



31. March 2023

LENTEN ITINERARY

Day 38: "The seven sorrows of Mary"

As we come to the end of our Lenten itinerary, we do not want to miss a glance at the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. What creature could better understand the suffering of her Son than the one who received the unspeakable grace of being His Mother and disciple? The traditional calendar dedicates the Friday before Holy Week to contemplating Mary's sorrows.

In that sense, we will listen to a meditation again today from P. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalene on this theme.

"O Mary, holy Mother of the crucified Lord, tell me something about His suffering, for among so many who were present, you felt and saw more than all. You looked upon him with the eyes of the body as well as with the eyes of the heart; with all your attention you contemplated him, for you loved him unspeakably" (St. Angela of Foligno).

The first explicit sign that Mary would have a part in the Passion of Jesus is found in the prophecy of the Elder Simeon: "*A sword will pierce your soul*" (Lk 2:35). On Calvary, this prophecy was fulfilled to the full. St. Bernard exclaims: "Yes, blessed Mother, truly a sword has pierced your soul. Indeed, only through it could the body of your Son be wounded. After your Jesus had expired, the cruel lance that had pierced His side could no longer wound His soul, but it pierced yours. For the soul of Jesus was no longer there, but yours could not be torn from that place". This beautiful interpretation allows us to understand how Mary, being the Mother, was intimately united to the suffering of her Son.

Today's liturgy puts on the lips of the Sorrowful Mother these moving words: "*All you who pass this way, look and see: is any sorrow like the sorrow inflicted on me*" (Lam 1:12). Yes, her pain is immeasurable; but her love is even more immeasurable: as great as an ocean in which everything fits. Of no other creature besides Mary can it be said that

his or her love is stronger than death. In fact, her love made her capable of enduring the bitter death of Jesus.

*"Is there one who would not weep
whelmed in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother to behold?
Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain
in that Mother's pain untold?"*

Thus sings the author of the "Stabat Mater", and immediately adds:

*"O, thou Mother, fount of love
touch my spirit from above
make my heart with thine accord".*

Today we follow the Church's invitation, contemplating Mary's sorrows, suffering with her and asking for the great grace of being able to participate with her in the Passion of her Jesus. Let us remember that this participation cannot remain in the realm of sentiments, however good and holy they may be; we must reach the level of com-*passion*, that is, to suffer together with Jesus and Mary. The sufferings that befall us in our lives are given to us precisely for this purpose.

When we look at the Mother at the foot of the cross, the school of the cross becomes less hard and less bitter. Her motherly example encourages us to suffer and eases our journey to Calvary. So let us follow Jesus together with Mary; let us go with her to the cross that He carries; let us willingly embrace our own, so that we can offer it together with that of her Son.

Tomorrow we will close our Lenten journey by reviewing the various stages of this journey. It has been a long journey, which will soon lead to Holy Week. How comforting it is to know that suffering and death do not have the last word, but that Christ's Resurrection will triumph over all! This is our firm hope, and so the joy of Easter will also resound in our hearts. Soon the time will come! There is little time left! Let us continue to walk day by day. The Lord awaits us in time and in eternity, and will watch over us so that none of us will be lost (cf. Jn 17:12).

Meditation on the reading of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2019/04/12/>