



# The Holy See

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MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA* HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"Our Lady of Sorrows: disciple and mother"

*Friday, 3 April 2020*

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

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## Introduction

There are people who are beginning now to think about the aftermath: the aftermath of the pandemic. Of all the problems that will arise: problems of poverty, work, hunger... Let us pray for all of the people who help today, but also think of tomorrow, to help us all.

## Homily

On this Passion Friday, the Church recalls the sorrows of Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows. This veneration of the people of God has existed for centuries. Hymns have been written in honour of Our Lady of Sorrows: she was at the foot of the cross and they contemplate her there, suffering. Christian piety has collected Our Lady's sorrows and speaks of the "seven sorrows". The first, just forty days after the birth of Jesus, is Simeon's prophecy that speaks of a sword that will pierce her heart (see *Lk* 2:35). The second sorrow is the flight to Egypt to save her Son's life (see *Mt* 2:13-23). The third sorrow, those three days of anguish when the boy remained in the temple (see *Lk* 2:41-50). The fourth sorrow, when Our Lady meets Jesus on the way to Calvary (see *Jn* 19:25). The fifth sorrow of Our Lady is the death of Jesus, seeing her son there, crucified, naked, dying. The sixth sorrow, Jesus' descent from the cross, dead, when she takes Him in her arms as she held Him in her arms more than thirty years before in Bethlehem. The seventh sorrow is Jesus' burial. Thus, Christian piety follows this path of Our Lady who accompanies Jesus. It is good for me, late in the evening, when I pray the Angelus, to pray these seven sorrows as a remembrance

of the Mother of the Church, how the Mother of the Church gave birth to us all with so much pain.

Our Lady never asked anything for herself, never. Yes, for others: let us think of Cana, when she goes to speak with Jesus. Never did she say: "I am the mother, look at me: I will be the queen mother". She never said it. She never asked anything important for herself within the apostolic college. She agrees simply to be a Mother. She accompanied Jesus like a disciple, because the Gospel shows that she followed Jesus: with her friends, pious women, she followed Jesus, she listened to Jesus. One time someone recognised her: "Ah, here is the mother". "Your mother is here" (see *Mk* 3:31)... She followed Jesus. All the way to Calvary. And there, on her feet... surely, the people would have said: "But, poor woman, how she must be suffering", and the evil ones surely would have said: "But, she is guilty too, because if she had brought Him up well he would not have ended up this way". She was there, with the Son, with the Son's humiliation.

Honour Our Lady and say: "This is my Mother", because she is a Mother. And this is the title she received from Jesus, right there, at the moment of the Cross (see *Jn* 19:26-27). Your *children*, you are *Mother*. He did not make her prime minister or give her "functional" titles. Only "Mother". And then, the Acts of the Apostles show her in prayer with the apostles as Mother (see *Acts* 1:14). Our Lady did not want to take away any title from Jesus; she received the gift of being His Mother and the duty to accompany us as Mother, to be our Mother. She did not ask for herself to be a quasi-redeemer or a co-redeemer: no. There is only one Redeemer and this title cannot be duplicated. She is merely disciple and Mother. And thus, 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 ones: everyone.

Today it would be good to stop a moment and think about Our Lady's pain and sorrows. She is our Mother. And how she bore them, how she bore them well, with strength, with tears: they were not false tears, it was truly a heart destroyed with sorrow. It would be good to stop a moment and say to Our Lady: "Thank You for accepting to be Mother when the Angel said it to You, and thank You for accepting to be Mother when Jesus said it to You."

## Spiritual Communion

Those who cannot receive communion can now make spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

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