

## ***THE ROSARY AND LENT***

**Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed... He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He shall be lead as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth. Isaiah 53**

Lent is the season of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. While they do not replace the Joyful Mysteries, customary for Mondays and Thursdays, nor the Glorious Mysteries on Wednesdays and Saturdays, they are the proper Mysteries for the Sundays of Septuagesima and Lent. It is also fitting during this penitential season, when Holy Mother Church recounts the Passion and Death of Christ and by our Lenten penances would have us share more abundantly in His merits, that any extra Rosaries we say on a given day be devoted to the Sorrowful Mysteries. Nothing can better dispose us to having the mind of the Church as she compassionates in her liturgy the Man of Sorrows and the Victim for our sins. "I looked for one who would grieve together with me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort me, and I found none" (Ps. 68:21). Indeed, in the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary we offer the suffering Savior the compassion of His own Mother, the Mother of Sorrows. **What greater can be given Him?** (Most Rev. R. McKenna, O.P.)

In our attempt to understand the Sorrowful Mysteries it should be of profit to consider sorrow and suffering in its relation to life in general and specifically in relation to the Mysteries of the Rosary. In our struggle with suffering the first question we always ask is: Why did it come to me instead of someone else? What does it all mean? In order to master sorrow, men may wrongfully adopt the assumption that sorrow and suffering do not belong to our existence at all, that they are a weakness which must be eradicated.

If we collect all the passages in the Gospels in which Jesus directly or indirectly speaks of suffering, we will not be able to discover a single one which treats suffering as a "problem." Jesus permits the fact of suffering to stand as a mystery and, with a world filled with suffering, says, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matt 16:24)

**The Holy Man Job** - A name that has become a synonym not only for human suffering in its worst form, but also for perfect patience and resignation to the adorable will of God amid the greatest afflictions, is that of the holy man Job. Sacred Scripture describes this great servant of God as a man who "was simple and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil." He had seven sons and three daughters, and was blessed with abundance of riches. But in the very midst of his prosperity it pleased God to put his virtue to a severe test admirably. Not a word of complaint or of murmuring against Divine Providence escaped his lips. His only comment was: "Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord." And the sacred writer adds: "In all these things Job sinned not with his lips, nor spoke he anything foolish against God."

But these afflictions, great as they were, were by no means the full measure of his sufferings. God allowed Satan to "strike him with a very grievous ulcer from the sole of the foot to the top of the head; and he took a potsherd and scraped the corrupt matter, sitting on a dunghill." But even so great a misery as this could not provoke him to murmur against God. On the contrary, when his wife, less virtuous than he, ridiculed him for his immovable trust in God, he reproved her with these words: "Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women. If we have received good things at the hands of God, why should we not receive evil?" In all these things Job sinned not with his lips.

In this did holy Job become a model of unfaltering trust in God and of perfect patience and resignation to the decrees of Divine Providence for all future generations. What is still more remarkable about him is that he practiced this wonderful resignation though he had not before him, as we have, the example of Jesus Christ, the model Sufferer, and that he bore his afflictions in so heroic a manner though he had not at his disposal the special graces that we have in the Church, especially through the sacraments.

# *The Sorrowful Mysteries*

taken from *The Rosary, The Crown of Mary* by a Dominican Father, 1947

## *The First Sorrowful Mystery - The Agony in the Garden*

**Contemplate:** how Jesus was so afflicted in Gethsemane that His body was bathed in a bloody sweat

**Let Us Pray:**

O most Holy Virgin, more than martyr ! By that ardent prayer which our beloved Saviour poured forth to His Heavenly Father, in the garden, vouchsafe to intercede for us, that, our passions being reduced to the obedience of reason, we may always, and in all things, conform and subject ourselves to the holy will of God. Amen.

**Points of Meditation** - the prayer and bloody sweat of Our Blessed Saviour in the garden

1. Jesus goes in to the Garden of Olives.
2. Jesus prays, lying prostrate on the ground.
3. Jesus perseveres in His prayer.
4. Jesus is sorrowful, even unto death.
5. Jesus is bathed in a sweat of blood.
6. Jesus submits His will to His Heavenly Father.
7. Jesus warns His disciples to watch and pray.
8. Jesus is betrayed by Judas.
9. Jesus is seized by His own creatures.
10. Jesus is cruelly bound, and dragged from one judge to another.

**Virtue or Practice:** Resignation to the will of God

Receive every annoyance and affliction as coming from the hand of God.  
Keep yourself resigned to His good pleasure in all things.

**Aspiration:** "Lord, not my will but Thine be done!"

## *The Second Sorrowful Mystery - The Scourging*

**Contemplate:** how Our Lord Jesus Christ was cruelly scourged in Pilate's house

**Let Us Pray:**

O Mother of God, overflowing fountain of patience! Through those stripes which thy only and much-beloved Son vouchsafed to suffer for us, obtain of Him for us grace to mortify our rebellious senses, to avoid the occasion of sin, and to be ready to suffer everything rather than offend God. Amen.

