



Saints today. Saints for all eternity.

From the desk of Dr. Marco Clark

"There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother Mary, who knew grief and was a Lady of Sorrows. She is our special patroness, a woman who bore much she could not understand and who stood fast. To her many sons and daughters, whose devotions ought to bring them often to Her side, she tells much of this daily cross and its daily hope"
~ Constitutions, 8:120

Dear Holy Cross Family and Friends,

The title of Mary as Our Lady of Sorrows comes from the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, during which the prophet Simeon says to Mary, "And you yourself a sword will pierce" (Luke 2:35). According to Tradition, Mary suffered seven sorrows in her life, beginning with the very prophecy of Simeon. The other six sorrows are the flight into Egypt, the loss of the child Jesus in the Temple, the encounter with Jesus carrying His Cross, the crucifixion, the reception of Jesus' body from the Cross, and the burial of Jesus in the tomb.

Together, with the Holy Cross sisters, the Brothers and Priests of the Congregation of Holy Cross look to Our Lady of Sorrows as the one who can instruct us and strengthen us in the core of our spirituality and our mission: to proclaim the cross of Christ as our only hope.

So why am I writing about Our Lady of Sorrows for this month's newsletter. First, a few weeks ago I had the great pleasure to participate in my first Parent's Weekend at Holy Cross College. I watched with joy as families painted beautiful renditions of the Millennial Arch, under the direction of our gifted Visual Arts Director Angelo Ray Martinez, M.F.A., peered through microscopes together with Science professors Dr. Elaine Mokrzan and Brother Lawrence Unfried, C.S.C., learned about the student-faculty collaborative research conducted with Dr. Cosette Fox (Psychology) and Dr. Aris Alexandrou (Biology) on the effects of melatonin and growth mindset on stress and anxiety, listened to the inspiring words of Notre Dame and NFL legend Tim Brown (who is also an HCC parent) as he spoke on leadership, celebrated Holy Mass with families on Saturday evening followed by ice skating at Howard Park, and enjoyed fellowship together at Sunday morning's pancake breakfast. The joys of that weekend were also tempered with sad farewells as families headed back home, as well as sadness felt by those whose parents were unable to attend.

I am also contemplating Our Lady of Sorrows during this Lenten season, a season in which we prepare for Christ's resurrection but must first pass through the disciplines and sacrifices of Lent, followed by Christ's passion and death during Holy Week. Imagine the fear and angst that Mary must have felt when hearing Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce her heart, when she and Joseph escaped from Herod's jealous rage, when they lost their Son for three days and found him in the temple, when she met him on the way to Calvary, watched him die on the cross, held his lifeless body, and ultimately witnessed his burial. By saying yes to God's mission, Mary had no idea of what she was entering into. She only had to trust God and accept His call for her life. As Father Michael Belinsky, C.S.C. wrote in a reflection titled, *Our Lady of Sorrows: A Channel of Faith and Hope*, (September 15, 2021, Congregation of Holy Cross website), "In God's wisdom and goodness, Mary bore much sadness that she could not understand, yet, in her, our Lord's first and truest believer, we can find a channel of faith and hope amid the crosses of our lives. For through Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, Christ continually offers his saving grace to all God's children."

Earlier this year, Holy Cross College embarked upon an exciting project on campus dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. Through the extraordinary generosity of a donor and friend to the College, this spring we will commence the construction of a new sacred space on campus. A committee of faculty, staff, and students have worked with local sculptor Miklós Simon and South Bend based Alliance Architects, to design and create three sculptures—the tree of life, Jesus on the cross, and Our Lady of Sorrows, placed in a beautiful water feature which flows together Mary's yes and her sorrows with her salvific mission. This space, which will be visible from the center of campus and will sit along the banks of the St. Joseph River, will serve as a daily source of inspiration and reminder of the motto of the Congregation of Holy Cross—Hail the Cross, our only Hope. Through Mary's yes, although she encountered great difficulty, fear, and sadness, she made way for the saving mission of Christ. Through Mary's yes, she brought hope and healing to the world.

After spending the past nine months at Holy Cross, I too believe that our distinctive mission, and the calling for each member of our community, is to bring hope and healing to the world. Through rigorous and engaged scholarship, formed as courageous citizens and virtuous leaders, may each of us become faithful and hopeful disciples who build bridges to one another, bond in solidarity, and become witnesses with the competence to see and the courage to act for a more loving and just world.

This Lenten season I invite you to join me in contemplating Our Lady as we prepare for the promise of Christ's resurrection as disciples with hope to bring. Ave Crux, Spes Unica!

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Ave Crux, Spes Unica,

Marco J. Clark, Ed.D.

