

Devotions to Our Lady of Dolours



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Cover Picture: *The Madonna in Sorrow* by [Sassoferrato](#), 17th century.

From mid-August to mid-October, there are eight Marian feasts, easily their greatest concentration in the calendar. The Feast of our Lady of Sorrows comes in the midst of these.

The entire month of September is devoted to our Lady under title of her seven dolours. In addition, the Blessed Mother is also especially venerated under this title during Lent. There are nearly-identical feasts of Our Lady of Sorrows on 15th September and on Passion Friday. The Lenten Feast concentrates more on the sufferings of our Lady for the Passion of her divine Son, whereas the one in September refers more to the various sacrifices of our Lady throughout her life.

INTRODUCTION

About the devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows

The Feast of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows is observed on 15th September

The Blessed Virgin Mary revealed to St. Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) that the following seven graces would be granted to the souls who honour her daily by saying seven *Aves* and meditating on her tears and dolours.

- 1) I will grant peace to their families.
- 2) They will be enlightened about the divine mysteries.
- 3) I will console them in their pains and I will accompany them in their work.
- 4) I will give them as much as they ask for as long as it does not oppose the adorable will of my divine Son or the sanctification of their souls.
- 5) I will defend them in their spiritual battles with the infernal enemy and I will protect them at every instant of their lives.
- 6) I will visibly help them at the moment of their death; they will see the face of their mother.
- 7) I have obtained [this grace] from my divine Son that those who propagate this devotion to my tears and dolours will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness, since all their sins will be forgiven and my Son and I will be their eternal consolation and joy.

St. Alphonsus de Liguori testifies to complementary revelations given by Our Lord to St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) in which Jesus further promises four special graces to those dedicated to the sufferings of the co-redeeming mother. He promises

1. that those who, before death, invoke the Blessed Mother in the name of her sorrows should obtain true repentance of all their sins;
2. that He would protect in their tribulations all who remember this devotion, and that He would guard them especially at the hour of death;
3. that He would impress upon their minds the remembrance of His Passion, and that they should have their reward for it in Heaven;
4. that He would commit such devout clients into the hands of Mary so that she might obtain for these souls all the graces she wanted to lavish upon them.

A. CHAPLETS TO OUR LADY OF SORROWS

FOREWORD

This devotion was instituted in the thirteenth century in honour of the Seven Dolours the Blessed Virgin Mary endured on account of the Passion of her divine Son. It is prayed upon a chaplet which comprises seven sets of beads. Each set consists of a medal plus seven beads. The medal depicts a Mystery of the Seven Sorrows of our Lady. On each medal, one may meditate on a Mystery and then say one *Pater*. On each of the beads, one says an *Ave*. There is no Glory said after each set. By custom, the colour of the beads is purple, for that is the liturgical colour proper to sorrow.

Eventually, a pendant was added to the original circlet of beads. It terminates in a crucifix. Between the crucifix and the first medal of the chaplet, there is a string of three (ideally purple) beads.

INDULGENCES

On 26 September, 1724, Benedict XIII granted an indulgence proper to this devotion. Further grants were approved in 1737 and 1747. All of these were replaced in 1968 by the new norms of indulgences. Grant Number 35 of the new norms pertains to the use of devotional objects (*objectorum pietatis usus*). Under this grant, "The Christian faithful obtain a *partial indulgence* when they make devout use of a devotional object (such as a crucifix or cross, a rosary, a scapular, or a medal) which has been rightly blessed by any priest or deacon". Unfortunately, the traditional system of indulgences has not been restored and is no longer valid.

OTHER PROMISES

In a locution to Berthe Petit, our Lord has said the following:

"This devotion to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of My mother will restore faith and hope to broken hearts and to ruined families; it will help to repair the destruction; it will sweeten sorrow. It will be a new strength for My Church, bringing souls not only to confidence in My Heart but also to abandonment to the Sorrowful Heart of My mother."

FOUR SPECIAL GRACES

In a revelation to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, our Blessed Lord promised the following graces to those who would pray this devotion:

1. True repentance for all their sins should they, before the time of death, invoke the Blessed Virgin in the name of these dolours.
2. Jesus' protection in all their tribulations, especially at the hour of death.
3. Impression upon their minds of the Passion of Christ, for which there would be a reward in Heaven.
4. Committal by Jesus into the hands of His holy and immaculate mother, so that she might obtain all the graces she wanted to lavish upon them.

HOW TO PRAY THE CHAPLET

To pray the Chaplet, simply meditate on the Mysteries pertaining to each medal and say one *Pater* on each medal and one *Ave* on each purple bead. At the end, say one *Ave* on each of the three beads on the pendant in remembrance of our Lady's tears and in sorrow for your sins. St. Alphonsus de Ligouri wrote a set of meditations as given hereunder, but any set will do or just a remembrance of each Mystery will be sufficient. Over time, customs have developed about how to pray this Chaplet. The following method reflects some developments and also a closing adaptation (from another's suggestion) by the publisher of this Booklet.

