

THE PERPETUAL NOVENA

in honour of
OUR SORROWFUL MOTHER

Over 700 years ago, on the feast of her Assumption into Heaven. August 15, 1233, Our Blessed Lady appeared to seven noblemen of Florence, instructing them to establish a Religious Order which would preach her sorrows to the Christian world. On Good Friday, April 15, 1240, the Mother of God appeared again to the VII Holy Founders of the Servite Order. In this second apparition Mary presented her seven sons with a habit of her own designing, indicated to them the rule by which her Order would be governed, gave them the name of “Servants of Mary.” High in the wilds of Monte Senario, the seven saints built the first monastery of their new Order. From this sacred spot a fire of devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, unprecedented in history, went out over the then civilized world. In the footsteps of the VII Holy Founders (Canonized saints by Pope Leo XIII, 1888) followed the great Servite Propagator, St. Philip Benizi. After 71 years of persecution, suppression, and bitter opposition, the Order was definitely approved when the Dominican Pope, Blessed Benedict XI, issued the Bull, “Dum levanus” (Feb. 11, 1304). The Servite Order became the last of the five Mendicant Orders of the Catholic Church

Among the many devotions to the Queen of Martyrs which grew out of the fervid preaching of the Servite Friars was the Via Matris. An historic study of this great devotion is now in progress. At present we know that it existed in Flanders as early as the 14th Century; that the Roman Ritual has carried it for over half a century; that it was indulgenced as early as 1837 by Pope Gregory XVI.

Sponsored by His Eminence, Cardinal Mundelein in 1937, the Novena in its present form was originated by the Very Rev. James Keane, O.S.M.. Prior of the Servite Community in Chicago. Today, Novena services are being held in practically every parish in the United States and most countries in the world.

It was brought to Australia by the Rev. Father W. Nicol, P.P., of Kyogle, N.S.W., and on December 6th, 1940, the Novena was solemnly inaugurated for the first time in this country, and has been celebrated each Friday night without interruption as a perpetual Novena.

Approval for the carrying out of the Novena in their territories has been given by His Eminence, Cardinal Gilroy, the Most Rev. Dr. Mannix, Most Rev. Dr. Duhig, Most Rev. Dr. McGuire, and Most Rev. Dr. Carroll.

Impetus to the devotion of the Via Matris has been given by the announcement of the appearances of Our Lady of Fatima. On the occasion of the first apparition, our Blessed Mother was asked two questions: “Who are you?” “What do you want?” Her reply was equally concise:

“I am the Lady of the Rosary. I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not continue to offend Our Lord already so deeply offended. They must say the Rosary.”

It will be seen that our Lady asked for “PRAYER” and PENANCE. To amend our lives and learn the best method of making reparation, we could not do better than follow Mary along her sorrowful way to Calvary. We will not stand alone at the foot of the Cross. Mary will be there, for she carries a load of sorrow that outweighs all others—Mary, the Mother of Sorrows; Queen of Martyrs,

Mary with the dead Body of Christ in her arms, is the greatest and noblest image of reparation that the world knows.

A broken-hearted Mother and her dead Son!

This devotion to Our Sorrowful Mother is new only in its Novena form. The Via Matrix and the other prayers date back to the Middle Ages. The devotion itself—devotion to Mary’s Sorrows —is as old as the Catholic Church. An intimate corollary of the Incarnation, it was publicly announced to mankind by Our Divine Saviour in His Agony on the Cross, when He said to St. John: “Behold Thy Mother” (John XIX, 27). It is the only Marian devotion in the Church, for the propagation of which Our Blessed Lady personally founded an Order.

That Our Divine Lord and His Blessed Mother have blessed this work seems evidenced by the multitude of graces showered upon it. May the day be not far distant when all the world will return to Christ through Mary—*Ad Jesum per Mariam!*

METHOD OF MAKING THE NOVENA

THIS PUBLIC NOVENA to our Sorrowful Mother can be made only in churches and chapels in which the Via Matris has been canonically erected.

ORDER OF NOVENA SERVICES:

(1) Reading of Petitions, (2) The Six Official Novena Prayers, (3) The Blessing of the Sick, (4) A Marian Hymn, (5) Sermon about the Blessed Virgin, (6) The Via Matris, (7) A Marian Hymn, (8) Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament (recitation of the Memorare before the Tantum Ergo). The People will say aloud and together all the prayers of the novena services, and the singing for the entire service will be congregational. The novena may be held on any nine consecutive days throughout the year. but is generally made on the nine days immediately pre-ceding either of the two Feasts of Our Sorrowful Mother.

