

Holy Family C 2018 SML  
LK 2:41-52

As Jesus is called the King of martyrs, Mary is merited the title “Queen of Martyrs.” Quoting St. Bernard, “Mary was a martyr not by the sword of an executioner, but by the bitter sorrow of her heart, as predicted by the high priest Simeon at the Presentation of our Lord.” Mary's motherhood was indeed, sorrowful and the Church pays particular attention to the seven dolors, or the seven sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

1. the Prophecy of Simeon
2. the Flight into Egypt
3. the Loss of Jesus in the Temple
4. the Meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Road to Calvary
5. the Crucifixion
6. Jesus' Descent from the Cross
7. and Jesus' Burial in the Tomb.

These seven sorrows were swords of sorrow, as described by the high priest Simeon when he said to Mary at the Presentation, “Behold, this child is destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel, a sign that will be contradicted, and you yourself a sword will pierce . . . “ (LK 2:34-35)

These were double edged swords as one edge ran through

the Our Blessed Lord's Sacred Heart and the other through Our Blessed Mother's Immaculate Heart. The double edged sword is described in the Letter to the Hebrews: "The word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two edged sword." (HEB 4:12) The word here is undoubtedly scripture, but the source of scripture is the Divine Word, Who is Our Blessed Lord.

The three days' loss of the Divine Child was the third thrust of the Sword. One edge went into Jesus' Own soul as He hid from His mother and His foster father, to remind them, as He said, that He must be about "His Father's business." And the other edge of the Sword was the grief of Mary's loss and searching. Jesus was hers and that is why she sought Him. He was onto the business of redemption and that is why He left her.

Not only was there a physical loss, but there was a spiritual loss as well. When the Divine Child said to His parents, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?" (2:49) Luke is clear to state, "They did not understand what He said to them." (2:50)

Something was now hidden from Mary, in the sense that she did not understand. It wasn't ignorance on her part, but rather something she just could not completely comprehend,

something that left her in the dark, namely the fullness of His purpose, the redemption of souls.

On the Cross at Golgotha, Our Blessed Lord felt:

- ✓ the pessimism of atheists,
- ✓ the despair of sinners,
- ✓ and the loneliness of the selfish

as He took their own sins upon Himself and wrapped up all their isolation into one great cry: “My God, My God, why have you abandoned Me?” Mary, too, experienced that loneliness and abandonment, not only in the physical loss of the Divine Child, but also in the inability to comprehend His mission. It is as if she was denied all the joys of His Father’s business. If the edge of the sword for Jesus was abandonment on the Cross, the edge of the sword for Mary would be the darkness of not comprehending it.

At the Annunciation, Mary asked the Archangel Gabriel a question, “How can this be since I have no relations with a man?” And the Angel’s answer was sufficient for her to give her fiat, her “yes” to God’s plan. Here, Mary asked the Divine Child a different question, “Son, why have you done this to us?” Yet His answer was not sufficient for her to understand, and the Divine Son knew it.

Hence the sword is two edged. The sorrow of His Mother was not caused by something Simeon said or something Herod did, it was caused by something the Divine Son said and the Divine Son did. The grief that the Divine Son caused His Mother grieved His Sacred Heart as well. He could not give her an answer that she could understand is what grieved His soul.

Mary felt the darkness of losing the Divine Child.  
Jesus felt the darkness of being lost.

Mary felt the darkness by not completely comprehending.  
Jesus felt the darkness by not completely explaining.

Mary felt the sorrow received by her.  
Jesus felt the sorrow inflicted by Him.

I remember listening to my brother talk to one of the Sisters from this parish who came to his house the day after my three year old nephew was killed in a car accident on Route 206. My brother said to her there must be one thing worse than the death of a child. And Sister asked, "What's that Rob?" And he said, "If he were missing, or if he were kidnapped, because you just wouldn't know . . ."

Those were dark days . . . dark days burying a child. I couldn't imagine days any darker, unless the child went missing. And the after effects were dark too . . . trying to figure it all out . .

. questioning if Geoff's death was or was not part of the plan . .  
. it was traumatic . . . wondering if somehow our capacity to  
understand, to comprehend, was somehow diminished by our  
own sinfulness . . . if it would be easier to deal with had we led  
better lives . . .

I take great consolation in the third sorrow of Our Blessed  
Lady, in the sorrow that she, who was conceived without sin,  
could not understand, that she, who did not sin, could not  
comprehend.

I also take great consolation in what Mary taught us in this  
third sorrow – that when we lose God, we must not wait for Him  
to come back. We must go out in search of Him; and, to the joy  
of every sinner, Mary knows where He can be found!