



Scripture: Lk 2:34-35, Mt 2:13-15, Lk 2:43-45

For all the joy and love in Mary's life, it is hard to forget the immense sorrow and pain she also endured for her son and for us, her spiritual children. When Mary appeared to the visionaries in Kibeho, Rwanda, she asked that the Devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Mary be recited. They're based on scriptural events in the life of Jesus and Mary that reveal her sorrows.

The Blessed Mother grants seven graces to those who pray her devotion to the seven sorrows: peace to their families, enlightenment of the divine mysteries, consolation in pains and accompaniment in their work, as much as they ask for as long as it does not oppose the (word choice here?) will of Her divine Son or the sanctification of their souls, defense in spiritual battles and protection for all of their lives, visible help at the time of their death, (they will see the face of their mother) and that those who propagate this devotion to her tears and sorrows will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness, since all their sins will be forgiven, and she, along with her Son will be their eternal consolation and joy. No small graces, if you ask me! Let's dive into the sorrows, shall we?

The First Sorrow: The Prophecy

This is the prophecy made by Simeon, a man known in Jerusalem for his holiness. "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 2:34-35 How broken must Mary's heart have been at these words? Thy own soul a sword shall pierce? Not her body, that would be bad enough, but her SOUL would be pierced by a sword. The pain and heartbreak would be THAT intense.

The Second Sorrow: The Flight

This is when Mary and Joseph had to take baby Jesus and flee their homes for safety in Egypt. Herod was killing all of the young boys up to two years old because the Magi had escaped him. They didn't go back to report the birthplace or identity of the "new king," to him. Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt, "...and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Matthew 2:13-15) Mary and Joseph had this most precious baby boy, and in order to save His life, they had to flee to a land with which they were unfamiliar. They lived there until Herod died, which had to have been a remarkable relief for the family.

The Third Sorrow: The Loss

When Mary and Joseph were heading home from Jerusalem, it would have been in a large caravan of people. Friends, family, neighbors, and the like would have all traveled together. It wouldn't be that unusual for a child to not be right by his parents the whole time. So at the end of the trip, Joseph and Mary start asking around, and nobody knows where Jesus is! Yikes! "And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him." (Luke 2:43-45)

I'm not a mother, so I cannot imagine the terrible fear that would go through a mother's mind upon losing her child. Think of the grief and terror she must have felt. No cell phone to track His location, just backtracking their entire day's journey to Jerusalem and hoping they'd find Him there.

- Mandi

Reflection: Which of these sorrows sticks with you the most? What would be the hardest for you to cope with?

Reflection: When you read of the graces Mary offers those who practice this devotional, which is most appealing and calls to your heart the most?

Act: Say a prayer for your mom. Better yet, give her a call. Shoot her a text.



Scripture: Lk 23:27, Jn 19:25, Mk 15:43-46

Today we'll continue on with the fourth through seventh sorrows of Mary. Let's jump right in.

The Fourth Sorrow: The Meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Way of the Cross

"And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him." (Luke 23:27) Think of how devastating it would be to see a person, let alone your own son, scarred, bruised, bleeding, with ripped clothes, and in unimaginable pain. The physical and mental pain they were putting our Lord through was witnessed by His, and our, mother.

The Fifth Sorrow: The Crucifixion

It was at the crucifixion of our Lord that Mary became the spiritual Mother of Christ's followers. He, in His infinite love, wisdom, and mercy, gave Mary to John, and John to Mary. She was right there when He was getting crucified. From the moment Simeon gave his prophesy to Mary and Joseph, Mary knew she was in for sorrow and pain. She knew the pain would be intense enough to pierce her soul. "They crucified Him. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother..." (John 19:25).

The Sixth Sorrow: Taking Down the Body of Jesus from the Cross

How final was our Lord's death to our Mother when she was with those taking down His body! His torn, bruised, bloody, and limp body would have been such a tough sight to bear, such a tough circumstance for any mother to have to suffer through. Kindly, there was a man, Joseph of Arimathea, who was strong enough to go to Pilate and ask for Christ's body. "Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counselor, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen." (Mark 15:43-46)

The Seventh Sorrow: The Burial of Jesus

Sometimes I wonder if Mary had known ahead of time that Christ would return in three days, the sorrows and burdens she bore would have been a little less difficult to bear. Still seeing her son in that state, then removing His body from the cross, and burying His body hastily in a tomb (in order to be done by the time the Sabbath started) would have been excruciating. Burying His body was the culmination of her sorrows.

