

Mary, Queen of Martyrs

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

“Now I seem to understand the martyrdom of our beloved Mother [...]. Oh, if everyone could understand this martyrdom! Who could hold on that while our dear Coredeмпtrix suffered this? Who would deny her the good title of Queen of Martyrs?”¹

So speaks Saint Padre Pio, who suffered for 50 years with the blessed stigmata of the Passion of Our Lord.

Our Lady never had to give her life like the martyrs did and continue doing in several places around the world. She never endured the physical tortures, such as the one described in the daily Martyrology, or in the acts of the Martyrs: arrows, sword, stones, fire, wild beasts... But Her sweet and maternal heart was bruised seven times during her life, fulfilling the prophecy of St. Simeon, and making her direct participant of the Passion of Her Son. She suffered with Him, for Him, all Her life, perfectly uniting Her Heart to His. Today we are honouring Our Lady of Sorrows, Queen of Martyrs.

We have evidence from the acts of the martyrs, that some of them, including in the earlier time of the Church, were submitted to mental torture, being asked to renounce their vows of fidelity to God, being dragged in awful places to be tempted, but God’s grace assisting, they victoriously supported everything, before being killed for the Glory of God.

“It is an established opinion that suffering sufficient to cause death, constitutes martyrdom, although death may not then take place.”²

These terrible sufferings were always connected to an intense life of the virtues of Faith Hope and Charity. We know that they lived at the highest degree in Mary. Benedict XVI gives us this definition of the action of the martyr, who is living from Christ:

“The newness of the proclamation lies in the depth of the believer’s immersion in the mystery of Christ and in assimilation of his word and of his presence in the Eucharist so that he himself, the living Jesus, may speak and act in his messengers. Essentially, evangelizers can bring Christ to others effectively when they themselves live in Christ, when the newness of the Gospel is reflected in their own life.”³

Mary gave a unique a precious testimony of her attachment to Her Son, as she stood at the foot of the Cross, watching Him dying with unutterable sufferings. From the three last sorrows, it is difficult to say which is the highest, as they are surpassing each other: the death of

¹ Padre Pio, Letters, San Giovanni Rotondo, IT 1992, p.384.

² St Alphonus Ligory, The Glories of Mary, 9th discourse on the dolours of Mary.

³ Benedict XVI, Angelus for St Stephen’s day, 26th December 2012.

Jesus, seeing his heart pierced by the lance and receiving him dead in her arms, placing Him into the sepulchre.

“Who can have a heart so hard that it will not melt on hearing of a most lamentable event which once happened in the world ? [...]

As Jesus is called King of sorrows and King of martyrs, because he suffered in his life more than all the other martyrs, so is also Mary called, with reason, queen of the martyrs, having merited this title by suffering the greatest martyrdom that could be suffered, next to that of her Son. Hence she was justly named by Richard of St. Laurence, the martyr of martyrs : “*Martyr martyrurum.*” And to her may be applied what Isaias said: ‘*He will crown thee with the crown of tribulation*’; ‘*Coronans coronabit te tribulatione.*’ For that suffering itself which exceeded the suffering of all the other martyrs united, was the crown by which she was shown to be the queen of martyrs. [...]

“Oh my afflicted Mother! queen of martyrs and of sorrows, thou hast shed so many tears for thy Son, who died for my salvation, and yet what will thy tears avail me, if I am lost? By the merits, then, of thy dolours, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins, and a true amendment of life, with a perpetual and tender compassion for the passion of Jesus and thy own sufferings.”⁴

Regina Martyrum, Ora pro nobis!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

⁴ St Alphonus Ligory, *The Glories of Mary*, 9th discourse on the dolours of Mary.