

Reflection Wednesday Week 24 Our Lady of Sorrows 2021

The devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows flourished in the Middle Ages, and the hymn *Stabat Mater* was composed for it. Although it is officially celebrated today, the day after the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, popular devotion in many parts of the Mediterranean celebrates it with processions on the Friday before Holy Week.

Jesus grew up in a family. He would have heard the story of his birth from his mother and Joseph and about who he was. After Joseph died, Jesus cared for his mother. They were very close. Jesus began his ministry with a group of friends that he gathered round him. We can only guess at the importance of Jesus seeing his mother and the other women close by as he carried his cross and hung upon it until he died. It is even more difficult to really know the suffering Mary experienced as she watched the terrible suffering forced upon her son. As we thank her son for our salvation through the cross, today we thank Mary for all that she did to help make it possible and the support she was in aiding Jesus fulfil his mission in obedience to the Father.

*The Woman raised eyes sorrowful,
bedimmed with grief and loss,
Suffering she spoke not a word
but leaned upon the cross.
In agony, her tears flowed down;
a soldier pierced His side.
Thorns crowned her baby's head,
her Life, her Joy, her Pride.
Upon this scene I entered;
espied entwined two Hearts.
Naked he came from her womb
... and naked he departs!*

Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us!

Pope Francis: Honour Our Lady and say: *"This is my Mother"*, because she is a Mother, a title she received from Jesus from the Cross (see *Jn 19:26-27*). It is as Mother we need to think of her, seek her and pray to her. She is the Mother in the Mother Church. In the maternity of Our Lady, we see the maternity of the Church who welcomes everyone, the good and the evil: everyone. Let us say to Our Lady: *"Thank You for accepting to be Mother when the Angel asked You, and thank You for accepting to be Mother when Jesus asked You."*