The PERPETUAL NOVENA to Our Sorrowful Mother is held every Friday throughout the year. Nine consecutive Fridays constitute one novena. The services are the same as those of the Public Novena, and on Good Friday the Desolata may substitute for the regular novena services.

A PRIVATE NOVENA to Our Sorrowful Mother may be made by saying the six official prayers of the novena and making the Via Matris for nine consecutive days or for nine consecutive Fridays. The Via Matris must be made in a church or chapel where the same has been canonically erected.

SIX OFFICIAL PRAYERS OF THE NOVENA

Priest: We shall begin the Novena service by kneeling and saying aloud and together the six official prayers of the Novena in honour of Our Sorrowful Mother.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER TO OUR SORROWFUL MOTHER

1. FOR A PARTICULAR GRACE

O most blessed and afflicted Virgin, Queen of Martyrs, who didst stand generously beneath the cross, beholding the agony of thy dying Son; by the sword of sorrow which then pierced thy soul, by the sufferings of thy sorrowful life, by the unutterable joy which now more than repays thee for them; look down with a mother's pity and tenderness, as I kneel before thee to compassionate thy sorrows and to lay my petition with childlike confidence in thy wounded heart. I beg of thee, O my mother, to plead continually for me with thy Son, since He can refuse thee nothing, and through the merits of His most sacred Passion and Death, together with thy own sufferings at the foot of the cross, so to touch His Sacred Heart, that I may obtain my request*Priest: Here pause and name the favours which you are asking Our Sorrowful Mother to obtain for you through this Novena. (Pause.) Let your secondary intention be to pray for the intentions of all the people making this Novena in any Church in the world. Thus a great mass prayer for all Novena intentions will arise each Friday to Our Blessed Mother. . .*

For to whom shall I fly in my wants and miseries, if not to thee, O Mother of mercy, who, having so deeply drunk the chalice of thy Son, canst most pity us poor exiles, still doomed to sigh in this vale of tears? Offer to Jesus but one drop of His Precious Blood, but one pang of His adorable Heart; remind Him that thou art our life, our sweetness, and our hope, and thou wilt obtain what I ask, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The "Hail Mary," and the ejaculation "Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us," seven times.

2. PRAYER FOR A HAPPY DEATH

O Mary, Refuge of Sinners, my sweet Mother, by the sorrow thou didst experience, when thou didst witness the agony and death of thy divine Son on the cross, mercifully intercede for me, I entreat thee, when my soul is about to leave this world; drive away all evil spirits, come to take my soul, and to present it to the eternal Judge. O Queen of Heaven, do not abandon thy child; next to Jesus thou wilt be my comfort in that dread hour. Ask thy Son to grant, in His infinite mercy, that I may die embracing His holy feet, kissing His sacred Wounds, saying with my last breath: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." Amen.

3. THE HAIL MARY OF OUR SORROWFUL MOTHER (Prayer of St. Bonaventure)

Hail! Mary, full of sorrows, the Crucified is with thee; tearful art thou amongst women, and tearful is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of the Crucified, give tears to us, Crucifiers of thy Son, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

4. FOR OUR SICK RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Queen of Martyrs and Mother of Consolation by that sword of sorrow which pierced thy soul, when thou didst see thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord raised upon the cross, pierced with nails and covered with His own Blood; pray for these sick persons,—

Priest: Pause here and name the sick persons for whom you are making the Novena. (Pause.) We intend that this Novena be made primarily for the recovery of health of those sick persons whose names have been given in—during the past nine weeks—in any Church where this Novena is in progress. . . .

—that they may by thy powerful intercession be cured of their illness, and thus we may both in time and eternity give thee heartfelt thanks.

5. FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

O Most Blessed Virgin Mary, my Mother, I turn to thee in supplication, and by that sword which pierced thy sorrowful heart, when thou didst behold thy beloved Son Jesus Christ bow down His head and give up the ghost, I pray and beseech thee to help the holy souls in Purgatory, and particularly those for whom I now pray.—

Priest: Here mention the names of your departed relatives and friends for whom you wish to make the Novena. (Pause.) Include in your intention all the departed souls whose names have been given in—during the past nine weeks—in any Church where this Novena is in progress. . . .

