Vatican

Francis, the comic strip



Pope Francis preaches about the motherhood and sorrows of Mary during his morning Mass April 3, 2020, in the chapel of his Vatican residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Cindy Wooden

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

## Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — April 3, 2020
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

On the Friday before Holy Week, Pope Francis asked people to keep a long tradition of Catholic piety by focusing on "the suffering and sorrows of Our Lady."

"Honor Our Lady and say, 'This is my mother,' because she is mother. This is the title that she received from Jesus precisely there, at the cross," the pope said at Mass April 3. Jesus "did not make her prime minister or give her 'functional' titles. Only 'mother.'"

Mary did not ask for any honor or special titles, the pope said. "She didn't ask to be a quasi-redemptrix or a co-redemptrix, no. There is only one redeemer and this title cannot be duplicated."

For decades, some Catholics have been petitioning the popes to recognize Mary as "co-redemptrix" to highlight the essential role she played in redemption.

"Just disciple and mother — and in that way, as mother, we must think about her, seek her out, pray to her," Francis said. "She is the mother in the church that is mother. In the maternity of Our Lady, we see the maternity of the church, which receives everyone, good and bad, everyone."

The Friday before Palm Sunday is observed in many places as the "Friday of Sorrows," a special day of Marian devotion.

Francis asked Catholics to spend time considering the "seven sorrows" of Mary: Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce her heart; the flight into Egypt; the worry when the child Jesus could not be found because he was in the temple; meeting Jesus on the way to Calvary; seeing Jesus on the cross; witnessing Jesus, lifeless, being taken down from the cross; and seeing Jesus being buried in the tomb.

Mary bore those sufferings "with strength, with tears — it wasn't a fake cry, hers was truly a heart destroyed by pain," the pope said.

Francis said that late in the evening, when he prays the Angelus prayer, he contemplates the seven sorrows and recalls "how the mother of the church, with so much pain, gave birth to all of us."

With the morning Masses from the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae livestreamed during the coronavirus crisis, Francis begins the liturgy with a special thought and prayer intention each day.

"There are people who already are thinking about the 'after,' what happens after the pandemic," the pope said April 3. They already are strategizing ways to alleviate "all the problems that will come — problems of poverty, jobs, hunger. Let us pray for all the people who are helping today, but also thinking of tomorrow to help all of us."

Advertisement