

Our Lady of Sorrows

Standing by the foot of the Cross is our mother. She is standing, not crying or fainting; she is there supporting her son with her presence. Silent tears run down her cheeks. And Saint John is also there, the celibate apostle, the one Jesus loved. Other women are there too. Women are stronger than men. Many artists tried to capture this moment but with different results. It is almost impossible to represent in a painting what happened at Calvary. Where are the other apostles? Where are the big guys? They said they were going to die for him. They ran away from the cross. We too, we are still running away from the cross. When are we going to stop running away? Today is a good day.

We can ask Saint John to help us to be at the foot of the cross, not to be afraid of the cross. We ask him to grasp our hand tightly and help us to remain there at this critical moment in human history. We are between him and Mary, hiding our face in our mother's robes. We don't want to see what's happening. We can only hear.

The passion of Jesus is the passion of Mary. It is impossible to know what is happening on Mary's heart. We can only imagine. Spiritual sufferings are more acute than physical ones. Why do we bring to our consideration something that happened 20 centuries ago? Because it is still affecting us. In eternity everything is present. We are the cause of their suffering, mother and son, united in their sorrow. The more we look at what happened at Calvary, the more we will try to avoid our sins. The more we love Jesus and Mary, the more we will avoid what is offending them. Our sins affect the people we love, the same way our love for them empowers them.

Jesus says: "Woman, behold your son." It is not a detached expression calling his mother "woman". He is reminding us that when Adam saw Eve for the first time and called her "woman", bones of my bones. Eve was the first woman. Mary is the second woman. The first one let us down because of sin. The second one was the cause of our redemption, of our healing. The Fathers of the Church loved this parallelism between Eve and Mary. He called first his mother "woman" at Cana; at the beginning. Now it is the end. Then he changed water into wine; now the wine is becoming blood, Eucharistic wine. She still remembers that moment. For Jesus was to die for us; for her, to become our mother. She gave birth to him at Bethlehem without pain; now we are born at Calvary in a bloody and painful manner. We have caused her so much blood, so much suffering. This is what we are considering today, Mater Dolorosa, Sorrowful Mother, to foster our love for her: how much pain we have delivered to her, for her to deliver us. The more we suffer, the more we love. We contemplate her sorrows for us to react, to change in our lives, to have a deep conversion. We cannot remain indifferent in front of her sufferings, specially knowing that she is there because she wants to be there, fruit of her love for her son and for us.

"Behold your mother." Now Jesus talks to us. First he asks his mother to look after us. Some people say that he wasn't planning to give us his mother, but when he saw from the cross our feebleness, he decided to give us also her. Now he asks us to look after her. He gave us his treasure, his masterpiece. We are represented in Saint John. Nothing is left for him but the wood of the cross.