

Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

Homily of Bishop John Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

September 15, 2021

Having commemorated the 20th Anniversary of 9/11 last Saturday, and having celebrated the Feast of the Exaltation or Triumph of the Holy Cross yesterday, we celebrate today the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Bishop Sheen says that “there were two great periods in the relations of Jesus and Mary, the first extending from the Crib to Cana, and the second from Cana to the Cross. In the first, she was the mother of Jesus; in the second, she began to be the mother of all who Jesus redeemed...She could give birth to Jesus in joy in a stable, but she could give birth to Christians only on Calvary, and in labors great enough to make her Queen of Martyrs.”¹

Every martyr in the history of the Church from St. Stephen to the many martyrs already in the 21st Century have Mary at the foot of the Cross as their Queen.

In section 285 of *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis gives a profound meditation on *Our Lady of Sorrows*.

He writes: “On the cross, when Jesus endured in his own flesh the dramatic encounter of the sin of the world and God’s mercy, he could feel at his feet the consoling presence of his mother and his friend. At that crucial moment, before fully accomplishing the work which his Father had entrusted to him, Jesus said to Mary: ‘Woman, here is your son’. Then he said to his beloved friend: ‘Here is your mother’ (*Jn* 19:26-27). These words of the dying Jesus are not chiefly the expression of his devotion and concern for his mother; rather, they are a revelatory formula which manifests the mystery of a special saving mission. Jesus left us his mother to be our mother. Only after doing so did Jesus know that ‘all was now finished’ (*Jn* 19:28). At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to

¹ Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen’s *Life of Christ*, (New York: Image Books/Doubleday, 1958), 547, 549.

Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey without a mother, and our people read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel.”

The Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, the Wedding Feast of Cana -- all these Gospel Mysteries converge at the Foot of the Cross. Christ leads us to Mary in each Mystery but in a most powerful way at the Foot of the Cross.

Mary accompanies each of us in every Cross we experience in life and in every Cross the world experiences.

We are called to live the Triumph of the Holy Cross with and in Our Lady.