PENDANT:

On the pendant medal or crucifix say:

V. Incline ✠ unto mine aid, O God.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

On the first bead of the pendant, say the Act of Contrition in any approved form.

On the second bead of the pendant, say the Glory.

On the third bead, say the *Strophe*, as follows:

My mother, share thy grief with me,

And let me bear thee company

To mourn thy Jesus' death with me.

Now go to the first medal of the circlet (the centrepiece).

A Traditional Chaplet of the Seven Dolours



MEDITATION ON THE FIRST DOLOUR:
THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON

I pity thee, O afflicted mother, on account of the first sword of sorrow which pierced thee when, in the Temple, all the outrages which men would inflict on thy beloved Jesus were revealed to thee by Saint Simeon, and which thou didst already know by the Sacred Scriptures—outrages which were to cause Him to die before thine eyes on an infamous gibbet, exhausted of His blood, abandoned by all, and thyself unable to defend or help Him. By that bitter knowledge then, which, for so many years, afflicted thy heart, I beseech thee, my Queen, to obtain for me the grace that, during my life and at death, I may ever keep the Passion of Jesus and thy sorrows impressed upon my heart.

Pater (still on the centrepiece medal). Seven *Aves* (one on each bead). *Strophe* (on the chain at the end of the seven beads). Move through the beads first towards the medal having on it the image of the Flight into Egypt.

MEDITATION ON THE SECOND DOLOUR:
THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

I pity thee, my afflicted mother, for the second sword which pierced thee when, soon after His birth, thou didst behold thine innocent Son threatened with death by those very men whom He had come into the world to save. I pity thee because, on this account, in the darkness of night, thou wast obliged to fly secretly with Him into Egypt. By the many hardships then, which thou, a vulnerable young woman, in company with thine exiled Child, didst endure in so long and exhausting a journey through rough and desert countries—and during thy residence in Egypt where, being unknown and a stranger, thou didst live for so many years in poverty and contempt—I beseech thee, my beloved lady, to obtain for me until death the grace to suffer with patience in thy company the trials of this miserable life, that I may thus, in the next, escape the eternal punishments of Hell which I have deserved. *Pater*. Seven *Aves*. *Strophe*.

MEDITATION ON THE THIRD DOLOUR:
THE LOSS OF JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

I pity thee, my sorrowful mother, on account of the third sword which pierced thee upon the loss of thy dear Son Jesus, Who remained absent from thee in Jerusalem for three days. No longer seeing thy divine Son by thy side and not knowing the cause of His absence, I can well conceive, my loving Queen, that, during those nights, thou didst not repose and didst only sigh for Him, Who was all thy treasure. By the sighs, then, of those three days—for thee, too long and bitter!—I beseech thee to obtain for me the grace never to lose my God so that, always clinging to Him, He might lead me at death into the realm of eternal bliss. *Pater. Seven Aves. Strophe.*

MEDITATION ON THE FOURTH DOLOUR:
CARRYING THE CROSS

I pity thee, my sorrowful mother, for the fourth sword, which pierced thee in seeing thy Son condemned to death, bound with cords and chains, covered with blood and wounds, crowned with a wreath of thorns, falling under the heavy weight of the Cross, which He carried on His bruised shoulders: going as an innocent lamb to die for love of us. Thine eyes met His, and His met thine; and your glances were as so many cruel arrows which wounded your loving hearts. By this great sorrow, then, I beseech thee to obtain for me the grace to live in all things resigned to the will of my God and to carry my cross cheerfully in company with Jesus, until my last breath. *Pater. Seven Aves. Strophe.*

MEDITATION ON THE FIFTH DOLOUR:
THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

I pity thee, my afflicted mother, for the fifth sword which pierced thee when, on Mount Calvary, thou didst behold thy beloved Son Jesus slowly dying on the hard bed of the Cross before thy very eyes amid so many torments and insults, where thou couldst not minister to Him even the least of those comforts which are granted to the greatest criminals at the hour of death. By the agony which thou, my most loving mother, didst endure, together with thy dying Son; and by the sadness which thou didst feel when, for the last time, He spoke to thee from the Cross and bade thee farewell and left all of us to thee as thy children in the person of Saint John; and by that constancy with which thou didst then see Him bow down His head and expire: I beseech thee to obtain for me from thy crucified love the grace to live and die crucified to all earthly things, and that I may spend my life for God alone and thus one day enter Paradise to laud Him face to face. *Pater. Seven Aves. Strophe.*

MEDITATION ON THE SIXTH DOLOUR:
THE DEPOSITION AND PIETA

I pity thee, my afflicted mother, for the sixth sword which transfix'd thee when thou didst see the sweet Heart of thy Son pierced through and through. He was already dead and had died for those ungrateful creatures who, even after His death, were not satisfied by the torments they had inflicted upon Him. By this cruel sorrow then, which was all thine, I beseech thee to obtain for me the grace to dwell in the Heart of Jesus, wounded and opened for me. Through thine intercession, may I live only in that Heart, which is the beautiful abode of love, in which all souls that love God repose, and abiding there, I may never think of anything or love anyone but God. Most sacred virgin, thou canst obtain this for me: from thee do I hope for it. *Pater. Seven Aves. Strophe.*

