# AND YOU YOURSELF A SWORD WILL PIERCE

The martyr is the testimony of the truth of God, lived in the great perfection of love, though, in the perfection of every virtue: cardinal and theological virtues. Jesus is the Faithful Testimony. In Him, truth and virtue are one only thing. His truth is divinely and humanly perfect. His virtues are divinely and humanly perfect. Nothing lacks to them. Perfection is absolute. The holiness with which Jesus lived his cross attests it. On the cross, He was able to remain as most holy. On it, He achieved the perfection of perfection in every virtue. Perfect was his obedience and perfect his love. The Virgin Mary was also the “Faithful Testimony” of the truth and of the virtues placed by God in her heart. In terms of faithful testimony, She infinitively overcomes all the testimonies of faithful of every other creature. No creature, but Christ Jesus, not even Abraham, was asked such a string faithfulness as Her, to love in such a holy charity as hers and in all other virtue. Even in that, She is most pure example for us. She is paragon of virtues, *speculum virtutis*. Mary was called to testify the truth of her Son at the feet of the cross. While He was dying, She was called to believe in the immortality of her Divine Son. She was called to testify that, in the immense and boundless sorrow of Mother, though. The prophesy of Simeon had already predicted this martyrdom:

*“Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. (Lk 2,25-4)*

The Apostle John attests how this prophesy has been precisely fulfilled at the feet of the cross:

*“Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.” (Jn 19,25-27).*

The martyrdom of the Mother of Jesus was truly high, most high. The trial of faithfulness She was subjected by God to gain every crown of glory was great, most great. No one in the world might ever overcome it. One needs to be filled with the same love for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. No one in the world is. The Virgin was in a most perfect way.

With a right title, Mary is Queen of Martyrs. No martyr, no testimony of the faith might ever say to Her: my sorrow, my suffering, my martyrdom has been greater than yours. God will never grant this glory to any creature. Also because every child of Adam suffers his sins, his transgression, his violation of the Law of the Lord. The Virgin Mary has never committed one only venial sin, neither the least one. Sorrow was not due to Her. She takes it entirely and lives it for us, She offers it in sacrifice, uniting it to that of her Divine Son, for our redemption. The physical sorrow does not count before the Lord, also because our flesh of sin is hard flesh, most hard. The nails cannot even undermine, so much it is tick it is. Mary was not pierced in flesh. She was crucified in the most pure, most sensible soul. This makes the difference. It makes a great difference. In this crucifixion of the soul at the feet of the cross, Mary deserved the palm of the martyrdom and the title of Queen of Martyrs. She lived her martyrdom in the greatest love, in the greatest offering and oblation of Herself and of her Diven Son to the Eternal Father. Through her holy sorrow, united to the sorrow, most holy of the Son of God too, grace descended into our hearts. Abraham has obeyed and through this obedience he received a great promise, unique promise in the history of salvation. God has promised to no one else such a great, high, most high thing.

*Again the LORD'S messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said: "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants shall take possession of the gates of their enemies, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing - all this because you obeyed my command.'' (Gen 22,15-18)*.

Now it is righteous to ask: what promise has the Lord made for the most perfect obedience of the Virgin Mary? He promised to Abraham that in his offspring all the nations of earth would have been blessed. At the feet of the cross, Christ Jesus, through will of his Father, has given a most great gift to Her, a unique gift in the history of salvation: each of her disciple would have been her true child and She his true Mother, always through the work of the Holy Spirit. As through the work of the Holy Spirit She has made the Son of the Most High in her virginal womb, so through the work of the Holy Spirit She would have made every disciple of Jesus as his true child in her mystical womb. Much more. Only being born as her true child, he would have become true child of God in her Only Begotten Son Christ Jesus. The mystery of the Mother of God is great. The Father has given another most great and sublime gift to Her: He has made Her his mediator in Christ, for every grace that descends onto earth. From the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. From Christ Jesus through Mary in the Holy Spirit. Not only in the descending line. This mediation is also in the ascendent line. From us through Mary to Christ Jesus in the Holy Spirit. From Christ Jesus to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Old Mariology thus proclaimed: *Per Mariam ad Jesum, per Jesum ad Padrem.* Mary truly lives a unique mission in the history of salvation. After Christ Jesus, in her true humanity, Mary is the most sublime woman before the Father.