Mother of Sorrows, Queen of Martyrs for the love of thy divine Son, whose precious blood was shed for us, help us with thy powerful intercession, who are in danger not only of falling into Purgatory, but of losing our souls forever in hell. O Mary, Mother of Grace; Mother of mercy, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.”

Eternal Father, through the most precious Blood of Jesus and the Sorrows of Mary, O have pity upon the holy souls in Purgatory. Amen.

6. AN ACT OF CONSECRATION TO OUR SORROWFUL MOTHER

Holy Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Martyrs, I do this day choose thee as my model, protectress, and advocate. In thy Immaculate Heart, pierced with so many swords of sorrow, I place my poor soul forever. Receive me as thy especial servant as a partaker in thy sufferings. O Give me strength always to remain close to that Cross on which thy only Son died for me. All that I am and have, I consecrate to thy service. Accept every good work that I may perform and offer it to thy Son for me. Dear Mother, help me to be worthy of the title: “Servant of Mary.” Stand by me in all my actions that they may be directed to the glory of God. As thou wert close to Christ, thy Son, on the cross, be near to me, thy child, in my last agony. Obtain for me, that I may invoke thine and His sweet Name saying with my lips and my heart: “Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I die in peace in your holy company.”

Priest: We shall now have the blessing for the sick. This blessing is intended for those here present in the congregation who are suffering from some physical malady.

BLESSING FOR THE SICK

THE PRIEST, WEARING A PURPLE STOLE, SAYS:

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven and earth.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

V. The Lord be with thee.

R. And with thy spirit.

LET US PRAY

Look down, O Lord, we beseech Thee, upon Thy Servants suffering with sickness of body, and refresh the souls which Thou hast created; that, being purified by chastisements, they may forthwith in Thy compassion experience betterment. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you that He may defend you: be within you that He may preserve you; precede you that He may guide you; follow you that He may guard you; be over you that He may bless you: Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and Holy Ghost world without end. Amen.

May the Blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son ✠ and Holy Ghost descend upon you and remain forever. Amen.

The priest then sprinkles the sick with Holy Water

Via Matris

(THE WAY OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER)

Priest: Now we shall all make the Via Matris or the stations of the Cross of Our Sorrowful Mother. We shall begin by rising and singing together: "Come Holy Ghost."

COME HOLY GHOST

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our hearts take up Thy rest;
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid,
To fill the hearts which Thou has made.
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

Priest: We shall now kneel and recite:

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

Virgin most afflicted, how ungrateful have I been in the past to my God, in return for all His benefits. Now, I repent in bitterness of heart, humbly asking pardon for the offence done to His infinite goodness, and resolved by the help of heavenly grace to offend Him no more.

Ah! by all the pains which thou didst suffer in the cruel Passion of thy dear Jesus, I pray thee, with fervent sighs, to obtain for me pardon and mercy for all my grievous sins. Receive this holy exercise wherein I am going to engage in memory of thy Sorrows. Obtain that the same sword which pierced thy soul may pierce mine also, that I may live and die in the love of my Lord, and share eternally in that glory, which He has purchased for me with His most precious blood. Amen.

Priest: We shall now stand.

FIRST SORROW

"And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His Mother: Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. Luke II, 34-35.

FIRST STATION

THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

How great was the shock to Mary's heart at hearing the sorrowful words, in which holy Simeon told the bitter

Passion and death of her sweet Jesus, since in that same moment she realized in her mind all the insults, blows, and torments which the impious men were to offer to the Redeemer of the world. But a still sharper sword pierced her soul. It was the thought of men's ingratitude to her beloved Son. Now consider that because of thy sins thou art unhappily among the ungrateful, and casting thyself at the feet of the Mother of Dolours, say with sorrow:

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

Virgin beloved, who didst feel so bitter pangs of soul at seeing the abuse which I, wretch that I am, would make of the Blood of thy dear Son, obtain for me, I pray thee, by thy riven heart, that in time to come I may better correspond to God's mercies, profit by His heavenly grace, receive not in vain His lights and inspirations, and so be among the blessed number of those who are saved by the bitter passion of Jesus. Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc.

People: Holy Mary, etc.

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful.

People: Pray for us.

