

Seven Sorrows of Mary in the Bible

1. What is the history of this devotion and feast day?

1. First known as Our Lady of Compassion (“to suffer with”)
2. Was placed on Friday before Good Friday
3. Grew in popularity in 12th century
4. Widespread in 14-15th centuries
5. Devotion approved by Pope Pius VII in 1815;
6. Set in the calendar Pius X fixed permanent date

2. This has been a popular devotion for a long time. When was it approved for the Church?

Pope Pius VII around 1815

3. Why Suffering?

- Hebrews 2:10 “For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.”
- Hebrews 5:8 “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”



Shouldn't Mary have been filled with *joy*? Why do we talk about *sorrows*?

- Though Immaculately Conceived, it did not prevent her from sorrows and grief — part of the fallen human condition

But even more so the sufferings for Mary....

From '*The Glories of Mary*' by Saint Alphonsus Liguori)

“In this valley of tears, every man is born to weep, and every one must suffer those afflictions that daily befall him. But how much more miserable would life be, if every one knew also the future evils which are to afflict him!

“The Lord exercises His compassion towards us, because He does not make known to us the crosses that await us; that if we are to suffer them, at least we may suffer them only once.

“But He did not exercise this compassion with Mary, who, because God wished Her to be the Queen of Sorrows, and in all things like His Son, and to see always before Her eyes, and to suffer continually all the sorrows that awaited Her; and those were the sufferings of the passion and death of Her beloved Jesus.

“For St. Simeon in the temple, after having received the Divine Child in his arms, predicted to Her that this child was to be the mark for all the opposition and persecution of men; "Set for a sign which shall be contradicted"; and that therefore the sword of sorrow should pierce Her soul: "And Thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”

“The Holy Virgin Herself said to St. Matilda, that at the announcement of St. Simeon all Her joy was changed into sorrow.”¹

What is the 1st Sorrow of Mary?

3. The Prophecy of Simeon, or the Circumcision of Christ

- This is really two sorrows combined — “Prophecy of Simon” and the “Circumcision of Christ” — a dire warning and the shedding of blood
- Luke 2:34-35: “Simeon said to Mary his mother, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel ... and a sword will pierce through your own soul also....’”
- Imagine a 15-year-old girl with her pudgy newborn hearing such dire news — what could it mean? How to process this prophecy?



4. When did she realize the full meaning of Simon’s prophecy?

- At the Cross (see picture from the top of Calvary)

¹ https://www.catholickingdom.com/Cathedral/Mary/her_sorrows/7_sorrows/sorrows_01.html
The Glories of Mary, St. Alphonsus Liguori, page 295.

5. Why was the circumcision a Joy and a Sorrow?

- First shedding of her Son's blood

What is the 2nd Sorrow of Mary?

The Flight into Egypt

- Matt 2:13–14: “An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, “Flee to Egypt, ... for Herod is searching for the child to destroy him.” And he took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt.”

6. How far was this trip and what were the grueling aspects of the trip?

- At least 250 miles — walking thru rugged territory.
- Average of 20 miles a day = 10 days minimum
- What accommodations? Walking or a donkey? Must have joined a caravan for safety and support

7. Where did a poor family acquire the funds from such a long and extended trip?

- Gifts of the Wise Men

What is the 3rd Sorrow of Mary?

The loss of the child Jesus in the Temple

- Luke 2:41–52: Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year ... When the feast ended, the boy Jesus stayed behind but his parents did not know it. ... and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him for three days.”
- Imagine losing the Son of God! Anxiety = sorrow
- Luke 2:48–50: “His mother said, “Son, why have you treated us so? Your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” And he said, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.”

What is the 4th Sorrow of Mary?

Mary meets Jesus on the way to Calvary

- Luke 23:27: “Followed him were a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.”
- Can we assume Mary was with them? She was at the foot of the cross!



What is the 5th Sorrow of Mary?

Jesus dies on the cross

- John 19:25: “Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister ...”
- Mary witnessed all the agony, abuse, insults and total nakedness of her Son on the Cross

What is the 6th Sorrow of Mary?

The piercing of the side of Jesus, and Mary's receiving the body of Jesus in her arms

- Matt 27:59–60: “Joseph of Arimathea took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud.”
- Can we doubt that Mary was still at the foot of the cross and was involved with the wrapping of his body?
- Some Shroud of Turin experts say the Shroud was so precisely and loving wrapped around the body, it could only have been done by his mother

What is the 7th Sorrow of Mary?

The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb

- Matt 27:60: Joseph of Arimathea laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.”
- We cannot assume Mary understood all the implications, but in any case, to watch you Son’s dead body sealed in a tomb would be a horrendous sorrow.

6. What will our next three shows cover?

- The following three shows will cover my own list of “The Twelve Unknown Sorrows of Mary”.