MEDITATION ON THE SEVENTH DOLOUR:
THE BURIAL OF JESUS

I pity thee, my afflicted mother, for the seventh sword which pierced thee when thou didst embrace thy dead Son, no longer beautiful and delightful, as thou didst receive Him in the stable of Bethlehem, but covered with blood, livid and all lacerated with wounds, so that even His bones were exposed. Thou didst then say, "My Son, my Son, to what has love reduced Thee?" And when He was borne to the sepulchre, thou wouldst thyself accompany Him, and place Him with thine own hands in the tomb; and bidding Him thy last farewell, thou didst leave thy loving heart buried with thy Son. By this martyrdom of thy beautiful soul, do thou obtain for me, O mother of fair love, the forgiveness of the offences which I have committed against my beloved God, and which I repent with my whole heart. Do thou defend me in temptations; do thou assist me at the moment of my death that, saving my soul through the merits of Jesus and by thine own merits, I may one day, after this miserable exile, rise to Paradise to sing praises for evermore to Jesus and to thee. Amen. *Pater. Seven Aves. Strophe.*

On the three pendant beads, say three *Aves* in remembrance of the tears our Lady shed in sympathy for the sufferings of Jesus, her beloved Son, and to obtain true sorrow for our sins.

On the pendant crucifix (or medal), say the following versicle and response and the final prayer:

✠. Pray for us, O most sorrowful virgin.

✠. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, at Whose Passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow didst pierce through the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary, grant that we who commemorate and reverence her dolours may attain grace and salvation through the fruit of Thy blessed martyrdom and death, Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Now move back onto the three pendant beads from the pendant crucifix or medal, making a petition on each as follows:

Virgin most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Virgin most Sorrowful, pray for us.

Virgin most Sorrowful, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Now say the *Salve Regina* on the centrepiece and then the *Memorare* on the pendant medal. Close with the *Signum Crucis*.



A Scriptural Chaplet of the Seven Dolours



First Sorrow of Mary The prophecy of Simeon (St. Luke 2. 22-35)



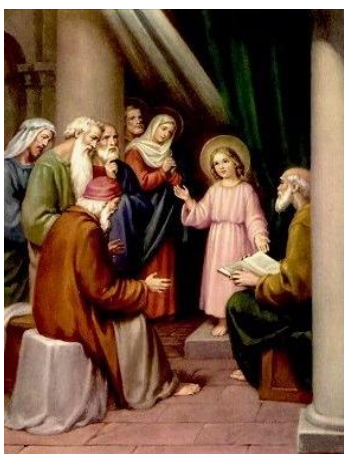
When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. He took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God, saying, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples". And His father and His mother marvelled at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is contradicted, and a sword will pierce through thine own soul also, that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed".



Second Sorrow of Mary **The flight into Egypt** **(St. Matthew 2. 13-21)**

When the Magi had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell thee; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him". Joseph rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was furious.

He sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or less. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: "Arise, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead". And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel.



Third Sorrow of Mary **The Loss of Jesus in the Temple** **(St. Luke 2. 41-50)**

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. When the feast was ended, as they were returning, the Boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing Him to be in the company, they went a day's journey. They sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and

when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. After three days, they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. His mother said to Him, "Son, why hast Thou treated us so? Behold, Thy father and I have been looking for Thee anxiously." He said to them, "How is it that thou soughtest Me? Didst thou not know that I must be in My Father's house?".

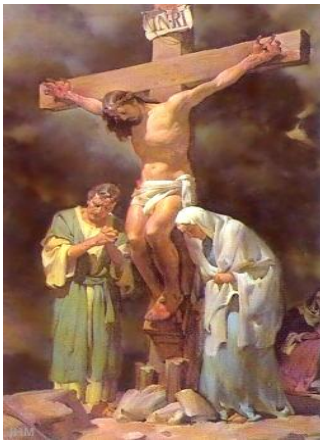


Fourth Sorrow of Mary

Mary meets Jesus on the way to the cross
(St. John 19. 1; St. Luke 23. 26-32)

So they took Jesus, and He went out, bearing His own cross. And as they led Him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed Him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for

Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!'. For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" And they brought Him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).



Fifth Sorrow of Mary

Jesus Dies on the Cross

(St. Mark 15. 22; St. John 19. 18, 25-27; St. Mark 15. 34; St. Luke 23. 46)

And they brought Him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to his

mother, "Woman, behold, thy son!". Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, thy mother!". And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?", which means, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?". Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit!". And having said this, He breathed His last.

Sixth Sorrow of Mary

Mary receives the dead body of her son
(St. John 19. 31-34, 38; Lamentations 1. 12)



In order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with Him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at

once there came out blood and water. After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away His body. "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow."