SECOND SORROW

“And after they (the wise men) were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him. Who arose, and took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod.”—Matt. II 13-14. 16

SECOND STATION

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

Consider the sharp sorrow which Mary felt, when St. Joseph being warned by an angel, she had to flee by night in order to preserve her beloved Child from the slaughter decreed by Herod. What anguish was hers, in leaving Judea, lest she should be overtaken by the soldiers of the cruel king! How great her privations in that long journey! What sufferings she bore in that land of exile, what sorrow amid that people given to idolatry! But consider how often thou hast renewed that bitter grief of Mary, when thy sins have caused her Son to flee from thy heart. Wherefore repent, and turn to her, humbly, saying:

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

Sweetest Mother, once and once only Herod obliged thee to fly with thy Jesus, to escape the slaughter which he had commanded; but I, how often have I forced my Redeemer, and thee with Him, to fly from my heart, when I have admitted into it accursed sin, hateful to thee and to my loving Lord. With tears and contrition I humbly sue for pardon.

Mercy, dear Lady Mine, mercy! and I promise thee that, for the future, with the help of God, I will ever maintain my Saviour and thee in complete possession of my soul. Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc. People: Holy Mary, etc.

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful. People: Pray for us.

THIRD SORROW

“And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinfolds and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him.” Luke II, 43-45.

THIRD STATION

THE LOSS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

How dread was the grief of Mary, when she saw that she had lost her beloved Son! And as if to increase her

sorrow, when she sought Him diligently among her kinsfolk and acquaintances, she could hear no tidings of Him. No hindrances stayed her, nor weariness, nor danger; but she forthwith returned to Jerusalem, and for three long days sought Him sorrowing. Great be thy confusion, O my soul, who hast so often lost thy Jesus by thy sins, and hast given no heed to seek Him at once, a sign that thou dost make of very little or of no account the precious treasure of divine love. Weep then for thy blindness, and turning thee to that Lady of sighs, thy Mother, say with compunction:

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

Virgin most afflicted, obtain that I may learn from thee to seek Jesus, when I have lost Him by giving ear to my passions and to the evil suggestions of the devil; obtain that I may find Him again, and when I possess Him once more, that I may ever repeat the words of the Spouse, "I found Him whom my soul loveth; I held Him, and I will not let Him go." Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc. People: Holy Mary, etc.

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful. People: Pray for us.

FOURTH SORROW

"And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him."—Luke XXIII, 27.

FOURTH STATION

MARY MEETS JESUS ON THE WAY TO CALVARY

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

Come, O ye sinners, come and see if ye can endure so sad a sight. This Mother, so tender and loving, meets her beloved Son, meets Him amid an impious rabble, who drag Him to a cruel death, wounded, torn by stripes, crowned with thorns, streaming with blood, bearing His heavy cross. Ah, consider, my soul, the grief of the blessed Virgin thus beholding her Son! Who would not weep at seeing this Mother's grief? But who has been the cause of such woe? I, it is I, who with my sins have so cruelly wounded the heart of my sorrowing Mother! And yet I am not moved; I am as a stone, when my heart should break because of my ingratitude.

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

O Virgin most holy, I crave pardon for the sorrows I have caused thee. I know and confess that I deserve it not, for it is I through whom thy Jesus was so treated; yet do thou call to mind that thou art the Mother of mercy. Show mercy, then, to me, and I promise to be more faithful to my Redeemer in the time to come, and thus to console thee for the many sorrows I have offered to thine afflicted heart.

Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc.

People: Holy Mary, etc.

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful.

People: Pray for us.

FIFTH SORROW

"They crucified Him. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother. When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: Woman: behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother." John X I X, 18-25-26-27.

FIFTH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

Look, devout soul, look to Calvary, whereon are raised two altars of sacrifice, one on the Body of Jesus, the other

on the heart of Mary. Sad is the sight of that dear Mother drowned in a sea of woe, seeing her beloved Son, part of her very self, cruelly nailed to the shameful tree of the cross. Ah me! how every blow of the hammer, how every stripe which fell on the Saviour's form, fell also on the disconsolate spirit of the Virgin. As she stood at the foot of the cross, pierced by the sword of sorrow, she turned her eyes on Him, until she knew that He lived no longer and had resigned His spirit to His Eternal Father. Then her own soul was like to have left the body and joined itself to that of Jesus.

