

Dear fellow sons and daughters of Our Lady of Sorrows, today is our parish feast. Happy feast to you all! **I would like to reflect briefly on the history and significance of this feast, and then, secondly, update you on our parish ministries and life.** The Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows was introduced by the Servites in the 12th century, and is celebrated on the 15th of September, but given that it is our patron feast, we honor her this Sunday. Mary's suffering alongside her son reminds us all to be sorrowful for our sins, and to seek true repentance and reconciliation.

In the opening prayer for today, we prayed: "O God, who willed that, when your Son was lifted high on the cross, his Mother should stand close by and share his suffering, grant that your Church, participating with the Virgin Mary in the passion of Christ, may merit a share in his Resurrection."

This feast is rooted in Scripture, as are all the Marian devotions. Jesus wanted us to honor his (our) Mother. We have heard from the Gospel of John (19:25-27) that Mary stood at the foot of the Cross. As a mother, she witnessed the Passion of her own Son. Her Son's Passion was for our own redemption, and, as such, Mary has been called co-redemptrix (co-redeemer). Just as the redeemer suffered, the co-redeemer also suffered as she was compassionate with the suffering of the Son of God for the salvation of the world. She remained obedient to God's plan from Incarnation till death.

Earlier when Mary presented the baby Jesus in the temple, Simeon had foretold that a sword shall pierce her soul, most probably referring to her spiritual martyrdom, suffering with her Son. She wept in pain as her Son was made to suffer for us. At the

foot of the Cross, Jesus told her, “behold your son,” referring not just to the beloved disciple, but to all of us in the Church. Jesus entrusted Mary to us as our Mother to journey with us and to lead us to heaven. That’s why we Catholics will never stop honoring our beloved Mother Mary; she stood by her Son’s side, and her Son asked her to stand by our side. She will never abandon her children; she is always our Mother.

Mary’s title as Our Lady of Sorrows focuses mainly on her intense suffering during the Passion and Death of Christ. Even as we hope for the resurrection and eternal happiness, we still face the mystery of suffering and evil today. Throughout the ages, the disciples of Christ have faced various catastrophes and crosses in their lives. In this year of 2020, we have witnessed the ravaging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now wildfires and air polluted by smoke, among other things. People have lost jobs and property and are struggling. Even parishes are struggling as regular parish life has been affected. These are but a few things that cause us pain. We therefore look to our Lord on the Cross for hope, and we turn to Our Lady of Sorrows, *Maria Santissima Addolorata*, to intercede for us that we as a Church may merit the joy of the Resurrection. With Mary, we stand at the foot of the cross with hopeful joy. *Now here are the Seven Sorrows reported in Scripture as having pierced the heart of our Mother Mary: the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:25-35), the fleeing to Egypt with the son (Mathew 2:13-15), the loss of the child Jesus (Luke 2:41-50), Mary meeting with Jesus on his way to Calvary (John 19:17), the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (John 19:25-30), The body of*

Jesus lowered from the cross (John 19:31-37) and the burial of Jesus (Mark 15:40-47).

I now will talk about our parish. Our parish was founded in 1917 by Monsignor Charles Smith, and the church was dedicated as Our Lady of Sorrows on February 10, 1918. In 1928, Our Lady of Sorrows School was opened, and it was sadly closed in 2007 due to financial difficulties. In all these years, this parish has been a home to many parishioners - very many baptisms and very many alumni. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who came before us and for all they did to support the ministry of Jesus Christ in this parish. *(Please read more on the history of our parish from our website).*

As the current members of this parish, we need to look to the past with gratitude, and to the future with hope. As we heard in our First Reading (1Cor 12:12-14), we are one body, and we are called to share our gifts and talents to edify this Body of Christ. Each and every one of us has a part to play, whether as a money counter, catechist, musician, usher, lector, ministry leader, or deacon. All of us, lay and clergy, are here to further the kingdom of God, to preach the love of God to our community, to draw people to Christ, and to lead them ultimately to heaven. Whatever we do, whether by donating our time, treasure, or talents, we are furthering the mission of Jesus Christ.

Today I want to thank you for your love and commitment to the mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. I have been here for just over a year and I have noticed it. Even now with the COVID-19 pandemic, you continue to sacrifice to support the ministries of this parish. Your support enables us to support the education of

our children in Catholic schools, teach them the faith, provide for the poor in our community, and support our people in their spiritual needs. Without your support, these ministries would not be possible. In this last year, we achieved our Archbishop's Catholic Appeal goal, and ended the fiscal year not in deficit. We also managed to install air conditioning in our Church, new LED lights in our gym and parking lot, and security cameras around our campus. In addition, we updated our alarm systems, and more. All this was made possible because of your generosity and sacrifices. This year we are planning on replacing the boiler in the Parish Office because it has begun to fail, and the cost of replacing it is about \$ 40,000. We also have to plan on replacing the roof of our church in less than two years. In these coming months, we will be inviting you to enroll in our new parish data system called Realm, so that we may engage closely as members of the parish. I also encourage you to consider enrolling in online giving, as this has proved to be very helpful during these times.

Our long-time tenants, Yu Miao School, had to pull out because of financial difficulties, but they hope to sign a new lease next year. St. Martino group that rents classrooms four to seven in our school building have also been struggling financially. Therefore, we are receiving very reduced income from these our rentals. The good news is that our two houses across the street are still rented out. On Faith Formation, we are planning to resume our classes next week. Parents who are unable to bring their children for in-person classes can make arrangements with us so that we may do all that we can to safely form our children in the faith. We are going to hold our annual Fall Bazaar. In some ways, we have to resume our

parish life slowly but safely. In conclusion, on this our feast day, let us celebrate our parish, let us be proud of our parish family and find ways to participate actively in one of the ministries. May our Mother Mary bless this our parish and pray for us to her Son for “we are his people, the sheep of his flock (Psalm 100).” Amen.