Seventh Sorrow of Mary

Jesus is laid in the tomb

(St. Matthew 27. 59; St. John 19. 38-42; St. Mark 15. 46; St. Luke 27. 55-56)



Joseph took the body, and wrapped It in a clean linen shroud. Nicodemus also, who had at first come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus and bound It in linen cloths with spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever

been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. And Joseph rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how His body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

B. Novenas
to Our Lady of Sorrows



Novena Prayer I

for Our Lady of Sorrows

A devotion practised from 6th – 14th September,
and from the Wednesday after Lætare Sunday
to Passion Thursday inclusive

CLOSING PRAYERS FOR NOVENA I

The prayers on this page are to be recited each day after
the Novena prayers and meditations have been observed.

Ave

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. *Amen.*

Prayer to our Sorrowful Mother for a particular grace

O mother most holy and sorrowful, Queen of Martyrs, thou who stoodst by thy Son as He agonised on the Cross: by the sufferings of thy life, by that sword of pain that pierced thy heart, by thy perfect joy in Heaven, look down on me kindly as I kneel before thee, sympathising with thy sorrows and offering thee my petition with childlike trust.

Dear mother, since thy Son refuses thee nothing, implore of His Sacred Heart mercifully to grant what I request through the merits of His Sacred Passion, together with those of thine immaculate heart at the foot of the Cross.

Mother most merciful, to whom shall I turn in my misery if not to thee, who pities us poor sinners in this vale of tears? In thy name, offer Jesus but one drop of His Most Precious Blood--but one pang of His loving heart. Remind Him that thou art our sweetness, our life and our hope, and thy prayer will be answered. *Amen.*

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother. To thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. *Amen*

First Day (6th September)



Prayer in honour of the First Sorrow of Mary:

The Prophecy of Simeon

Most sorrowful mother, aggrieved was thy heart when, on offering thy Divine Son at the temple, Holy Simeon foretold that a sword would pierce thy soul on account of His Passion. By this prophecy, thou knewest that thou wouldst suffer with Jesus.

Queen of Martyrs, let me unite my heart to thine in this pain, and I ask thee the grace to keep the thought of my death in mind, so that I may always avoid sin.

Second Day (7th September)



Prayer in honour of the Second Sorrow of Mary:

The Flight into Egypt

Most sorrowful mother, thy maternal heart was overcome with fear at the hatred of Herod for thine innocent Son. To save Him from the King's jealousy, thou hadst to flee with Him into Egypt. Thine heart also suffered grievously upon feeling the apprehension of thy beloved spouse St. Joseph, as he led his wife and babe into an unknown wilderness.

Queen of Martyrs, let me unite my heart to thine in this sorrow, and obtain for me the grace to avoid those who wish me harm; above all, to avoid those who wish evil to my soul.

Third Day (8th September)



Prayer in honour of the Third Sorrow of Mary:
(FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LADY)

The Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple

Most sorrowful mother, grief, sorrow and anxiety filled thy tender heart when thou didst find that thou hadst been separated from thy beloved Son upon leaving Jerusalem. For three days, He remained lost to thee and to St. Joseph. For three days didst thou seek Him Who was the Light of the world and of thy life. And for three days, thou didst not find Him.

Let me join thee in this pain, O Queen of Martyrs, and obtain for me the grace never to lose Jesus through sin, but to remain ever united to Him in His divine love. Should I have the misfortune of falling, may I never doubt His mercy and may I always return to His grace through the Sacrament of Penance, which He instituted for the salvation of my soul.

Fourth Day (9th September)



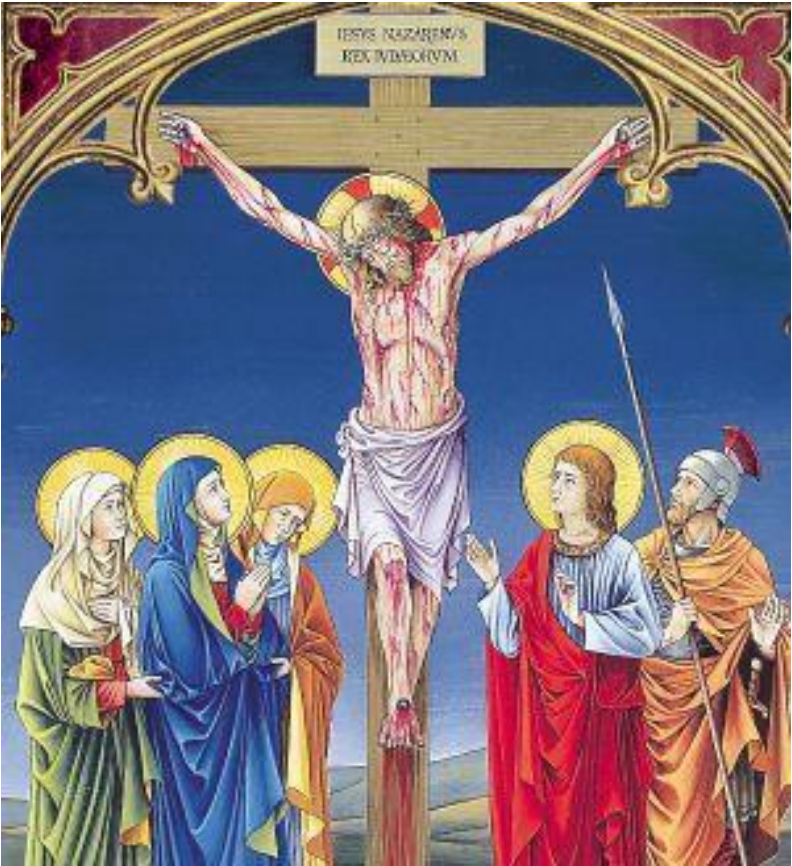
Prayer in honour of the Fourth Sorrow of Mary:

