearest Mother.

And she has always shown herself as such. To each of us individually she was and is a kind and loving Mother. Give thanks to her, bless and praise her for having adopted you as her child, and strive to become worthy of so great a privilege.

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for the martyrdom thy generous heart bore so nobly whilst thou didst stand by Jesus agonising. Dear Mother, by thy heart then so cruelly martyred, obtain for me the virtue of temperance and the gift of counsel. *Hail Mary, etc...*

12th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S SIXTH SORROW - THE TAKING DOWN OF JESUS' BODY FROM THE CROSS

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

Who can describe the sorrow and anguish of Mary's heart when the body of Jesus was taken from the cross, when her tearful eyes fell upon His disfigured features! The pure and holy and beauteous form of her Son was a mass of clotted blood and unsightly wounds; and yet, disfigured as it was, there shone in His countenance a clear, calm expression of divine majesty.

Now Mary views the wounds of that sacred body; she looks at the gap made in His side by the cruel spear, and can almost see the Sacred Heart of Jesus, all bruised and broken for love of man. Before her vision passes in detail His life and her own. Memory presents to her mind every day and hour of their quiet, happy life at Nazareth.

Is it to be wondered, then, that at this bitter moment her sorrow was so great that, as St. Anselm observes, she should have died had she not been sustained by a miracle of divine omnipotence?

3. Practice

Ought not the contemplation of the sorrows of our blessed Mother confirm us in patience, in resignation to the will of God in our trials and sufferings?

If the Son of God said of Himself: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" (*Luke xxiv. 26*); if the most pure and holy Mother of God, despite her great prerogatives and merits, had to suffer a sorrow so ineffable, do not murmur if the word of Christ is addressed also to you: "And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me." (*Matt. x. 38*)

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for the pain thou didst suffer when the body of thy divine Son, taken down all torn and bloody from the cross, was placed in thy arms. Dear Mother, by thy heart pierced through, obtain for me the virtue of fraternal charity and the gift of understanding. *Hail Mary, etc...*

13th SEPTEMBER: MARY'S SEVENTH SORROW - JESUS IS BURIED

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

The sacrifice for the redemption of the world was accomplished. "And Joseph, taking the body, wrapt it up in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way." (*Matt. xxvii. 59*) Mary also took part in the burial of her beloved Son, though the evangelists do not mention her name amongst those who were present on that mournful occasion.

Never, most assuredly, was human soul visited by such woe and desolation, as that which overwhelmed hers as she cast a last glance on the precious remains of her dead Son.

3. Practice

Let us learn of the sorrowful Mother at the tomb of her divine Son submission to God's holy will in all things, but especially when He takes from us one of

our dear ones. Again, the contemplation of the sufferings of Mary should fortify us in patience, whenever God is pleased to visit us with a light and small cross of affliction, or even with a sorrow that causes our heart to bleed.

It should inspire us with a filial confidence in Mary, who thus suffered for us and gave her divine Son for our salvation. We can and ought to prove our love for her, not by sentimental feelings of affection, but by a sincere hatred of sin and great fervour in the service of her divine Son.

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for the anguish felt by thy loving heart when Jesus' body was laid in the sepulchre. Dear Mother, by all the bitterness of desolation thou didst know, obtain for me the virtue of diligence and the gift of wisdom. *Hail Mary, etc...*

14th SEPTEMBER: REASONS WHY MARY HAD TO SUFFER

1. Preparatory Prayer

2. Meditation

The reasons why God permitted Mary to suffer so much may be briefly stated as follows: He did so from His love for Mary and from His love for us. He did so from His love for Mary, because by suffering she merited greater glory in heaven.

As Mother of the Crucified she persevered beneath the cross, and now she thrones in heaven as the glorious Mother of the risen Redeemer. Because she shared in His suffering, she now shares His glory.

Again, God permitted Mary to suffer because He loved us. If she had not experienced such bitter sorrow, we would not have recourse to her, for whosoever has not suffered himself can not have sympathy with the sufferings of others. Mary knows the pangs of sorrow by experience, and therefore knows also how to console and help us.

3. Practice

Because she herself drained the most bitter cup of sorrow, Mary is always willing to help those who invoke her aid. But above all she is inclined to help repentant sinners, because she knows how great the price of their redemption was, paid by the blood of her divine Son. She is able to help us, because, after God, she is most

powerful; she is most willing to help us, because she loves us, whom God so has loved "as to give His only-begotten Son." (*John iii. 16*) Let us, therefore, have recourse to her in all our needs, and we shall experience the power of her help in life and death.

4. Prayer of the Church

5. Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows

6. Final Prayers

I compassionate thee, sorrowing Mary, for all thy sorrows. I beseech thee, dear Mother, by thy heart pierced through by them, obtain for me full abandonment to the will of God in everything and perseverance to the end. *Hail Mary, etc...*



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