

Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday
April 16, 2023
Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant

“As there is no true devotion to His Sacred Humanity, which is not mindful of His Divinity, so there is no adequate love of the Son, which disjoins Him from His Mother, and lays her aside, as a mere instrument, whom God chose as He might choose an inanimate thing, without regard to its sanctity or moral fitness.”

(Rev. Frederick Faber, The Foot of the Cross, p.11)

Last week, we gathered as a church family to honor, remember and celebrate the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One Biblical figure who was both present for and shared in these events was His Mother. The Gospels do not delve much into Mary’s actions during those few days. The inspired writers were focused upon accurately retelling the saving action of her Son. Mary is mentioned as being present to witness the saving Passion of her Son. As we know from our previous studies, the church’s understanding of Mary and the honor we owe to her would naturally develop slowly in time. One of these theological statements of belief would gradually unfold and develop into our understanding of Mary’s unique participation in the Passion of Her Son. It is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Simeon foretold long ago when she and Saint Joseph presented the child Jesus in the Temple. The expression of this statement may be understood from a theological viewpoint and a prayerful devotional under the proclaimed title of Our Lady of Sorrows (Seven Sorrows or *Mater Dolorosa*).

The Seven Sorrows of Our Lady:

- (1.) The Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34-35)
- (2.) The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-21)
- (3.) The Loss of Jesus for Three Days (Luke 2:41-50)
- (4.) The Ascent to Calvary (John 19:17)
- (5.) The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (John 19:18-30)
- (6.) Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross (John 19:39-40)
- (7.) Jesus is Laid in the Tomb (John 19:40-42)

As we have reflected upon previously, Mary’s obedient “Yes” to the proclamation of the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation would directly contradict the disobedience of Eve in the Garden. It is through Eve’s fateful decision that suffering, sin and death became a part of man’s existence. It is through Mary’s faithful decision that suffering, sin and death no longer dominate man’s existence. Her interior suffering joined in union with the perfect and complete suffering of her Son, allow us a glimpse into the depth of her holiness. I use the word “glimpse” purposefully for who can, when staring out upon the Gulf of Mexico from the shores of Orange Beach, truly comprehend the fullness of life found beneath its waters. We believe Mary’s suffering, her sorrows, to be affected by both by her sanctity and her knowledge. Being the Immaculate

Conception, sin never darkened her intellect nor dulled her feelings of both love and pain. In those agonizing moments as her Son hung dying upon His Cross, Mary's whole being was joined, in total union with Jesus, as a perfect offering to God the Father for the sins against His Divine Person committed so frequently by us, His adopted children.

Before I close, I would offer one item for your continued meditation. The Church believes and teaches that through the Prophecy of Simeon God grants to Mary, His Mother, a special privilege. It is a unique privilege awarded her in equal measure to the suffering she endured during the days of her Son's life-giving Passion. Simeon says to her: "*Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.*" (Luke 2:34-35). With the words of Saint Simeon, I encourage you to develop a devotion to Our Lady under the title of Our Lady of Sorrows. As you offer your own prayers, joys and sorrows to her Son, ask her to assist you and your family, especially with those issues and/or individuals which trouble your peace the most. When we request her help, we give glory and praise to Jesus who offers His Mother to assist, love and support each of us with His dying words: "***Behold, your Mother!***" (John 19:27).