

SEPTEMBER 15 2025 FATHER PETER TURRONE

Today we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

As a priest, we are involved in the lives of our parishioners. There's the baptisms, the communions, there is the weddings, and we have several funerals.

But I have to say, over the years of my priesthood, and this is a common experience for many of us, the most painful experience to witness and to participate in is to see the devastation of a mother who loses their child. This has happened twice.

I remember just early on in my priesthood, I remember being at the funeral home just standing there, waiting for the family to arrive, and to hear and to see the absolute sorrow of this mother, coming through as a consequence of seeing her deceased child. It was probably the worst experience that any parent can have.

So when you look at this, and in light of today's feast. I find that today's feast is really not so much an answer, but provides a deep sense of courage in the midst of the pain that the parents would experience, or anyone who is going through some sort of suffering.

Mary is the woman of perfect faith. She had faith, hope, and charity in its most highest possible form. In fact, the Church says that Mary is the icon of the Church. If you want to know what it means to be a Christian, you look to Mary, you look to the Blessed Mother.

And through that experience and looking at her life, we see that in scripture, that she experienced tremendous joy, but she also experienced suffering. And especially all the things that led up to Jesus going on the cross.

And despite the fact that she is a woman of profound faith, faith does not mean--does not erase the suffering that comes with human experience. In fact, it helps us to recognize it in a different way. However it still doesn't erase it. It still doesn't erase it.

But we are buoyed by that experience, and the knowledge that Christ himself in the end that all will be well. That in the midst of the suffering, that it doesn't end in that moment. And this was the experience also of accompanying this one particular family, and seeing the impact, the sorrow, but then also the ability to trust.

So when we have this sorrow and this experience, we have two options. We can either turn away, or we can leap into the arms of God. And this is what this family did, and I've seen many people do this. Again, with a lot of difficulty, but putting one's trust in the Lord.

Not understanding, but being and allowing God, in the silence, right, in the silence there without having to say anything, but being there with the Lord and being able to experience his consolation in the midst of the suffering.

So in this gospel that we heard today that was just proclaimed, we can see, we can put ourselves there. So, Jesus is on the cross. Imagine his suffering. So we know, from the Letter to the Hebrews, we hear that when Jesus was in the garden, he was crying out to his Father. Jesus is God, God-man, right, he is a divine person. Yet he still suffered, so we can see that

Some people think that "If I have faith, then I can't cry because I miss someone or something has happened." No. But in faith, our experience of grieving and of sorrow is going to be different.

So Mary is there, and she is looking at her son. So, Jesus is the redeemer, he's the sole redeemer of the world. But Mary participates with Jesus in his suffering.

And just like yesterday was the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, so, every Marian feast is Christological. Why? Because it's always tied to Jesus, to what Jesus himself has done. So by her sharing the same flesh as Christ, and her giving her life completely to her son, she is suffering with her son.

And we heard Simeon tell us, Simeon told her, when Jesus was a baby, that a knife--a sword would go through her heart. So that suffering would be a real suffering. So what did she do when she heard that?

There must have been moments throughout her life when she saw Jesus get hurt, when she started seeing this opposition, not completely understanding everything, but what did she do? She trusted. She trusted in the silence of the pain that she would experience.

This anticipatory anxiety that she would have to experience, you know, waiting for when this thing would finally happen. When the Lord would be placed on the cross

So, the Virgin Mary, she has a unique role in salvation history. Again, not only as the Mother of God, but she is also unique in her ability to understand the sufferings of Jesus, being his mother and perfect disciple.

And going back again to the reality of grieving, so, sometimes, and I've had this experience, I have had some people come to me and say, "Father," you know, "I've lost a child." And people will come and tell me all sorts of things. They mean well, but they cause more damage.

We have to be comfortable with being silent. The one thing, if anything, that I would recommend is to pray the Chaplet of Our Lady of Sorrows. Why is that? Because the Virgin Mary, she understands. She knows what it's like to suffer. She is perfectly pure in heart. She understands, she saw Jesus, her son, she suffered with him, but she also had hope in what would take place afterwards.

So we see on the cross, again, Jesus, he can barely speak, he's lost so much blood. All of the pain. He had to put all his weight on his feet, right, which were nailed to the cross. And what does Jesus do? He gives Mary to the -- to the disciple, beloved disciple. And he gives the beloved disciple to Mary.

When we were baptized, we were given to Mary. She was given to us as our mother. We are her children. And what a great gift to be able to turn to Mary in our suffering and ask her, especially for those who are suffering the loss of a child, a deceased member, that we can ask her to intercede for them so that we can experience the consolation.

And what is the consolation she offers? It's Jesus. Jesus and hope. Even though we have to pass through the reality of the cross it doesn't end in despair. It ends in the arms of God. So, just think about that.

And then one other thought just came to my mind. So, we have--when Jesus died and she was given the Lord in her arms, what happened? Well, when everybody left, the Virgin Mary was the only one. She was the only flame of faith that was still flickering. That was the only candle, the only light in the world. In all the world, it was her faith and her hope that sustained herself during that time. And also brought, eventually, the disciples back.

So we ask her to intercede for us, intercede for those who are suffering, and especially during this year of hope that our hope will increase and not decrease. Trusting that in the midst of the sufferings, that all will be well because all will end in the Lord for those who love God.