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

O Mother of Sorrows, who wouldst not leave Calvary until thou hadst drunk the last drop of the chalice of thy woe, how great is my confusion of face, that I so often refuse to take up my cross, and in all ways endeavour to avoid those slight sufferings which the Lord, for my good, is pleased to send upon me. Obtain for me, I pray thee, that I may see clearly the value of suffering, and may be enabled, if not to cry with St. Francis Xavier, "More to suffer, my God! ah, more!" at least to bear meekly all my crosses and trials. Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc. People: Holy Mary, etc.

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful. People: Pray for us.

SIXTH SORROW

"Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen."—Mark XV., 43-46.

SIXTH STATION

MARY RECEIVES THE DEAD BODY OF JESUS IN HER ARMS

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

Consider the most bitter sorrow which rent the soul of Mary, when she saw the dead Body of her dear Jesus on her knees, covered with blood, all torn with deep wounds. O mournful Mother, a bundle of myrrh, indeed, is thy Beloved to thee. Who would not pity thee? Whose heart would not be softened, seeing affliction which would move a stone? Behold John not to be comforted, Magdalen and the other Mary in deep affliction, and Nicodemus, who can scarcely bear his sorrow.

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

And I—Shall I alone be tearless amid such grief? .Ingrate and hard am I! Grant, dear Mother, that my heart may be pierced with the same sword that pierced thy sorrowful soul, that it may be softened, and may indeed lament those my heavy sins which were the cause of thy cruel suffering. Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc.

People: Holy Mary, etc.

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful.

People: Pray for us.

SEVENTH SORROW

Now there was in the place where He was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand."—John XIX, 41-42.

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

People stand, while Priest reads the following meditation:

Consider the sighs which burst from Mary's sad heart when she saw her beloved Jesus laid within the tomb. What grief was hers when she saw the stone lifted to cover that sacred tomb! She gazed a last time on the lifeless body of

her Son, and could scarce detach her eyes from those gaping wounds. And when the great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, oh, then indeed her heart seemed torn from her body!

People kneel and recite aloud the following prayer:

O Mother most desolate, who didst indeed in body depart from the sepulchre, but didst leave thy heart where was thine only treasure, obtain that all our desires, all our love may rest there with thee. Surely our hearts must melt with love to our Saviour, who has shed His Blood for our salvation. Surely we must love thee, who hast suffered so much for us. Oh, by all thy sorrows, grant that the memory of them may be ever imprinted on our mind, that our hearts may burn with love to God, and to thee, sweet Mother, who didst pour out all thy soul in sorrow for the Passion of Jesus: to Him be honour, glory, and thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

Priest: Hail Mary, etc.

People: Holy Mary, etc..

Priest: Virgin Most Sorrowful.

People: Pray for us.

TO MARY IN HER DESOLATION

I pity thee, most Holy Mother, with all the tenderness of which my heart is capable in thine extreme desolation. Deep indeed was thy grief, when thou didst witness the Passion and death of thy beloved Son. But then His presence could in a measure sustain thee and comfort thee in the stormy waves of sorrow. Now art thou wholly desolate. Oh, grief unequalled! O, lonely bitterness! Oh, by that grievous loss, have pity on me, who so often have, by my sins, lost my beloved Lord. Obtain, O tender Mother, that I may never again cause my Jesus to re-move from me through my wickedness and want of fervour, but may serve Him faithfully in this earthly life, to see and enjoy Him hereafter in heaven.

Say the "Hail Mary" three times in memory of the Desolation of the Most Holy Virgin.

INDULGENCES

Pope Pius XII, by Decree of the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary dated April 24th. 1951, granted the following Indulgences to the Via Matris: Plenary Indulgences (under the usual conditions of Confession, Communion and prayers for the Holy Father) :

1. Once a day.
2. Further Plenary Indulgence for the Pious Exercise of the Seven Fridays preceding the Feast of our Lady of Sorrows in September.
3. Further Plenary Indulgence for the Pious Exercise of the Seven Fridays preceding the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows in Passion Week.
4. Further Plenary Indulgence for making the Pious Exercise in the form of a Novena.

Partial Indulgences: of 10 years for each Station of the Via Matris when, for any reasonable motive, the Pious Exercise of the Via Matris was interrupted and not completed.

Imprimi Potest:

* JOHN CARROLL

Bishop of Lismore

April 30th, 1941.