The Meeting of Mary and Jesus on the Way to Calvary

Most sorrowful mother, who can fathom the grief of thy loving heart when thou didst see thy Son fall on the way to Calvary, wounded and bleeding under the crushing weight of the Cross?

O Queen of Martyrs, let me unite my heart to thine in this grief, and obtain for me the grace to bear patiently whatever crosses God may see fit to impose on me in this vale of tears.

Fifth Day (10th September)



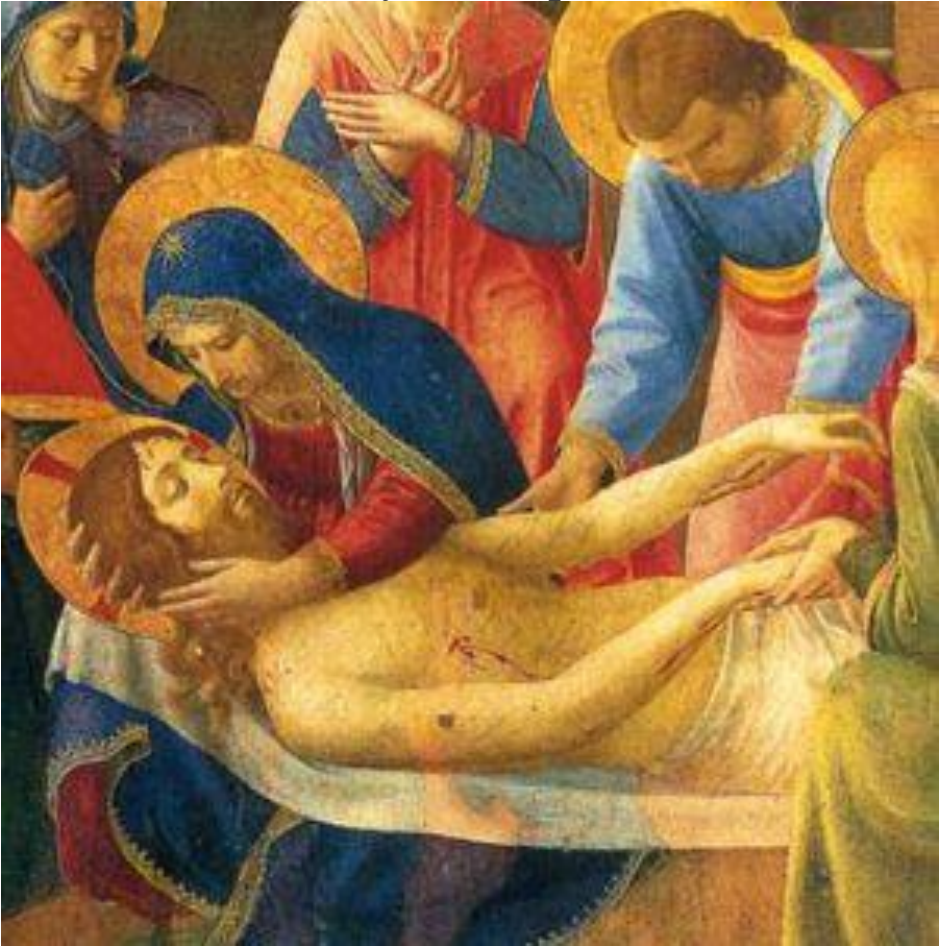
Prayer in honour of the Fifth Sorrow of Mary:

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

Most sorrowful mother, standing at the foot of the Cross, thy most pure heart was transfixed by a sword of despair. And yet thou didst not faint or fall, thou didst not lean upon the Cross or sit at the shattered feet of Thy beloved Son. Fortified by perfect faith, thou didst stand beneath the Cross to share His anguish and to offer it up with thine own in reparation for the sins of the whole world--even for my sins. Like Abraham, thou didst offer the Sacrifice of thy Son willingly, as if standing before His holy Altar.

Queen of Martyrs, let me join thee in these lamentations, and obtain for me the grace to prevail against temptation and sin no matter what the cost may be; and may I attain a happy death through thy most bitter anguish, suffered in the hope of my salvation.

