

The Seven Sorrows of Mary

Devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows has been a part of Catholic life since the Middle Ages. In this devotion, Catholics reflect on seven sorrowful events in the life of Mary. These events are either recorded in the Gospels or known through oral tradition.

The First Sorrow of Mary: The Prophecy of Simeon

When Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus to the Temple, according to Jewish custom, they met a holy man named Simeon. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. As soon as Simeon saw Jesus, he knew that God's promise to him had come true. Simeon told Mary that she would experience much sadness because of the mission Jesus had been given.

Based on Luke 2:22-35

The Second Sorrow of Mary: The Flight into Egypt

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary and Jesus and go quickly into Egypt. Herod was looking for their child and would do great harm to Jesus if he found him. In the night, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fled into Egypt. They stayed there until it was safe to return to their own country.

Based on Matthew 2:13-15

The Fifth Sorrow of Mary: The Crucifixion

Standing by the cross of Jesus while he died were his mother and his mother's sister. Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary of Magdala were also among the women gathered there.

Based on John 19:25

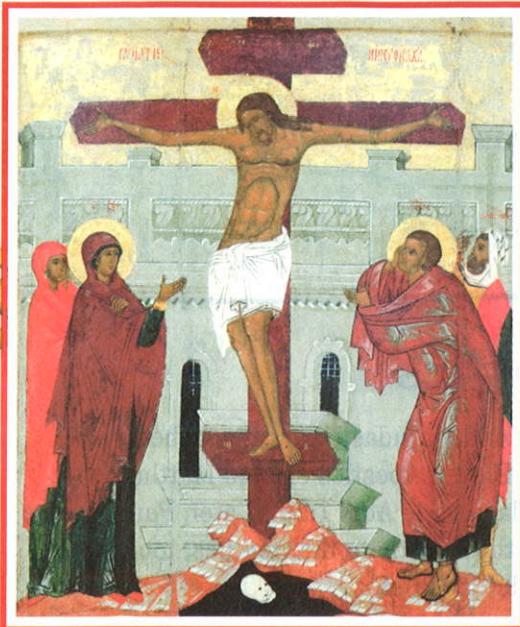
The Fourth Sorrow of Mary: Mary Meets Jesus on the Way to Calvary

There is no record in Scripture of a meeting between Mary and Jesus on the way to Calvary. However, this meeting has been part of the tradition of the Church since the fourteenth century. This tradition commemorates Mary's compassion for her suffering Son and her suffering at her inability to help Jesus in his time of need.

The Third Sorrow of Mary: The Loss of Jesus in Jerusalem

After three days of looking for the boy Jesus, Mary and Joseph found him in the Temple in Jerusalem. When they asked Jesus why he had not stayed with them, Jesus told them that he had to be in his Father's house. Jesus left the Temple with Mary and Joseph and went back home to Nazareth.

Based on Luke 2:46-51



Louvre, Paris, France/Giraudon/Bridgeman Art Library

Crucifixion, Novgor School

**The Sixth Sorrow of Mary:
Mary Receives the Body of Jesus**

Scripture does not record Mary's receiving Jesus' body after it was taken from the cross. This sorrow comes to us from the Tradition of the Church and is often represented in art. Perhaps the most famous example of art that commemorates this sorrow is Michelangelo's *Pietà*. This statue is displayed at the Vatican.

Devotion to Mary's Seven Sorrows

Saint Bridget of Sweden passed on a devotion to Mary Our Lady of Sorrows. The devotion is the praying of seven Hail Marys while meditating on Mary's Seven Sorrows. Mary promises seven graces to those who honor her with this prayerful devotion.

The Seven Sorrows of Mary describe Mary's obedience to God's will. Mary's trust in God's plan of Salvation allowed her to become the Mother of Jesus. Even though this great honor later became a source of great sorrow, Mary placed her complete trust in God's plan and remained faithful to Jesus throughout her life.

Through Mary's sorrows and great faith, we learn to trust God with our lives. Even in our darkest moments, we continue to trust that God is present to us. The feast of Our Lady of Sorrows is celebrated on September 15.

**The Seventh Sorrow of Mary:
The Burial of Jesus**

Mary and Jesus' friends took the body of Jesus, anointed it with spices, and bound it in burial cloths, according to the Jewish burial custom. In the place where Jesus had been crucified there was a garden, and the garden had a new tomb. So they laid Jesus there.

Based on Matthew 27:59-61

Activity

Draw an image that symbolizes Mary's sorrows.

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that your faithful, who rejoice under the patronage of the most holy Virgin Mary, may be freed by her motherly intercession from all evils on earth and merit the attainment of eternal joys in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Collect, Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1 8, Roman Missal