Jerusalem weeps for its children. Its sorrow is unsayable. But it is only figure, only a sign of the great sorrow that afflicts the Virgin Mary every day, seeing her children going in the eternal exile, distant from the house of the Father, because of their sins. The sorrow suffered on the cross was sorrow of great hope. In the Holy Spirit, She knew that her Son would have risen. For the children who are lost, her sorrow is hopeless. It is sorrow with no solace. Here is why the Church uses a quote of the First Lamentation to manifest how great the sorrow of our Mother is: “*Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see Whether there is any suffering like my suffering.*” Let us read and meditate the First Lamentation:

*How lonely she is now, the once crowded city! Widowed is she who was mistress over nations; The princess among the provinces has been made a toiling slave. Bitterly she weeps at night, tears upon her cheeks, With not one to console her of all her dear ones; Her friends have all betrayed her and become her enemies. Judah has fled into exile from oppression and cruel slavery; Yet where she lives among the nations she finds no place to rest: All her persecutors come upon her where she is narrowly confined. The roads to Zion mourn for lack of pilgrims going to her feasts; All her gateways are deserted, her priests groan, Her virgins sigh; she is in bitter grief. Her foes are uppermost, her enemies are at ease; The LORD has punished her for her many sins. Her little ones have gone away, captive before the foe. Gone from daughter Zion is all her glory: Her princes, like rams that find no pasture, Have gone off without strength before their captors. Jerusalem is mindful of the days of her wretched homelessness, When her people fell into enemy hands, and she had no one to help her; When her foes gloated over her, laughed at her ruin. Through the sin of which she is guilty, Jerusalem is defiled; All who esteemed her think her vile now that they see her nakedness; She herself groans and turns away. Her filth is on her skirt; she gave no thought how she would end. Astounding is her downfall, with no one to console her. Look, O LORD, upon her misery, for the enemy has triumphed! The foe stretched out his hand to all her treasures; She has seen those nations enter her sanctuary Whom you forbade to come into your assembly. All her people groan, searching for bread; They give their treasures for food, to retain the breath of life. "Look O LORD, and see how worthless I have become!*

*"**Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see Whether there is any suffering like my suffering, which has been dealt me When the LORD afflicted me on the day of his blazing wrath. "From on high he sent fire down into my very frame; He spread a net for my feet, and overthrew me. He left me desolate, in pain all the day. "He has kept watch over my sins; by his hand they have been plaited: They have settled about my neck, he has brought my strength to its knees; The Lord has delivered me into their grip, I am unable to rise. "All the mighty ones in my midst the Lord has cast away; He summoned an army against me to crush my young men; The LORD has trodden in the wine press virgin daughter Judah. "At this I weep, my eyes run with tears: Far from me are all who could console me, any who might revive me; My sons were reduced to silence when the enemy prevailed." Zion stretched out her hands, but there was no one to console her; The LORD gave orders against Jacob for his neighbors to be his foes; Jerusalem has become in their midst a thing unclean. "The LORD is just; I had defied his command. Listen, all you peoples, and behold my suffering: My maidens and my youths have gone into captivity. "I cried out to my lovers, but they failed me. My priests and my elders perished in the city; Where they sought food for themselves, they found it not. "Look, O LORD, upon my distress: all within me is in ferment, My heart recoils within me from my monstrous rebellion. In the streets the sword bereaves, at home death stalks. "Give heed to my groaning; there is no one to console me. All my enemies rejoice at my misfortune: it is you who have wrought it. Bring on the day you have proclaimed, that they may be even as I. "Let all their evil come before you; deal with them As you have dealt with me for all my sins; My groans are many, and I am sick at heart." (Lam 1,1,22).*

That of the Virgin Mary is a spiritual sorrow no physical sorrow might ever be compared to. Has Jesus on the cross not added the spiritual sorrow, infinitively more excruciating than the physical sorrow? Has He, the Son of God, the Creator of man not been subjected to all the wickedness, the evil, the hatred of humanity that have fallen on his Person? This is love, though: taking all this world of hatred and of every other evil to expiate for the eternal redemption of man. Through this unsayable sorrow lived in our place, we have obtained the forgiveness of sins by God.

Whoever loves the Mother of Jesus and loves Christ Jesus must also take the sorrow of Mary and the sorrow of Jesus, that is sorrow of salvation and of redemption. It is a necessary sorrow to deliver every man from the slavery of the sin and of death. That is a sorrow, so that the grace of God may descend into a heart and attracts it to Christ, to the faith in his Word, to the faith in his name, the only name in which we are to be saved. If we do not make the sorrow of Mary and the sorrow of Jesus ours, then it means that we do not love them, and we do not love them because their sorrow for the salvation of the world is not our sorrow, and their physical and spiritual cross is not their cross. This attests that we are not yet disciples, neither of Mary nor of Jesus. They live for the salvation of the souls and we have no interest in their salvation. Instead, living the sorrow of Christ Jesus in the silence of the heart as they have lived it in the silence of the heart, but offering the life for the salvation of the world, we attest that our love for them is true and that our discipleship is perfect. Until their sorrow becomes our sorrow, we cannot consider ourselves true disciples, neither of Mary nor of Jesus. Today many disciples of Jesus live an anthropological “sorrow”, but not theological, not soteriological and not even eschatological. Their sorrow is vain for it is not the theological, soteriological, eschatological, missionary sorrow of Jesus and of Mary. Mother of God, Queen of Martyrs, come to our rescue. Let us be able to unite our sorrow, lived in the greatest holiness, to yours, to be offered to the Father, in Christ, through the Spirit, for the conversion of the world.