There are several meditations available for each of the sorrows, and in order to pray the chaplet, one is to pray seven sets. Each set begins with an Our Father, followed by seven Hail Marys. At the end, three more Hail Marys are said in honor of the Tears of Our Sorrowful Mother (taken from the appendix of 33 Days to Morning Glory).

- Mandi

Reflection: Now that we've gone over all of Mary's Seven Sorrows, which would be the hardest for you to handle?

Reflection: Does this devotion seem like one you'd be interested in working into your life on a regular (or even somewhat regular) basis?

Act: Take a moment to reflect on the sorrows of Mary, and the wonderful gifts she bestows on those who take time to participate in her devotion of the Seven Sorrows.

Handwritten lines for reflection and act.



Scripture: Rev 12:1, Jn 2:1-5, 1 Kgs 2:20

“A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars...” This passage from the book of Revelation highlights the regal position Mary has among her Son’s followers. Mary was told at the Annunciation that her Son would be the one to receive the throne of David forever, and in the final book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, we see Mary as the Queen of Heaven.

In Old Testament days, the Queen Mother held more of an important and revered position than the wife of the King as queen. Mary’s role as the Queen of Heaven at the side of her Son is prefigured in the Old Testament depictions of the Queen Mother role. The Queen Mother had a very influential role in national issues, and acted as regent when the king was absent or dead. Since the Queen Mother was recognized by the ancient Hebrews, the first Christians didn’t see a conflict or reason why we couldn’t honor our Queen Mother as such.

“The Old Testament understanding of an advocate is a person who is called in to intercede for another in need and particularly at court, and no one had more intercessory power to the king than the queen mother, who at times sat enthroned at the right side of the king.” (1.) This sets the stage for us to go to Mary as our intercessor!

Mary knew that all generations would call her blessed. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.” (515) The Church rightly honors “the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of ‘Mother of God,’ to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs... This very special devotion...differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration.” (516)

The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God, and Marian prayer such as the rosary, which is an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.

What an amazing gift we have in our Mama Mary! She's there to swoop in when our hearts and souls need her the most. Mary is here to intercede with her Son for us, as in the Old Testament days of the Queen Mother, "...the king's mother; and she sat on his right. Then she said, 'I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me.' And the king said to her, 'Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you.'" (1 Kings 2:20)

Mary's role in the Church is wholly part of her union with her Son our Lord, and comes directly from that union. The Catechism says, "After her Son's ascension, Mary 'aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers.' In her association with the apostles and several women, 'We also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation.'" (CCC 965)

Mary, from the start, was the intercessor for us to her Son. Think back to the wedding feast at Cana. The servants told Mary that the wine was running low (a tragedy at any wedding, I'm sure!) and Mary told Christ, who seemed to give her the brush off saying it wasn't His time, but then she turned around and told the servants to do whatever Christ asked of them. She KNEW, even though His words to her indicated otherwise, that He would take care of the people because she asked it of Him.

- *Mandi*

Reflection: Is there something in your life you need help handling? Stress from work or school or family trouble? Turn to Mama Mary!

Reflection: What is your relationship with our Queen Mary like? What can you do to get closer to our Mother?

Act: Make time to turn to Mary with one even tiny request. She loves helping us and coming to the aid of her children.

Link: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/MARYINSC.htm>



Scripture: Lk 1:38, 42

There are many reasons to pray the rosary. It is cathartic, it's simple to keep track of, and best of all, Mary offers fifteen promises to those who pray the rosary. Here are the promises, as she told them to St. Dominic.

