

131. The Seven Sorrows of Mary

By Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

1. We find in Simeon's prophecy the first explicit announcement of the part the Blessed Virgin was to have in the Passion of Jesus: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2:35). This prophecy was fulfilled on Calvary. "Yes, O Blessed Mother," says St. Bernard, "a sword has truly pierced your soul. It could penetrate your Son's Flesh only by passing through your soul. And after Jesus had died, the cruel lance which opened His side did not reach His soul, but it did pierce yours. His soul was no longer in His Body, but yours could not be detached from it." This beautiful interpretation shows us how Mary, as a Mother, was intimately associated with her Son's Passion.

The Gospel does not tell us that Mary was present during the glorious moments of the life of Jesus, but it does say that she was present on Calvary. "Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen" (John 19:25). No one had been able to keep her from hastening to the place where her Son was to be crucified, and her love gave her courage to *stand* there, erect, near the Cross, to be present at the sorrowful agony and death of the One Whom she loved above all, because He was both her Son and her God. Just as she had once consented to become His Mother, so she would now agree to see Him tortured from head to foot, and to be torn away from her by a cruel death.

She not only accepted, she offered. Jesus had willingly gone to His Passion, and Mary would willingly offer her well-beloved Son for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity and the salvation of men. That is why the sacrifice of Jesus became Mary's sacrifice, not only because Mary offered it together with Jesus, and in Him, offered her own Son; but also because, by this offering, she completed the most profound holocaust of herself, since Jesus was the center of her affections and of her whole life. God, Who had given her this divine Son, asked, on Calvary, for a return of His gift, and Mary offered Jesus to the Father with all the love of her heart, in complete adherence to the divine will.

2. The liturgy puts on the lips of Our Lady of Sorrows these touching words: "O you who pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow" (Roman Missal). Yes, her grief was immeasurable, and was surpassed only by her love, a love so great that it could encompass that vast sea of sorrow. It can be said of Mary, as of no other creature, that her love was stronger than death; in fact, it made her able to support the cruel death of Jesus.

“Who could be unfeeling in contemplating the Mother of Christ suffering with her Son?” chants the *Stabat Mater*; and immediately it adds, “O Mother ... make me feel the depth of your sorrow, so that I may weep with you. May I bear in my heart the wounds of Christ; make me share in His Passion and become inebriated by the Cross and Blood of your Son.” In response to the Church’s invitation, let us contemplate Mary’s sorrows, sympathize with her, and ask her for the invaluable grace of sharing with her in the Passion of Jesus. Let us remember that this participation is not to be merely sentimental—even though this sentiment is good and holy—but it must lead us to real *compassion*, that is, to *suffering with* Jesus and Mary. The sufferings God sends us have no other purpose.

The sight of Mary at the foot of the Cross makes the lesson of the Cross less hard and less bitter; her maternal example encourages us to suffer and makes the road to Calvary easier. Let us go, then, with Mary, to join Jesus on Golgotha; let us go with her to meet our cross; and sustained by her, let us embrace it willingly, uniting it with her Son’s.

Text taken from [Divine Intimacy](#) (Baronius Press, 2015), pp. 374-375.