



15. September 2022

Memory of Our Lady of Sorrows The Sorrowful Mother

Jn 19:25-27

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

On Calvary in Jerusalem, next to the very place where Our Lord died for us on the Cross, there is a moving image of the Sorrowful Mother. A sword pierces her heart and her eyes have an expression of deep suffering. Very early in the morning, the faithful pilgrims who come to pray often come to her as well, to ask for her help and comfort, or to thank her because she knew how to remain close to her Son even as he hung on the Cross. It is difficult to even imagine the immensity of her suffering. That is why, at Holy Mass this day, these words resound before the Gospel:

*"Is there one who would not weep
Whelmed in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother's pain untold.
Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold?"*

Adherence to the suffering of Christ and his Mother makes us better understand what it means that the Redeemer has walked the way of the Cross for us and that his Mother has remained faithfully at his side. In this way, our hearts are enlarged in gratitude and become capable of more deeply understanding the love of God.

Even on the natural level, a mother's capacity for suffering often exceeds our capacity. In the case of the Mother of Jesus, this suffering goes even further. As though the immense pain of seeing her Son suffer in this way were not enough, there is the added

the profound suffering - perhaps even greater - of all the people who pass by, ignoring his sacrifice and his free gift of redemption.

This sacrifice of love to which she gave her consent, as the Church teaches us, was the one that brought us salvation. For us, who received her as our Mother at the foot of the Cross by the words of Jesus, there is nothing more important than to welcome this salvation. Then, for her, being the Mother of the Mystical Body of the Lord, could there be anything more painful than to see her children in danger of being lost forever?

If Our Lady, being the Mother of mankind, suffers "in her own flesh" every physical and spiritual suffering of her children, becoming thereby a refuge and consolation for many, how much more constant and profound will her concern be in the face of the danger of their being lost forever! Not least this concern manifests itself when she appears again and again throughout history, calling humankind to conversion and - as was the case at Fatima - giving them instructions which observances would save us from impending misfortune.

Just as the Son of God willingly gave himself as a sacrifice on the Cross, out of love for the Father and for mankind (cf. Jn 10:18), so too the Virgin Mary gave her voluntary consent to God's saving plan when the Angel brought her the message in Nazareth (Lk 1:26-38). In every situation as mother and disciple of her divine Son, she actualized this significant "yes", pronounced out of love for God. Thus, being filled with God's grace and love for him, she was able to share in the suffering of her Son.

Therefore, we bow deeply before the love of God, who was able to fully inundate the Virgin Mary, and we call her blessed together with all generations, because the Mighty One has done great works for her (Lk 1:48-49), who is the Mother of us all.