



Questions for Personal Reflection or Discussion

Introduction

1. What kind of pressure do I feel to conform or perform? Do I feel like I've got it all together?
2. Pelagianism was one of the first heresies the Catholic Church had to face. It affirmed that we could become perfect and holy by our own effort, without God's grace. Have I found myself trying to be perfect so that I can be worthy of God's love? How so? Or do I truly trust in the gratuitous, unconditional love of God, our Father who is rich in mercy?
3. How have sorrows in my life helped me to turn more fully to God and rely on his grace? How have sorrows helped to "awaken the world," in the words of C.S. Lewis?
4. Am I aware that I could channel and regulate my emotions, feelings, and passions? Do I see a need to rectify anything in my comprehension, value system, or openness of mind?
5. What are some ways that I have shown true compassion to others? What are some ways that I have recognized the redemptive value of my suffering?
6. Which of the seven sorrows catches my attention most at first glance? Why?

Sorrow 1

1. What do I find myself worrying about? How do I bring those worries to Jesus in faith?
2. Have I learned to trust in God's Providence in a way that dissipates worry, because I recognize in faith that as my loving Father he will never let anything separate me from him? Do I feel that he holds me in his arms? In what ways have I separated myself from him?
3. In what ways do I seek control in my life? Do I trust God enough to relinquish everything to him? How can I grow in trust?
4. When I experience worry, do I get so caught up in the present concerns that I lose sight of how God has cared for me in the past? Or of how his Divine Providence provides for the future?
5. Do I live mired in the sins of my past, without trusting in God's mercy? Have I sought out the freedom that God wants to give me in the sacrament of Reconciliation?
6. Do I see wisdom, the gift of the Holy Spirit, present in my life? Does that wisdom help me to put everything in perspective and keep my peace, even amid trials? Have I asked for this gift in prayer?



Sorrow 2

1. Am I still insecure in some ways? Where do I find my security?
2. What are some ways that I still seek creature comforts, the accolades and esteem of others, or control of everything myself? How do I grow in my trust, and in what areas do I need to place my security in God?
3. Do I have compassion on those who are rejected, unwanted, or on the fringes of society? Where do I encounter these people in my life? How do I treat them? Am I so insecure that I am afraid to associate with them in any way, lest my own reputation be brought down?
4. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, do I find strength and peace through belief in God's loving presence, even amid turmoil and daunting obstacles?
5. How am I growing in understanding, the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps me to see into the deeper reality of things, relate all truths to my supernatural purpose, and appreciate God's loving Providence in all that happens?
6. How does that understanding help me to put my security in the Lord, rather than in things, others, or self? Have I asked for this gift in my prayer?

Sorrow 3

1. What fears have been affecting my life recently? In what way have they dominated me, stolen my peace?
2. How could I experience the freedom and peace God desires for me, reflected in these words: "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18)?
3. What was it that kept the Blessed Virgin Mary from blaming Joseph? What needs to change in my own heart, mind, or behavior so that I stop tearing others down with my words and instead build up and encourage those around me? Have I asked for God's grace in prayer, through the intercession of Mary, for these changes or do I think I can do it by myself?
4. How have I experienced separation from Jesus in my own life? Have I come now to a deeper relationship with him? What has helped me the most to strengthen my relationship with Christ?
5. What have the sources of joy been so far in my life? Have I experienced something of the deepest joys that come from the greatest good, God himself?
6. Have I experienced the joy of giving and sharing my own experience of God's goodness? Would I feel sorrow or joy if one of my children had a calling to the priesthood or consecrated life? Why? What would the Blessed Virgin Mary have to say to me about that?



Sorrow 4

1. Do I follow Christ because the crowds of people around me call out “Hosanna!” to him, or because I have encountered his love for me at a deeper level?
2. When I face shame for his name, do I pretend not to know him, or do I push through the crowds to accompany my Lord wherever he may go?
3. When I experience the burden of family members or friends whose mistakes and messy lives seem to drag me down, how do I turn to the Virgin Mary and to Jesus Christ for strength? Do I walk away from tough situations? How can I love as Christ calls me to love?
4. In what ways have I embraced my cross? How have I experienced the joy that comes from uniting my suffering with Christ?
5. How do I show that I truly believe that Jesus can “make all things new,” and that even apparent failure and defeat can be turned into glory for those who trust in the Lord?
6. When I feel weak or that I cannot go on, do I ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of fortitude?

Sorrow 5

1. How do I usually react when others hurt me or those I love? Why? Do I hold on to anger and resentment, or forgive as Jesus did on the Cross, as Mary did at the foot of the Cross?
2. In what ways do I live out the importance of prayer of intercession for others? How do I respond when the Holy Spirit leads me to pray for someone?
3. How do I accept the love and appreciation of those around me? Do I let others accompany and console me or do I have walls built up in my mind or heart?
4. How do I express my love for others in words and deeds? In what ways do I accompany others and console them in their sorrows?
5. What aspects of the “art of accompaniment” have I assimilated in my own life? What elements do I need to continue developing, with God’s grace?
6. Have I embraced the Blessed Virgin Mary as my mother? How could I ask her for the help I need to follow Jesus and be his disciple?

Sorrow 6

1. How have my personal sins wounded the heart of Jesus, perhaps more than the soldier’s lance ever did?
 2. What do the saints see in the blood and water coming from Jesus’s side that I still need to grasp more deeply in my own life? The totality of Christ’s self-giving love? God’s mercy flowing out to heal humanity? The birth of the Church? The source of the sacraments?
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3. How do I handle rejection, silence and grief in my own life? Do I flee from it? Does it embitter my heart, stirring anger, resentment, or close-heartedness? Do I lose perspective? Or do I process grief in the same faith that the Virgin Mary showed at the foot of the Cross?
4. How can I better foster gratitude and hope in my heart? How can I encourage it in others?
5. What are some instances where I have recognized signs of hope, conversion, and rebirth even in dark situations? Do I base it on merely a cheerful disposition, or on a profound faith, hope, and love that come from prayer and communion with Jesus Christ?
6. What differences could the Holy Spirit's gift of piety make in my life?

Sorrow 7

1. What are some instances where I have learned how to let go of people, situations and control, leaving all in the hands of God the Father? How can I grow in my trust in him?
2. What things do I hold onto most tightly in my own life? Where do faith, hope, and love fit into the picture for me right now? Is there anything - e.g., my way of seeing things, my hurts, my resentment, my control - that I still need to let go of to experience the freedom Christ wants for me?
3. How could I foster more of an attitude of constant growth, of looking forward to the future, to the mission that God has in store for me? What are some ways that I can avoid letting my heart get stuck in the moment, losing perspective, drowning in my teacup of sorrow?
4. Who are the people who have helped me to detach? To hold on? To move forward? And who are the people who hold me back from being at peace in God's plan?
5. How can I help those whom I love with extra details of service? What more can I do to help them live with the type of holy detachment the Blessed Virgin Mary shows us, so that they can experience the joy that God has in store for us?
6. In what ways do I recognize the gift of wisdom in my own life?