1. To all those who shall pray my Rosary devoutly, I promise my special protection and great graces.—Holy moly! Starting off strong right off the bat, huh? Special protection and great graces! Sign me up!
2. Those who shall persevere in the recitation of my Rosary will receive some special grace.—This is Mary telling us we need to make it a daily commitment.
3. The Rosary will be a very powerful armor against hell; it will destroy vice, deliver from sin and dispel heresy.—Imagine how peaceful and calming it is to know that when you're praying the Rosary, you have one extra special piece of armor against Sin and Hell!
4. The Rosary will make virtue and good works flourish, and will obtain for souls the most abundant divine mercies. It will draw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.—We get an abundance of divine mercies and again, Mary urges us to do this regularly!
5. Those who trust themselves to me through the Rosary will not perish.—Mary is promising the safety of our souls if we trust in the Rosary.
6. Whoever recites my Rosary devoutly reflecting on the mysteries shall never be overwhelmed by misfortune. He will not experience the anger of God nor will he perish by an unprovided death. The sinner will be converted; the just will persevere in grace and merit eternal life.—As overwhelming as life gets, those who pray the Rosary daily won't be inundated by stress and misfortune. She'll be the life raft for us. By "unprovided death," the promise means that your soul will be prepared for the final judgement before you die.

7. Those truly devoted to my Rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.—What a wonderful gift and promise! We’ll be able to receive last rites, and be anointed before our death. The most important benefit of receiving this sacrament is that it prepares you to enter into heaven by forgiving your sins and cleaning your soul which has been stained due to the effects of sin.

8. Those who are faithful to recite my Rosary shall have, during their life and at their death, the light of God and the plenitude of His graces, and will share in the merits of the blessed.—I can’t think of anything more reassuring and rewarding than being showered with God’s grace and receiving the prayers of the saints already in heaven.

9. I will deliver promptly from purgatory souls devoted to my Rosary.—Purgatory is where we go to cleanse our souls before we get to the gates of Heaven. Mary’s basically giving us a get out of jail free card. Don’t pay \$200, go ahead and pass Go, and get on up to Heaven!

10. True children of my Rosary will enjoy great glory in heaven.—This one seems pretty self-explanatory! Great Glory in Heaven? Sign me up, please!

11. What you shall ask through my Rosary you shall obtain.—Ask and we shall receive! Whatever we ask for help with, Mary is here to help us!

12. To those who propagate my Rosary, I promise aid in all their necessities.—Everything we need, even if we forget to ask for it, Mary is going to help us! Thanks, Mom!

13. I have obtained from my Son that all the members of the Rosary Confraternity shall have as their intercessors, in life and in death, the entire celestial court.—As our mediator, Mary is telling us she’ll be the go-between for all of us and her Son, as well as the saints already in Heaven!

14. Those who recite my Rosary faithfully are my beloved children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.—This isn’t to say that those who don’t pray the Rosary faithfully aren’t Mary’s spiritual children, just that those who do receive a special place in her heart.

15. Devotion to my Rosary is a special sign of predestination.—Praying the rosary faithfully keeps one in such a peaceful state of grace, it’s a sign of where they’re headed.

With all of these promises and wonderful gifts from Mary to those who pray it faithfully and daily, why WOULDN’T we try to pray the rosary? Our Mother Mary wants us to be close to her, and a daily rosary is the surest way to achieve this closeness.

- *Mandi*

Reflection: Which of these promises is most appealing to you?

Reflection: How often do you currently pray the rosary?

Act: Make some time to incorporate the rosary into your day. In the morning, on a lunch break, or even just before you fall asleep. Starting out simply would seem less daunting. Try a decade a day for a few days, then build up from there.



Scripture: Lk 1:28, 39-45, Lk 2:6-7, 22-24, 44-52

Often, when I'm saying my prayers or praying a decade of the rosary before bed (those nights you just can't get to sleep? Try a decade of the rosary; it's so peaceful and calming, it helps me almost right away!) I usually count on my fingers (I'm scared I'll fall asleep on it and break my rosary!) and don't worry about remembering what mystery I'm on. It's a pretty informal way to pray the Rosary, but it's calming and a peaceful and prayerful way to end my day. On the other hand, when I have time before Mass or am making time to stop by Adoration, my favorite set of mysteries to pray is the Joyful Mysteries. There is such a beautiful peace about them, they're downright JOYFUL: full of the happiest moments of Christ's and Mary's lives.