Sixth Day (11th September)



Prayer in honour of the Sixth Sorrow of Mary:

The Piercing of the Side of Jesus and His Descent from the Cross

Most sorrowful mother, grief didst fill thy heart when Jesus' body was lowered from the Cross and laid in thine arms. Though thine embrace brought thee some needed relief, how painful it was for thee to gaze upon Him Who loved thee perfectly as a Son, for He had been the comely figure of health and grace but had become pale, broken, torn, scarred and lifeless.

O Queen of Martyrs, let me join my heart to thine in this grief that I may receive Jesus into my soul before I die, so that I may rejoice with Him in Heaven forevermore.

Seventh Day (12th September)



Prayer in honour of the Seventh Sorrow of Mary:

(FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF MARY)

The Burial of Jesus

Most sorrowful virgin, grief didst again overwhelm thy heart when the Sacred Body of thy Son was wrenched from thine arms to be abandoned in a cold tomb. Yet thou didst not doubt that He would rise again.

Queen of Martyrs, let me join thee in thy dolours, and inspire in me thy own deep, trusting faith in the word of Thy Son. Let me have trust that even in crippling sorrow, even when crushed by anguish, the hope promised by Jesus will never desert my soul. Obtain for me also a sincere sorrow for all my sins, a burning love for God and a tender devotion to thee so that, one day, I may die in His grace and, in Him, rise to eternal life.

Eighth Day (13th September)



Vigil of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Sweet Mother of Sorrows, Providence wished that Saint Helena, who was, like thee, the mother of a king, find the Cross of thy Son and lavish honours on this Relic of relics.* Grant, most sorrowful Queen and mother that, like St. Helena, I always honour the sign of our salvation, the Holy Cross. Like the Church, may I hold it high; may I hold and wear it with gratitude and with pride. Above all, may I unite my own sufferings to those of Jesus on the Cross, and may I carry my crosses as He did, not in shame but in love, patience and faith.

The Church teaches that hardships and mortifications are never suffered in vain but are a redemptive salve when they are borne for God and neighbour and when they are united to Christ's Passion. May I ever remember this so that my own sacrifices and pains may benefit others unto salvation.

* Saint Helena found the relic of the True Cross while on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the year 326 A.D. It was identified as the wood which wrought cures. To celebrate this victory, the Church established the Feast of The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Ninth Day (14th September)



Vigil of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Sorrows

O most holy virgin, mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by the overwhelming grief thou didst suffer when thou didst witness the crucifixion and death by martyrdom of thy divine Son, look upon me kindly, and enkindle in my heart a tender sympathy for our Lord's Sacrifice.

Grant me a sincere detestation of my sins so that, free from undue affection for the passing joys of earth, I may attain unto the eternal bliss of Heaven. May all my thoughts and all my actions be directed towards this one great goal. Honour, glory and love be given to our divine Lord Jesus and to His holy and immaculate mother. Amen.

Novena Prayer II **for Our Lady of Sorrows**

(To commence on 6th September and end on 14th September)

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of our Redeemer!, remember that we are thy children, given unto thee by thy divine Son when He was expiring on the Holy Cross. Mother of Sorrows!, by the tears which flowed from thine eyes when St. John related how the traitor Judas sold thy divine Son for the vile price of thirty pieces of silver, and how, in the Garden of Olives, He was agonised with fear and sorrow, and how His Precious Blood was shed from every pore; by all the anguish which overwhelmed thy heart when thou didst hear that Jesus, Whom thou didst love without measure, was condemned to death; by the sorrow that pierced thy maternal heart upon meeting thine only-beloved Son when He was loaded with a heavy cross and was spent in pain by fatigue and by loss of blood; by that heroic resignation to the divine will which, triumphing over the sentiments of nature, sustained thee at the foot of the Cross; by the excess of grief that would have robbed thee of life had not God preserved thee for the relief of His disciples and the protection of His infant Church; by the dolours which rent thy desolate heart upon beholding thy beloved Jesus, most comely among the sons of men, become a prey to death, the ignominious death of the Cross; by all the sufferings of thy most afflicted heart: obtain for us, O Mother of Mercy, true contrition for our sins, persevering fervour in divine service, and the particular favours we solicit in this novena.

O thou most tender and afflicted mother, who didst suffer at the Altar of the Holy Cross with thy dear Son Jesus, and whose Immaculate Heart was penetrated by the nails that fastened Him there in torment on account of our sins, we acknowledge that we justly deserve the wrath of divine justice to fall on our devoted heads. But if those very sufferings have proved to be our defence and protection heretofore, grant that now, at least, we may feel profoundly a share of the sorrow of which we have been the unhappy cause; and mayest thou obtain that souls hitherto so insensible to the strongest proofs of love may, by heartfelt contrition, taste one drop of that bitter chalice from which thou didst drink so deeply.

