

## FRIENDS OF MARY: A LORETTO REFLECTION

**Opening Song:** "Come Holy Mother" by Kathryn Christian  
Based on Julian of Norwich

Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
Come Holy Mother, still my soul and heal my pain.

Loretto's way of loving service, rooted in Jesus on the cross and Mary at the foot of the cross, shaped and formed our early sisters and continues to form us in Loretto today. The same Spirit who inspired and guided Mary Rhodes, Ann Havern, and Christina Stuart to service gathers us today. We walk with all those "Friends of Mary" who, for almost two centuries have followed those first sisters on a journey of praise, prayer, and service. Their courage, concern, and energy, nourished by the gospel and friendship, are with us today as an endowment of hope as we face the challenges of a global society.

As we stand with Mary at the Foot of the Cross, we work to bring the healing Spirit of God into our world. We commit ourselves to improving the conditions of those who suffer from injustice, oppression, and deprivation of dignity.

We gather in honor of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, with whom Loretto has walked in faithful, pioneering friendship from the early days of Little Loretto, across the Santa Fe Trail, and to the ends of the earth. .

We join with her as we pray.

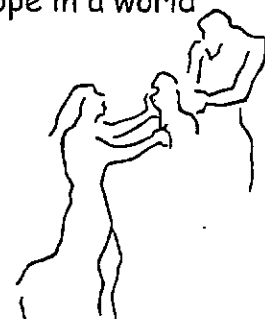
**The First Sorrow: The Prophecy of Simeon To Mary "your own heart will be pierced with sorrow..."**

Within a moment of joy, devastating announcement,  
The heart shudders with fear, trembling as the future unfolds.

**All:** Compassionate God, there are many people in our world today who are hearing difficult news. They will need an anchor of strength to keep them from being swept away in their waves of worry, pain, and fear. Be this anchor of strength for them. Form us into a people of hope in a world where the future often is filled with painful uncertainty.

And we pray for:

**Response:** Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
Come Holy Mother, still my soul and heal my pain.



## The Second Sorrow: The Flight With the Infant Jesus Into Egypt.

A dream taps on the inner world, warning of danger and death.  
Two frightened parents hurry to find refuge for their beloved child.

**All:** Loving Shelter, there are many people in our world who live in dangerous or hurtful situations. They need courage to escape, to leave what is harmful. They need safety and protection. Safe refuge. Be the peace they seek. Be the shelter they need. Form us into safe shelter for our brothers and sisters.

And we pray for:

**Response:** Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
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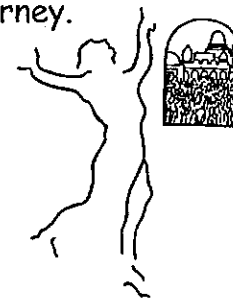
## The Third Sorrow: Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

Frantic footsteps hasten back, retracing roads recently traveled.  
A mother presses on in her search, finding a child whose wisdom takes her deeper into mystery.

**All** God of the lonely and lost, there are many people in our world who are searching. Many who are lost. There are parents filled with heartache for their lost children. Women alone. And children. There are distressed people looking for themselves. And searchers seeking meaning. May all who are lost or seeking find a home in your love, comfort in your guiding presence. May they find us faithful friends for their journey.

And we pray for:

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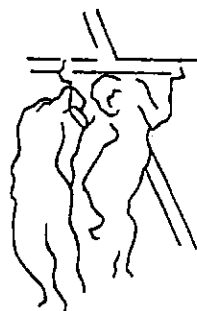
## The Fourth Sorrow: Mary Meets Jesus Carrying His Cross.

Mother and Son, face-to-face, suffering in each one's heart.  
We meet the pain in our life, embracing it with kindness.

**All:** Enduring love, we live in troubled times. Help us be attentive to our own spirits. To believe that our own heartaches are also worthy of a compassionate gaze. Teach us to offer kindness to the part of us that suffers. Remembering your love, we turn towards ourselves with compassion and reach out with tenderness as we embrace the hurting parts of our own selves.

And we pray for:

**Response:** Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
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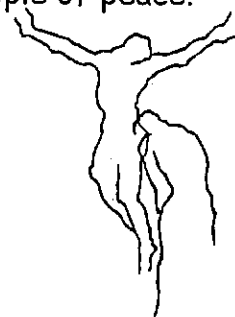
**The Fifth Sorrow: Mary Stands Beneath the Cross.**

A mother waits while her son dies, unable to hold, to touch, to comfort; standing, keeping vigil, entering his agony.

**All:** Crucified One, may all who hang upon a cross of suffering and sorrow, or stand beneath a cross today, find comfort and consolation. Ease their pain and suffering. Free them from discouragement. Gentle their harsh emotions. Cease their restlessness. Coax them away from despair. Save them from hate. Teach us courage and strength that we may stand at the foot of the cross in all our world's great pain and witness there your love, and care. Teach us to stand in justice with all who suffer. To be a people of peace.

And we pray for:

**Response:** Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
Come Holy Mother, still my soul and heal my pain.



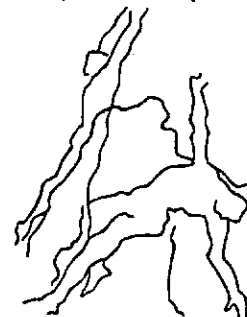
**The Sixth Sorrow: Mary Receives the Dead Body of Jesus.**

A mother's generous lap, holding what remains of a son, receiving him as lovingly in death as she first held him, wet from the womb.

**All:** God of the desolate, give your strength and courage to all suffering people, especially those who feel the ache of deep loss. Gently open their hearts and increase their capacity to be with their great hurt. Help us to offer a generous lap of kindness and tenderness so that, through us, your deep and strong love will resound in their experience.

And we pray for:

**Response:** Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
Come Holy Mother, still my soul and heal my pain.



**The Seventh Sorrow: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb.**

A kind-hearted child is laid to rest, and a loving mother bids him farewell. She walks away with mystery in her heart and a thousand tears in her grieving soul.

**All:** Mary, you have been there before us. You have stood at the tomb of farewell. We, too, often face painful endings. Mistakes, failures, and inadequacies. Like you, we need to eventually let go, believing that the Holy One will console us. You know how grief engulfs the heart and tries to strangle the hope it contains. You have felt the drain of great loss and the emptiness it creates inside. Teach us how to have confidence in God when we question what the future holds. Strengthen our faith as we try to let go of whatever keeps us from growing deeper. Teach us to be a people of faith in all of life's farewells.

And we pray for:

**Response:** Come Holy Mother, let your mercy fall like rain.  
Come Holy Mother, still my soul and heal my pain.



*Adapted by Sue Rogers SL  
from Joyce Rupp and I AM THE WAY*