

# GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



I must admit that when I entered the Servite formation program in the Autumn of 1982, I was not a fan of the Servite title for Mary: Our Lady of Sorrows. "Why would anyone want to pray to a sorrowful Mary instead of a joyful Mary," I thought. The whole idea of a Mother of Sorrows just seemed a bit morbid, and unappealing to me. While I loved the charm, spirituality and traditions of the Order, this one was a bit much for me. But, the Lord has a great way of taking a challenge to show us something new about Him and His love. In my struggle to ponder and better understand Our Lady as the Mother of Sorrows, maybe I issued the Lord a challenge to assist me in understanding this particular devotion to His Mother. Wow, did He show me. Over the past thirty-nine years, I have grown to love not only the title of Our Lady of Sorrows, but the spiritual reality that it represents as well.

The title of Our Lady of Sorrows represents the reality of God's everlasting and unrelenting faithfulness in our lives, especially in the darker moments of pain and suffering, and the uncontrollable moments that life presents us. The image of the Mother of Sorrows, the woman at the foot of the Cross, is one of trusting the faithfulness of the Lord in these moments. Throughout her life,

## CALLED TO SERVE

### ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

#### Vocation Newsletter

Mary knew the greatest of joys and the deepest of sorrows. Yet, in each of these moments she never wavered in her trust of the faithfulness of God. As a faithful Jewish woman, Mary knew the story of her people's relationship with God. She knew of the Lord's constant love for His people even when they sinned and strayed from their covenant with God. She knew the ancient prophecies of future deliverance that God promised for His people. She held in her arms Him, her Son, who was the fulfillment of the prophecies and the fullness of God's faithful love. She trusted so deeply, so completely, that even in her darkest hour, the death of her beloved Son, Mary found hope in the faithfulness of God. Through the tears and heartache, the sounds of Christ's painful agony, Mary remembered God's faithfulness and found hope to endure the event of the Cross and others as well. The Father's faithfulness was her hope, her strength and her courage. It is Mary's ability to experience the Father's faithfulness and find hope, strength and courage at the Cross that we Servites venerate Mary under the title of Our Lady of Sorrows. She models for us how we

are to live in the faithfulness of the Lord. We Servites experience the faithfulness of God in our communal life as brothers to each other. We experience the faithfulness of God in our ministry.





As friars, we are brothers to each other. As brothers, we look for opportunities to encourage each other through the difficult moments of life. In such, we help each other to remember God's faithfulness as we minister to each other. Likewise, we call forth from each other our gifts and talents, encouraging each other to use these for our common mission of building the Lord's kingdom in the present time. We support each other as God supports us by His faithful presence in our lives.

As friars, we mirror the faithfulness of God in the way we minister. Here, the Mother of Sorrows at the foot of the cross is our model. Mary's presence at the Cross was a silent witness of compassionate hope and love to her dying Son. At her station by the cross, Mary witnessed the power of the love of God, which was willing to sacrifice His Son so that the Father's



## Scripture Reading: John 19:25-27

### Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. What does the Mother of Sorrows teach me about my faith?
2. What does the Mother of Sorrows say to me in my discernment of Religious/Servite Life?
3. As I ponder the Servite understanding of Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, what questions do I need to ask the Vocation Director? Do I see myself as a member of the Servite Friars' community? What more do I need to know to make a decision of entering religious life?

#### Vocation Directors

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love could recreate a new hope and love within the human story. Mary's presence was a willingness to stand with another so that love, not aloneness, would be Christ's experience in His agony. In our ministries, we friars are called to be ever vigilant for the present day crosses where Christ suffers in His brothers and sisters, so that we can stand with them. By these crosses we desire to offer the Father's faithfulness through our loving presence in the sufferings of others. As we do so, we further experience the faithfulness of God which is the hope of our vowed lives.

Yes, the title of Our Lady of Sorrows may seem weird, even difficult to comprehend at first, but in light of all the violence, suffering and hopelessness of these times, Our Lady of Sorrows reminds us that God is faithful, and we are called as Christians to help others encounter the faithfulness of God by our solidarity with all people, especially those in pain of any sort.

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