

THE ROSARY OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Rosary of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary is, in effect, a way of holding in one's heart certain events in the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Compassion of His Virgin Mother. The fruits of this particular prayer are compunction of heart, detachment from the occasions of sin, chastity, humility, reparation, compassion, intimacy with the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, and desire to contemplate the Face of Christ. The power of this prayer — something that many have experienced — comes from allowing one's own heart to be irrigated and purified by the tears of the Mother of God. The tears of the Sorrowful Mother bring purity and healing wherever they fall.

It is good for the Christian, as *The Directory of Popular Piety* reminds us: “Christian piety has signaled out seven particular incidents of sorrow in her life, known as the ‘seven sorrows’ of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” But the Church does not merely recommend this devotion for popular reasons but gives us this act of piety because this form of the Rosary follows closely the Gospel by emphasizing Mary's connection with the saving Passion of Jesus. In devotions connected with the Paschal Mystery of the Lord we are “...limited merely to the expression of emotion before a sorrowing mother. Rather, with faith in the resurrection, it should assist in understanding the greatness of Christ's redemptive love and his Mother's participation in it” (DPP 145).

Here is a method for saying the Rosary of the Seven Dolors:

+ Incline, unto my aid, O God.
O Lord, make haste to help me.

Say An Act of Contrition

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

(In place of Alleluia, from Ash Wednesday until Easter is said: Praise be to thee, O Lord, King of eternal glory.)

1. THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON

“And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘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).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart upon hearing Simeon’s prophecy, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus, “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to God’s people Israel” (cf. Luke 2:32).

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

2. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

“And an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him.’ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt have I called my Son’” (Matthew 2:13–15).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart at the flight into Egypt by night, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus, born “to save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

3. THE LOSS OF JESUS FOR THREE DAYS

“And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.’ And he said to them, ‘How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’” (Luke 2:48–49).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart when together with Saint Joseph you searched for Jesus for three days, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus, “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

4. HER MEETING JESUS, CARRYING HIS CROSS

“He was oppressed and was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. . . . Yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:7, 12).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart when you encountered your Jesus bearing His cross, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus, “despised and rejected by men” (Isaiah 53:3).

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

5. HER STANDING BENEATH THE CROSS ON CALVARY

“But standing by the Cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home” (John 19:25-27).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart when you saw your Child’s hands and feet nailed to the wood of the Cross and His side pierced by the soldier’s lance, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus Crucified, bowed in death.

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

6. THE SACRED BODY OF JESUS, TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

“What can I say for you, to what compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What can I liken to you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Sion? For vast as the sea is your ruin; who can restore you? Cry aloud to the Lord! O daughter of Sion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite” (Lamentations 2:13, 18).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart when you beheld the lifeless Body of Jesus taken down from the cross, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus, “beautiful above the sons of men” (Psalm 44:3).

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

7. HER WITNESSING THE BURIAL OF THE SACRED BODY OF HER SON

Joseph of Arimathea “went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the Day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how the body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment” (Luke 23:52–55).

Holy Mother of God, I remember the sorrow of your heart when you beheld the Body of Jesus wrapped in a linen shroud and laid in the tomb, and I desire to contemplate with you the Face of Jesus, covered with a veil in death.

One Our Father and seven Hail Marys.

*Holy Mother, this impart,
Deeply print within my heart,
All the wounds my Savior bore.*

In honor of the tears shed by Our Lady during these Seven Dolors: three Hail Marys.

O Mother of Sorrows, by the tears you shed,
grant that I may weep for my sins. **Hail Mary.**

O Mother of Sorrows, by the tears you shed,
soften the hardened hearts of sinners. **Hail Mary.**

O Mother of Sorrows, by the tears you shed,
allow me to make reparation for my sins. **Hail Mary.**

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