

Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, with St Joseph

1st Sorrowful Mystery – The Agony in the Garden

Every year at Passover, beautiful unblemished lambs are sacrificed. How horrible it is to see the price that innocence pays as a redemption for sin. But you sort of come to accept it. It took on a whole new level of horror for me the day the elderly Simeon prophesized over Mary and Jesus when I realized that it was God's plan that they be sacrificed. His great mind-blowing plan of eternal redemption and its unimaginable cost. Day by day we lived as a family like the shepherds of Bethlehem, raising these precious lambs and knowing the fate that awaits them. So each day was a joy, but it was also an agony. Each day required that we trust in God's plan, battling to accept the cost that Jesus and Mary would pay. I wish I could say that it got easier. It didn't. Jesus went through that daily battle too. What is recorded of His agony in Gethsemane is the culmination of all the daily struggles to say Yes to this sacrifice.

2nd Sorrowful Mystery – The Scourging at the Pillar

There's no Temple sacrifice without lots of blood. It's a really messy business, but it is the ancient way of entering into covenant. On each party to the covenant half the blood gets sprinkled. The thought of how much blood our Jesus would lose so that the new covenant with God could be ratified always caused by heart to seize. But I was spared knowing how it would happen. On that redemption day the most blood was shed by Jesus during the scourging. Half fell back on Him and half splattered everything and everyone else. Only through this blood of Jesus does the barrier between heaven and earth disintegrate, the barrier that has existed since original sin entered the world.

3rd Sorrowful Mystery – The Crowning with Thorns

What is it about goodness that attracts such fury from those lacking in goodness? Our Jesus is so good, so very good. You've noticed how the bullies among the religious authorities liked to probe Him with questions and test Him with rejection and contradiction. Now it is the turn of the military types to test this utter gentleness of His. Violence, cruelty and mockery are what they use. Yet Jesus remains the perfect paschal lamb, never complaining, never retaliating, never resisting, and offering all the tortures He undergoes for your redemption and for mine, and for the whole world.

4th Sorrowful Mystery – The Carrying of the Cross

I know it must have crossed your mind, the fiendishness of evil to choose the substance a carpenter knows best as the ultimate instrument of execution. Only a carpenter would fully appreciate all the objects of beauty and usefulness these hefty planks could become. Yet here they are being used to accomplish not only crucifixion, but also the public humiliation of transporting it to the place of execution. The kinds of wood making up the Cross were what Jesus and I regularly had in our workshop; in particular the kinds we would get into deep discussions about the best uses for. Yet God took what evil had concocted and transformed it into the universal sign of our redemption.

5th Sorrowful Mystery – The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

Here it is. The ultimate sacrifice of the life of Jesus. The ultimate sacrifice of the soul of Mary. One body rent with wounds, one heart rent with wounds, both united in offering their sufferings and sorrows in supplication to the Father for the sake of all humanity; and for you and for me. On the one hand horror unimaginable, on the other hand, the glory of love unfathomable. It is accomplished. May God be praised, loved, adored, worshipped in gratitude for all eternity. Amen.