C. Litanies
of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows



INTRODUCTION: THE THREE LITANIES DEDICATED TO THE SORROWS OF OUR LADY

Holy Church celebrates two very similar feasts dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. One is prayed on Passion Friday; the other, on 15th September. In the proposals for reform of 1962, the former was initially reduced to a mere commemoration. However, this did not sit well with Blessed Pope Pius XII or with many other people. Therefore, His Holiness stipulated that two third-class feasts of Our Lady of Sorrows could be celebrated in white vestments on Passion Friday where there was a firm devotion to our Lady of Dolours, but that the privileged Lenten Feria must be commemorated [as well as the seniormost feast which might occur on the same day]. Those who wish to benefit from this privilege are strictly required to observe some devotions to our Lady of Sorrows after this Mass is ended. Ideally, if this Mass be celebrated once (minimally), the Mass of Passion Friday should also be celebrated on the same day and in the same place.

Devotion to our Lady of Dolours is, of course, enjoined throughout Lent and also throughout the month of September because that month is dedicated to our Lady under title of her sorrows. The Lenten Feast recalls entirely our Lady's sufferings with Jesus in the Passion and at the Crucifixion. The Servite Friars wanted to add a second Feast which would include all Our Lady's sufferings on account of her divine Son throughout His life. It includes attention to the Prophecies of Simeon and Anna, the Flight into Egypt and the loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple when He was twelve years old. This is known more accurately as the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of our Lady. September is dedicated to all seven dolours and the Litany of the Seven Sorrows is the best

of the three dolorous Marian litanies for this purpose, as it includes a group of seven petitions.

"The Litany of the Sorrowful Mother" focuses more on the dolours of our Lady in the Passion of Christ and is therefore more appropriate for Lent. "The Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows" is yet more intense in this regard: it concentrates emotionally on the sorrows of our Blessed Mother as she stood at the foot of the Cross and received her dead Son into her arms. It achieves this effect by use of short and poignant petitions that drive through the hearts of the faithful like the swords of grief which pierced her own loving heart or the nails which pierced the hands and feet of our Lord. Note how the stresses fall in this Litany: "Mother crucified, Mother sorrowful, Mother tearful, Mother afflicted, Mother forsaken, Mother destitute, Mother bereft of thy Child, Mother transfixed with the sword, Mother consumed with grief, Mother filled with anguish, Mother crucified in heart, Mother most sad, Fountain of tears, Abyss of suffering". After this, the petitions become milder but remain just as pointed. They draw the devout out of profound grief, suggesting the movement of our Lady's heart after she left the tomb and returned to her abode to wait for the Resurrection in hope. The last of these petitions even suggests an ending in gladness: "Joy of all saints": and it even moves to this ending by a step: "Consolation of widows". Given these differences in intensity, it is recommended that faithful pray "The Litany of the Sorrowful Mother" in Quadragesima (the first part of Lent) and "The Litany of Our Lady of Sorrows" in Passiontide. "The Litany of the Seven Dolours" is best recited in September.

Litany I

of the Sorrowful Mother

(To be prayed especially in Quadragesima: Ash Wednesday to Passion Sunday)

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

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

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

Holy Mary, conceived without sin, *pray for us.*

Holy Mother of God, *pray for us.*

Mother of Christ, *etc.*

Mother of Our Saviour Crucified,

Mother most sorrowful,

Mother most tearful,

Mother most afflicted,

Mother most lonely,

Mother most desolate,

Mother pierced by the sword of sorrow,

Queen of Martyrs,

Comfort of the sorrowful,

Help of the needy,

Protectress of the forsaken,

Support of widows and orphans,

Health of the sick,

Hope of the troubled,

Haven of the ship-wrecked,

Refuge of sinners,

Hope of the despairing,

Mother of mercy,

Through thy poverty in the stable of Bethlehem,

Through thy sorrow at the prophecy of Simeon,

Through thy sad flight into Egypt,

Through thy anxiety when seeking thy lost Child,

Through thy grief when seeing thy divine Son persecuted,

Through thy fear and anxiety when Jesus was apprehended,

Through thy pain caused by the treason of Judas and the denial of Peter,

Through thy sad meeting with Jesus on the way of the Cross,

Through the tortures of thy loving Heart
at the Crucifixion of Jesus,
Through thy agony at the death of Jesus,
Through the sword of sorrow that pierced thy heart
when the side of Jesus was transfixed by the lance,
Through thy lamentations over the dead Body
of thy divine Son lying on thy bosom,
Through thy deep mourning at His tomb,
Through thy desolation after the burial of Jesus,
Through the tears thou didst shed for thy beloved Son,
Through thy wonderful resignation to the will of God
in all thy sufferings,

O Queen of peace,
In all our tribulations,
In our illnesses and pains,
In our sorrows and afflictions,
In our need and destitution,
In our fears and dangers,
In the hour of our death,
On the Day of Judgement,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

✠ Pray for us, O Sorrowful Virgin,

✠ That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray.

We beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, let Thy mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose holy soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow at the hour of Thy Passion, implore Thy mercy for us, both now and at the hour of our death, Who livest and reignest, world without end. ✠ Amen.

Litany II

of Our Lady of Sorrows

(To be prayed especially in Passiontide, particularly on the Lenten Feast,
on Passion Friday and for its preceding Novena)

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

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

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

Holy Mary, *pray for us.*

Holy Mother of God, *pray for us.*

Holy Virgin of virgins, *pray for us.*

Mother crucified, *pray for us.*

Mother sorrowful, &c.

