



## Introduction: A Pain That Unites Us to Heaven

In the silence of Holy Week, as the Church prepares to relive the sacred mysteries of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, there is one particularly moving day: **Friday of Sorrows**. This day, observed on the Friday before Palm Sunday, invites us to contemplate the sufferings of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, with a mother's heart, accompanied her Son on His path to Calvary.

This is not merely a day of sadness but of deep reflection on the love that binds a mother to her Son—and how that same love extends to each of us. In a world where pain often seems unbearable, the Sorrowful Virgin teaches us to suffer with hope, knowing that every hardship, when united with Christ's, holds redemptive meaning.

## Origin and History of Friday of Sorrows

### 1. Biblical Roots: The Prophecy of Simeon

The scriptural foundation of Friday of Sorrows is found in the Gospel of Luke (2:34-35), when the aged Simeon prophesies to Mary:

*“Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted—and you yourself a sword will pierce—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”*

These words foretell the Virgin's unique suffering as she would witness her Son rejected, tortured, and crucified. The “sword” that pierces her soul symbolizes her **perfect compassion**, her participation in Christ's redemptive work.

### 2. Liturgical and Devotional Development

Devotion to Mary's Sorrows dates back to the Middle Ages, when religious orders, particularly the **Servites (Servants of Mary)**, promoted meditation on the **Seven Sorrows of the Virgin**. This practice spread in the 13th century, and in 1668, the Church established the **Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows** on September 15.



However, **Friday of Sorrows**, as a preparation for Holy Week, gained special prominence in Hispanic spirituality, where it is observed with processions, penitential hymns (such as the *Stabat Mater*), and veneration of images of the Sorrowful Mother.

## The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary

Catholic tradition reflects on seven key moments in which Mary suffered profoundly out of love for her Son and for humanity:

1. **The prophecy of Simeon** (Lk 2:34-35).
2. **The flight into Egypt** (Mt 2:13-15).
3. **The loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple** (Lk 2:41-50).
4. **Mary meets Jesus on the way to Calvary** (Via Dolorosa).
5. **The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus** (Jn 19:25-30).
6. **The Descent from the Cross (Pietà)** (Mk 15:42-47).
7. **The burial of Jesus** (Jn 19:38-42).

Each of these sorrows reveals Mary as **Co-Redemptrix**, not because she replaces Christ's unique sacrifice, but because she freely cooperated in God's plan of salvation, offering her suffering alongside her Son's.

## Spiritual Meaning for Today's World

In a society that flees from suffering and seeks instant gratification, **Friday of Sorrows** teaches us three crucial lessons:

### 1. Suffering Is Not Meaningless

Mary did not fully understand the "why" behind each sorrow, but **she trusted in God**. Today, amid illness, family crises, or persecution, her example calls us to believe that pain, when united with Christ, holds eternal value.

### 2. Strength in Faith

While the disciples fled, **Mary remained at the foot of the Cross** (Jn 19:25). In a world where many abandon faith in times of trial, she shows us that true devotion is proven in adversity.



### 3. Hope in the Resurrection

Friday of Sorrows is not the end. Though shattered by grief, Mary **awaited the Resurrection**. Likewise, in our trials, we must remember that **the Cross precedes the Glory**.

## How to Observe Friday of Sorrows Today

1. **Attend Mass or pray the *Stabat Mater***: This medieval hymn meditates on Mary's sorrow.
2. **Pray the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows**: A traditional devotion reflecting on each of the Virgin's pains.
3. **Practice abstinence or fasting**: As an act of union with Christ's sacrifice.
4. **Meditate in silence**: Before an image of Our Lady of Sorrows, ask: *How do I bear my sufferings? Do I offer them to God?*

## Conclusion: Mary, Mother and Companion in Suffering

Friday of Sorrows is not just a historical remembrance but a **school of love and strength**. Mary, the strong woman of the Gospel, teaches us that suffering, when endured in faith, becomes a path to holiness.

In these uncertain times, let us turn to her, the **Sorrowful Mother**, and say, like the beloved disciple: *"Behold your mother"* (Jn 19:27). May she guide us toward the Light of Easter, showing us that after the Cross, Resurrection always comes.

**Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us!**