

ARTICLE 49

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

Marriage a gift from God

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Marriage! Our Lady of Sorrows 2

The Seven Founders

My last article mentioned the powerful devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, and I mentioned a little booklet that I have designed. In this article, I would like to give a brief history of how I came to produce this booklet before giving the meditations on the last three sorrows of Our Lady.

The response to the last article has been very encouraging and so I would like to remind readers that I print these booklets myself and that if you would like a copy, you can send a stamped addressed envelope with a two euro coin inside to me at 21, Glenbrook, Knock, Claremorris Co Mayo F12 NW20.

Institute of Christ the King, Gricigliano

In March 2012, I travelled with my wife Naomi and six of our children to the seminary of The Institute of Christ the King in Gricigliano, near Florence in Italy. We were there for the visit of Cardinal Brandmuller, who was going to confirm my sons Oscar and Raphael using the Latin form of confirmation. I have many wonderful memories of our stay with the Institute, not least of which were the evening meals where we gathered together with the priests and seminarians of the Institute.

It does the heart good to sit in a room with over seventy cheerful, cassock clad men, all alive in their faith and seeking the glory of God and the conversion of souls. If you are ever in Italy, I heartily recommend a visit. There you will see that our Catholic faith is not dead, but is alive and well in the mustard seed of the Institute of Christ the King which will one day have grown into a mighty tree giving shelter to the needy Catholic faithful.

A Trip in the countryside of Florence

One day during our stay, in order to give my wife a little break, I took the children for a spin about the countryside of Florence. We ended up in what looked like a small forest park with a path going up a hill. The weather was beautiful so we decided to stop and take a walk along this path. At the end of the path there was a large old Church with many visitors, and I took photographs of the various signs there as I was interested in finding out what this place was. What we had stumbled upon was the Church of the Seven Founders of the Servite Order. Theirs is a very interesting history but one thing caught my mind in particular. On Good Friday of 1239, while meditating on Our Lord's passion the seven founders had a vision in which Our Lady asked them to found an order and to promote devotion to her Seven Sorrows which they did throughout Europe as their order grew.

Traditional Devotions

When I began my little project 'True Devotions' with the aim of promoting the traditional devotions of the Church I had several requests for something on Our Lady's sorrows and I wanted to produce a booklet for quite some time but I was never clear as to what form it should take. Then at the end of August this year, a man came into me with leaflets on the Seven Sorrows and the following day a lady came in and asked for a little booklet on the seven sorrows of Our Lady. I asked her exactly what she was looking for and she said that she wanted seven pictures and seven little meditations.

About three days later I had the booklet complete. Then on the fifteenth of September, the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, a local artist called in and asked me if I would sell one of her pictures in my shop. She handed me a beautiful oil painting of Our Lady of Sorrows modelled on the miraculous image of Quito which I had chosen for the front cover of the booklet. The picture sold within a couple of weeks and I took this as a sign that Our Lady was pleased with this booklet.

The final three sorrows from the booklet are as follows

The Fifth Sorrow of Our Lady - Jesus dies of the Cross

“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.

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the scripture), “I thirst.” A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19: 25-30)

Our Lady stands by the cross of Jesus for the three hours of His agony. We can only imagine the sorrow of her heart at seeing her only Son treated so cruelly by those whom He dies for. “Father, forgive them...”

Hail Mary ...

The Sixth Sorrow of Our Lady - Mary receives the dead body of Jesus

Mary holds the now dead body of Jesus in her arms. As she looks upon His bruised and wounded body, does her mind drift back to that night in Bethlehem when she first wrapped Him in swaddling clothes? Does she ponder in her heart her life with Jesus here on earth?

Yes Jesus is dead! He died for our sins and for the sins of all humanity. Let us contemplate this Holy Virgin who has given her all to Jesus and who has willingly accepted to unite herself in suffering with her Son so that we might be saved.

Let us approach her in humility and contrition of heart with deep sorrow for our own sins and for the sufferings we have caused to Jesus and Mary on account of those very sins. Let us reach deep into that sorrow and draw from it the resolve to turn away from our sins so that we may no longer offend God and His blessed Mother. Our Lady desires this of us and she is waiting to help us to become Holy.

Hail Mary ...

The Seventh Sorrow of Our Lady - Jesus is laid in the Tomb

Our Lady returns home after the crucifixion to keep vigil for Our Lord. She alone keeps the faith throughout Holy Saturday. And yet her heart is sorrowful as, for the first time since His birth, she is alone in the world without the living presence of her Son. Jesus is dead!

Her life on earth will never be the same again. She has a great longing for heaven so as to be re-united once again with her Son. She also realises her role in keeping vigil for Christ and in strengthening the Apostles and preparing them for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The tragedy of death and sin is engraved on her sorrowful heart and yet, this sorrowful heart is full of hope and that deep inner joy that comes from knowing Jesus intimately. She longs to share the secrets

of holiness with us her children and to help us to carry our own crosses so that one day we too may be with Jesus and Mary in heaven.

Let us too reaffirm our commitment to keeping the faith alive in our own lives and encouraging those we meet. **Hail Mary ...**

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Author: John Lacken
Founder: Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family
E-Mail: john@truedevotions.ie
Website: www.truedevotions.ie