

We celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows. Traditionally there are Seven Sorrows for Mary that we learn of from scripture.

- The First Sorrow is the Prophecy of Simeon. At what is meant to be a joyous occasion, the presentation of Jesus in the temple, Simeon foretells the future and announces to Mary, “And you yourself a sword will pierce” (Lk 2:35).
- In the Second Sorrow: “The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him’” (Mt 2:13).
- In the Third Sorrow: Mary and Joseph have lost their twelve-year old son, and only discover him by returning to Jerusalem. “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety’” (Lk 2:46, 48).
- In the Fourth Sorrow: Mary Meets Jesus on His Way to the Cross. “And carrying the cross himself . . .” (Jn 19:17). “A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him” (Lk 23:27).
- Mary is Standing at the Foot of the Cross for the Fifth Sorrow. “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (Jn 19:25–27).
- In the Sixth Sorrow: Jesus’ dead body is taken down from the cross. After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So, he came and took his body” (Jn 19:38).
- In the Seventh Sorrow, Jesus is buried in the tomb. “The women who had come from Galilee with him followed behind, and when they had seen the tomb and the way in which his body was laid in it, they returned and prepared spices and perfumed oils” (Lk 23:55–56).

My grandmother used to say, he who laughs ... cries. Sometimes it was meant to warn a child not to misbehave. At other times, it speaks of joy that cannot be contained by laughter and spills over into tears. Hidden within these sorrowful mysteries, we also find the seeds of joy.

- The Presentation in the Temple is the 4<sup>th</sup> Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. Simeon is filled with joy and says, “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Luke 2:25-32). Simeon has waited a lifetime for the fulfillment of the messianic promises. He can die at peace knowing that God’s long-awaited promises are being fulfilled. Mary and Joseph can also rejoice in their roll of helping to fulfill God’s plans.
- In the 5<sup>th</sup> Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, Jesus is found in the temple. The worry of losing their son is overcome by the joy of finding him after three days. This incident when Jesus is only twelve, foreshadows the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, especially when after three days, Jesus rises from the dead.
- Standing at the foot of the cross was painful for Mary. But her Son gives her a new role as Mother of the Church. The pains of childbirth that she was spared when he entered the world are quite different than the labor pains she experiences at his death. The full joy

comes with the birth of the Church at Pentecost as the Apostles come out of their mourning and begin to boldly proclaim the good news.

As we ponder the Seven Sorrows of Mary and the Mysteries of Joy and Glory, there is a simple lesson for us. Each life experiences suffering and sorrow. Like Mary, we have painful moments of our life that often brings us to tears. But the experience of walking with Christ and others in suffering can also be a source of joy for us. We experience life more deeply. We appreciate that which we do have, and we can savor the glory of God walking with us when we feel the weight of the world on our shoulders.

We are his people: the sheep of his flock.

For he is good, the LORD,

whose kindness endures forever,

and his faithfulness, to all generations (Ps 100:3c, 5).