

Liturgical Living: Our Lady of Sorrows

In the Catholic Church, the monthly devotion for September is Our Lady of Sorrows. Devotion to the sorrows of the Virgin Mary dates from the twelfth century, when it made its appearance in monastic circles under the influence of St. Anselm and St. Bernard. It became widespread in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Interestingly, in 1482, the feast was officially placed in the Roman Missal under the title of Our Lady of Compassion, highlighting the great love our Blessed Mother displayed in suffering with her Son. The word compassion derives from the Latin roots “cum” and “patior”, which means “to suffer with”.

The title, Our Lady of Sorrows, given to our Blessed Mother focuses on her intense suffering and grief during the passion and death of Our Lord. Traditionally, this devotion highlights the seven sorrows of Mary, which were foretold by Simeon who proclaimed to Mary:

“Behold this child is set for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; And thy own soul a sword shall pierce that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.” (Luke 2: 34-35)

What are the Seven Sorrows of Mary?

1. The Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34–35)
2. The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13)
3. The Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2:43–45)
4. The Meeting of Mary and Jesus on his Way to Calvary (traditional)
5. Standing at the Foot of the Cross (John 19:25)
6. Jesus Being Taken Down from the Cross (Matthew 27:57–59)
7. The Burial of Jesus (John 19:40–42)

What are some ways to celebrate this month's devotion?

- **Read each of the sorrows** in the gospels listed above.
- **Pray the [Servite Rosary](#).** St Bridget of Sweden received visions of Our Lady who said she would bestow [seven graces](#) to those souls honoring her daily by saying seven Hail Marys while meditating on her tears and sorrows.
- **Do you know someone who is suffering?** Bring them an image of Our Lady of Sorrows, offer to take them to a doctor's appointment, or just visit and pray with them.

- **Attend Mass on September 15**, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Sorrows.
- **Make a shrine** using an image of our sorrowful mother, and adorn it with flowers and candles. Place a small box near the image and ask each member of the family to write one act of love or mercy they promise to do to console Our Sorrowful Lady this month.
- **Complete an Art History activity** for this month. Michelangelo carved a beautiful statue depicting Mary's sixth sorrow, called la Pieta. It shows Mary holding Jesus' crucified body in her lap. [This video](#) gives a brief 6-minute analysis of the sculpture.
- **Listen to Stabat Mater for Alto Solo Rv621**. It was composed by a Catholic priest, Fr. Antonio Vivaldi, and translates as "Sorrowful Mother."
- [Pray the Litany](#) of Our Lady of Sorrows.

O Mother of Sorrows, so stricken with grief, help us to bear our own suffering with courage and love so that we may relieve your Sorrowful Heart and that of Jesus. As you suffered, teach us to suffer silently and patiently. Amen.