

The Ancient Song!

13 September 2026

Dominica XVI Post Pentecosten

III. Septembris - Semiduplex Dominica minor

**“A valiant woman, who shall find?
Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.”**

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

***“It is as ancient as the Church herself,
yea, even a bit more!”***

Dear friends, today is the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, and on this holy day the Bride of Christ, our Mother and Teacher, sounds in our ears the Apostolic longing that we would “comprehend with all the saints, the breadth and length, and height, and depth” of God as He is, and the inexplicable charity which God lavishes upon us, and “to know the charity of Christ, which of itself surpasseth all knowledge.” In other words, that we “may be filled unto all the fullness of God.”

To wit, on this self-same day, she calls us to that humble vision which embraces the supremacy of charity over the apparent obligations of Divine custom.

“Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?”

Ah, but, my friends, this holy day also follows the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, at which the holy Roman Church inebriates herself with “all the privileges given to Mary by God and all the graces we have received through her intercession and mediation.”

And this, even as she anticipates the grief-laden joys of her contemplation of “the recovery and solemn restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem by the emperor Heraclius in 628, after it had been carried off by the Persians,” and those of her suffering with the Queen of Martyrs, her Seven Dolors, the commemoration of “the whole series of Mary’s sorrows,” this year’s Tuesday Sorrows.

Today serves as a sort of respite, or perhaps note, from the soul-forming contemplation of a triptych of the realities which gave birth to the Catholic Mind, the Catholic Heart, and the myriad behaviors, customs and devotions which, in the practical order, gave rise to Christendom.

But the goal of the respite truly is our deeper penetration into the mystery of the Marian form of the Holy Cross itself.

And Holy Mother Church hopes, with the certitude of Hope, that a side-effect of the respite will be our lifelong appreciation of Our Lady’s interior crucifixion: a Crucifixion which begins

with Simeon's prophecy, is lived in hidden exile and loss, years unmarked by history's pen, a Crucifixion consummated with the Mother standing at Calvary.

This is the heart and soul of the saints' and doctors' vision of Mary's unique and subordinate cooperation in the one Redemption, the doctrine much later summarized by the title *Coredemptrix*.

Simeon's sword does not merely predict later grief, along with the flight into Egypt and the three-day loss. The first three Dolors are already a sharing in advance of the Cross of Christ. These three bind Mary's whole maternal life to the wood of the Cross on which her Son will hang.

The meeting on the Via Dolorosa, the Crucifixion, the taking down from the Cross, and the burial, the last four Dolors, are the Passion itself seen through the Mother's heart.

As such, Holy Mother Church bears witness to the reality of two altars on Calvary, or better yet, to the one altar on which both the Lamb and His Mother are offered. On the wood, Christ's Body is offered. At the foot, Mary's soul in compassion. And because that compassion is free, it is meritorious and offered for the world's salvation.

It is the concrete historical expression of the Blessed Virgin's Co-Redemptive place in the Order of Salvation. The Blessed Virgin is New Eve with the New Adam. No, not a second redeemer, but the associate who consents to the immolation of the Victim born of her and who suffers it with Him.

It is for this reason that St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 180) offers his song as hymnic foundation:

"Even as Eve became disobedient, and was made the cause of death to herself and to the entire human race, so also did Mary's yielding obedience become the cause of salvation to herself and the whole human race. The knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, the virgin Mary set free through faith."

"As the human race fell into bondage by means of a virgin, it rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience has been balanced by virginal obedience."

It is for this reason that St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) sings with Simeon:

"Truly, O blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart. For only by passing through your heart could the sword enter the flesh of your Son. The sword did not touch his soul, but it did pierce your heart. A sorrowful violence has penetrated your heart. Thus, we rightly hail you more than martyr, for your compassion has transcended all physical suffering."

"Offer your Son, sacrosanct Virgin," Saint Bernard sings, "and present the fruit of your womb to the Lord. For our reconciliation, offer the pleasing heavenly victim to God."

Arnold of Chartres (d. after 1156) hails:

"Two altars: one in Mary's heart, the other in Christ's body. Christ sacrificed his flesh, Mary her soul."

St. Bonaventure (d. 1274), Seraphic Doctor, says:

“O Lady, where art thou? Near the cross? Nay, rather, thou art on the cross, crucified, sacrificing thyself with thy Son. There was but one altar, that of the cross of the Son, on which, together with this Divine Lamb, the victim, the Mother was also sacrificed.”

As such, St. John Chrysostom chants:

“Whoever then was present on the Mount of Calvary might see two altars, on which two great sacrifices were consummated; the one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary.”

And St. Augustine hails:

“The cross and nails of the Son were also those of His Mother; with Christ crucified the Mother was also crucified.”

Similarly, St. Albert the Great (d. 1280), Doctor of the Church, concludes:

Since “we are under great obligations to Jesus for His Passion endured for our love, so also are we under great obligations to Mary for the martyrdom which she voluntarily suffered for our salvation in the death of her Son.”

Thus, indeed, as St. Alphonsus Liguori was happy to confess:

“Mary was a martyr, not by the sword of the executioner, but by bitter sorrow of heart. This good Mother, for the love she bore us, wished also to help the cause of our salvation with the merits of her sufferings, which she offered for us on Calvary.”

Dear friends, behold our singular icon: the Seven Sorrows. They are not seven isolated griefs. No. They are the signs of the progressive opening of Mary’s heart to the one Cross that redeems the whole world.

Calvary is two altars, yea, even one.

The Blessed Virgin’s heart has become the obverse side, the spiritual place where Mother consents and co-offers one Sacrifice. The offering is real, meritorious, and willed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Behold the Lady who has become, by the kindness of the Most High, part and parcel of the economy of salvation. Behold the Coredemptrix. A parallel redeemer? ***Anathema sit.***

Behold the New Eve, who, under and with the New Adam, shares in the eternal work of Redemption and becomes spiritual mother of the redeemed.

Alma Redemptoris Mater

*Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia caeli
Porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti,*

*Surgere qui curat, populo: tu quae genuisti,
Natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem,
Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore
Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.*

Ave Regina Caelorum

*Ave, Regina caelorum,
Ave, Domina Angelorum:
Salve, radix, salve, porta,
Ex qua mundo lux est orta:
Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,
Super omnes speciosa,
Vale, o valde decora,
Et pro nobis Christum exora.*

Regina Caeli

*Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia:
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*

Salve Regina

*Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo, advocata nostra,
illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.
Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.*

***“It is as ancient as the Church herself,
yea, even a bit more!”***

And on this Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, and the second installment of our Mini-catechesis on the Seven Sorrows and the Holy Cross, as you come to receive upon your tongues and in your persons the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I beg you plead with “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies” for the grace “to comprehend with all the saints, the breadth and length, and height, and depth” Him as He is, and the inexplicable charity which He has lavished upon us, and “to know the charity of

Christ, which of itself surpasseth all knowledge.” The grace to be “filled unto all the fullness of God.”

That we may never be numbered among those who “faint at their tribulations for the glory” of the Blessed Virgin Mary, saying:

May Thy grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord, ever go before us and follow us, and make us continually intent upon good works. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

***“It is a Song
as ancient as the Church herself,
yea, even a bit more!”***

**“A valiant woman, who shall find?
Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.”**

Saint Helena, pray for us!
Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us!
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,