Mother tearful,

Mother afflicted,

Mother forsaken,

Mother desolate,

Mother bereft of thy Child,

Mother transfixed with the sword,

Mother consumed with grief,

Mother filled with anguish,

Mother crucified in heart,

Mother most sad,

Fountain of tears,

Abyss of suffering,

Mirror of patience,

Rock of constancy,

Anchor of confidence,

Refuge of the forsaken,

Shield of the oppressed,

Subduer of the unbelieving,

Comforter of the afflicted,

Medicine of the sick,

Strength of the weak,

Harbour of the wrecked,
Allayer of tempests,
Resource of mourners,
Terror of the treacherous,
Treasure of the faithful,
Eye of the prophets,
Staff of the apostles,
Crown of martyrs,
Light of confessors,
Pearl of virgins,
Consolation of widows,
Joy of all saints,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

Look down upon us, deliver us, and save us from all trouble, in the power of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Let us pray.

Imprint, O Lady, thy wounds upon my heart, that I may read therein sorrow and love—sorrow to endure every sorrow for thee, love to despise every love for thee. *Amen.*

Said together: The Apostles' Creed.

Hail, Holy Queen, . . .

Now say three *Aves* in honour of the Holy Heart of Mary.

In the Name of the Father + and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.

Litany III

of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary

(To be prayed in September,
especially on Saturdays and on the Feast of our Lady of Sorrows)

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*
Christ, have mercy. *Christ have mercy.*
Lord, have mercy. *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 Ghost, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, One God, *have mercy on us.*

Mother of Sorrows, *pray for us.*
Mother whose soul was pierced by the sword, *pray for us.*
Mother who fled with Jesus into Egypt, *pray for us.*
Mother who sought Him sorrowing for three days, *&c.*
Mother who saw Him scourged and crowned with thorns,
Mother who stood by Him while He hung upon the Cross,
Mother who received Him into thine arms when He was dead,
Mother who saw Him buried in the tomb,

O Mary, Queen of Martyrs, *save us by thy prayers.*
O Mary, comfort of the sorrowful, *saves us by thy prayers.*
O Mary, help of the weak, *save us by thy prayers.*
O Mary, strength of the fearful, *&c.*
O Mary, light of the despondent,
O Mary, nursing mother of the sick,
O Mary, refuge of sinners,
Through the bitter Passion of thy Son,
Through the piercing anguish of thy heart,
Through thy heavy weight of woe,
Through thy sadness and desolation,
Through thy maternal pity,
Through thy perfect resignation,
Through thy meritorious prayers,
From immoderate sadness,

From a cowardly spirit,
From an impatient temper,
From fretfulness and discontent,
From sullenness and gloom,
From despair and unbelief,
From final impenitence,

We sinners, *beseech thee, hear us.*

Preserve us from sudden death, *we beseech thee, hear us.*

Teach us how to die, *we beseech thee, hear us.*

Succour us in our last agony, *we beseech thee, hear us.*

Guard us from the enemy, &c.

Bring us to a happy end,

Gain for us the gift of perseverance,

Aid us before the Judgement Seat,

Mother of God,

Mother most sorrowful,

Mother most desolate,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Christ hear us. *Christ, graciously hear us.*

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

V. Succour us, O Blessed Virgin Mary,

R. In every time, and in every place.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man, grant, we beseech Thee, that Thy dear Mother Mary, whose soul the sword pierced in the hour of Thy Passion, may intercede for us, now, and in the hour of our death, through Thine own merits, O Saviour of the world, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest, God, world without end. *Amen.*

Consecration to Our Lady of Sorrows

O most holy Virgin Mary, Queen of Martyrs, would that I could be in Heaven, there to contemplate the honours rendered unto thee by the Most Holy Trinity and the whole Heavenly Court! But since I am still a pilgrim in this vale of tears, receive from me, thy unworthy servant and a poor sinner, the most sincere homage and the most perfect act of vassalage a human creature can offer thee. Into thine Immaculate Heart, pierced through by so many swords of sorrow, I place today my poor soul forever. Receive me as a partaker in thy dolours, and never suffer that I should depart from that Cross on which thine Only-begotten Son expired for me. With thee, O Mary, I will endure all the sufferings, contradictions and infirmities, with which it will please thy divine Son to visit me in this life. All of them I offer unto thee, in memory of the dolours which thou didst suffer during thy life, that every thought of my mind and every beating of my heart may henceforward be an act of compassion for thy Sorrows, and of complaisance for the glory thou now enjoyest in Heaven. Since then, O dear mother, I now compassionate thy dolours and rejoice in seeing thee glorified, do thou also have compassion on me, and reconcile me to thy son Jesus, that I may become thy true and loyal son/daughter; do thou come to me on my last day and assist me in my last agony, even as thou wert present at the agony of thy divine Son Jesus, that from this painful exile, I may enter into Heaven, there to be made partaker of thy glory. Amen.

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