The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

"And when the Angel had come to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you," (Luke 1:28). The first Joyful Mystery signals that it's time for the Lord to arrive. The moment that the Lord's people had been waiting CENTURIES for had finally arrived! The incarnation of our Lord still depended upon Mary using her free will to choose to be the Mother of our Savior. She did, obviously, and we are all a better humankind for it! Mary was a humble, happy servant of the Lord, and we learn from her the virtue of humility in this instance.

The Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation

"...Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, 'Most Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Luke 1:42-43) Mary's cousin Elizabeth was already pregnant with her own miracle gift from the Lord. The Holy Spirit guided her words when Mary, pregnant with our Lord, came to visit her. Mary then stays with her cousin, and serves her and helps her until the birth of her son, John the Baptist. From Mary in this mystery we learn to love others and sacrifice self.

The Third Joyful Mystery: The Birth of Jesus

“She gave birth to her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes,” (Luke 2:7). Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to comply with the decree that all the families be counted. Christ entered the world with very little, and shows us that earthly things aren’t what is important. The shepherds and Magi come to do homage and pay respect to our Lord. Mary shows us humility, again, by having her Son in a manger and wrapping him in humble swaddling clothes.

The Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Presentation in the Temple

“...They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the Law of the Lord,” (Luke 2:22-23). Mary and Joseph took their Son to be baptized in Jerusalem, following the customs and traditions from centuries. After they fulfill the requirements of consecrating him, they return home. Their obedience in following the customs and commands of the Lord, even for their Son who IS the Lord, gives us a spectacular example of parenthood

The Fifth Joyful Mystery: Finding Jesus in The Temple

“After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions...” (Luke 2:46). When Joseph and Mary had lost track of Jesus, they searched for three days and finally find him studying with the teachers and likely giving them a run for their money. Joseph and Mary were filled with anxiety and worry, but when they finally found Jesus, He told them, “Why wouldn’t I be doing my Father’s work?” and this was the start of Christ’s ministry. They were so joyful at finding their Son safe and sound. Jesus then goes back home to Nazareth with them, an excellent example of obedience.

Next time you’re making time to pray a rosary, consider praying the Joyful mysteries and reliving the happiest, most wonderful moments of our Mother’s life.

- *Mandi*

Reflection: Which of the Joyful Mysteries speaks to you the most?

Reflection: Would you have had the courage to respond with the same love as our dear Mother during these joyful times?

Act: Pray for courage and obedience, and to be as graceful as our dear mother!



Scripture: Rev 12:1, Jn 19:26-27

I have always been very fascinated by the Marian apparitions. It's just so overwhelmingly awesome to think that there are so many people with the wonderful faith and fortune to have witnessed our dear Mother appear in person. In some cases, as in the one we'll learn about today, other saints also appeared! Mary was given to us by Christ on the cross, and she and the saints haven't abandoned us!

One of the lesser-known Marian apparitions, not yet fully verified by the Vatican but approved by their local bishop, is Our Lady of Knock, which took place in Knock, Ireland. There were fifteen individual witnesses to this miraculous event, and even after inquiry and investigation the apparition has been approved as a legitimate Apparition. One of the personal accounts given of that day by Mary Byrne at the first commission of inquiry is below:

'I beheld, all at once, standing out from the gable, and rather to the west of it, three figures which, on more attentive inspection, appeared to be that of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. John. That of the Blessed Virgin was life-size, the others apparently either not so big or not so high as her figure. They stood a little distance out from the gable wall and, as well as I could judge, a foot and a half or two feet from the ground. The Virgin stood erect, with eyes raised to heaven, her hands elevated to the shoulders or a little higher, the palms inclined slightly towards the shoulders or bosom. She wore a large cloak of a white color, hanging in full folds and somewhat loosely around her shoulders, and fastened to the neck. She wore a crown on the head, rather a large crown, and it appeared to me somewhat yellower than the dress or robes worn by Our Blessed Lady.

In the figure of St. Joseph the head was slightly bent, and inclined towards the Blessed Virgin, as if paying her respect. It represented the saint as somewhat aged, with grey whiskers and greyish hair. The third figure appeared to be that of St. John the Evangelist.....Above the altar and resting on it was a lamb and