**Points of Meditation** - the scourging of Jesus Christ

1. Jesus is delivered to be scourged.
2. Jesus is falsely accused.
3. Jesus is stripped of His clothes.
4. Jesus is naked in the hands of His executioners.
5. Jesus is fastened to a pillar.
6. Jesus is lashed with scourges.
7. Jesus is bruised with clubs.
8. The flesh of Jesus is torn with points of lead.
9. The blood of Jesus flows down to the ground.
10. They unfasten Jesus; He clothes Himself again.

**Virtue or Practice: Spirit of Penance**

Mortify your curiosity and contradict your own will daily.  
Deny yourself occasionally something at meals.

**Aspiration:** "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, make me truly mortified."

***The Third Sorrowful Mystery - The Crowning with Thorns***

**Contemplate:** how His enemies plaited a crown of sharp thorns, and cruelly pressed it on Jesus' head

**Let Us Pray:**

O Mother of our Eternal Prince, the King of Glory, by those sharp thorns wherewith His sacred head was pierced, we beseech thee, obtain, through thy intercession, that we may be delivered from all notions of pride, and escape that shame which our sins deserve at the day of judgement. Amen.

**Points of Meditation - the crowning with thorns**

1. Jesus brought forth is ridiculed and buffeted by the soldiers.
2. They prepare a crown of thorns for Him.
3. They force the crown upon His sacred head.
4. The head of Jesus is pierced on every side.
5. His most precious blood flows from the head of Jesus.
6. The forehead of Jesus is covered with His precious blood.
7. Jesus' eyes are bathed in blood and tears.
8. The lips of Jesus are pale as death.
9. Jesus is mockingly clothed in a purple garment.
10. Jesus is cruelly mocked and derided: "Behold the Man!"

**Virtue or Practice: Patience**

If assailed by impatience, restrain it instantly. Daily perform three acts of mildness and patience.

**Aspiration:** "Lord, Your thorns are my roses, and Your sufferings my paradise."

***The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery - The Carrying of the Cross***

**Contemplate:** how Our Lord bore with amazing patience the Cross which was laid upon Him

**Let Us Pray:**

O Holy Virgin, example of patience! By the most painful carrying of the Cross, in which thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, bore the heavy weight of our sins, obtain for us from Him, through thine intercession, courage and strength to follow His steps and bear our cross after Him to the end of our lives. Amen.

**Points of Meditation - the carrying of the cross**

1. Jesus is condemned to be crucified.
2. Jesus lovingly embraces His Cross.
3. Jesus carries His Cross on His torn and wounded shoulders.
4. Jesus falls under the weight of His Cross.
5. Jesus, again loaded with His Cross, meets His sorrowful Mother.
6. Jesus leaves the impression of His Holy Face on the veil of St. Veronica.
7. Weak and weary, Jesus falls to the ground, under the weight of His heavy Cross.
8. None can be found willing to carry the Cross for Jesus.
9. Jesus, loaded with Cross, falls at the foot of Calvary.
10. Jesus, again loaded with His Cross, ascends the hill of Calvary.

**Virtue or Practice: Holy Purity**

Fly all occasions dangerous to holy purity. Guard your senses carefully.

**Aspiration: "Jesus, lover of chastity, have mercy of us!"**

***The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery - The Crucifixion***

**Contemplate:** how Our Lord, coming to Mt. Calvary, was stripped of His garments and nailed to the Cross

**Let Us Pray:**

O Holy Mary, Mother of God! As the body of thy beloved Son was for us stretched upon the Cross, so may we offer up our souls and bodies to be crucified with Him, and our hearts to be pierced with grief at His most bitter Passion; and thou, O most sorrowful Mother, graciously vouchsafe to help us, by thy all-powerful intercession, to accomplish the work of our salvation. Amen.

**Points of Meditation** - the crucifixion of Christ on the Cross for our sins

1. Jesus is cruelly stretched upon the Cross.
2. His sacred hands and feet are pierced with nails.
3. Jesus is raised upon the Cross, and His blood flows in streams from all His wounds.
4. Jesus prays for His enemies.
5. Jesus promises paradise to the penitent thief.
6. Jesus recommends St. John to His Mother.
7. Jesus, in His thirst, is offered vinegar and gall.
8. Jesus cries out, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
9. Jesus says, "It is finished!"
10. Jesus gives up His Spirit into the hands of God, His Father.

**Virtue or Practice: Contrition**

Every day at noon recall to your mind Our Lord crucified, and reflecting that your sins are the cause of His suffering, declare your sorrow, and promise never to offend Him again.

**Aspiration: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"**



***Oh Most Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
Mother of Jesus, Our Lady of Fatima,***

inspire me to grieve sincerely for the sins that weigh heavily upon the souls of men.  
Sorrowfully I recall the bitter and harsh punishments heaped upon Thy Divine Son,  
when He was cruelly scourged at the pillar, unmercifully crowned with thorns.  
I recall His sad journey to Calvary, His Crucifixion, and ignominious death on the Cross.  
Yet, they were but the instruments of pain.  
It was my sins that really caused His Precious Blood to be shed.  
His excessive love willed that He should suffer for my salvation.  
Thus, I will give my little love to make amends  
and atone for a thoughtless and unappreciative world.  
Oh Most Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, you who suffered,  
and shared with Him each pain caused and inflicted by our sins,  
intercede for us that we may be privileged to unite our hearts with yours  
in an effort to make reparation for our sins, and the sins of an ungrateful world. Amen.