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Follow Christ with Mary

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Monday February 27, 2023

Liturgical readings of the season from the votive Mass of the Lenten season: 'Holy Mary, Disciple of the Lord'

For special occasions, such as pilgrimages to a Marian shrine or extraordinary events for Marian groups, the Church provides votive Masses with a Lenten theme. The first of the five Marian Lenten Masses ties in with the liturgies for the universal Church in the theme of the *innocent young one who rejoices in her heart because the "precepts of the Lord are right"* (Sirach 51:13; Psalm 19:9).

Mary is presented to the Church as the woman who has faithfully sought wisdom. She is the one who believed the Word of God, who found the Lord trustworthy, "giving wisdom to the simple" (Psalm 19:8). She is the Virgin who kept the Word of God and pondered it in her heart (See Luke 2:19). She followed the Lord from the first moment of his earthly existence and heard the words praising her for her faith:

Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled (Luke 1:45).

The votive liturgy applies a text from the book of Sirach to Mary. Mary has sought wisdom, that is, she has searched for her God and found him who is the truth, the way, the life. Because she sought wisdom and found it, she herself is gifted with wisdom, the wisdom that sings God's praises, as Mary did in her Magnificat song. Read the holy words of Sirach:

*When I was young and innocent,
I sought wisdom.
She came to me in her beauty,
and until the end I will cultivate her.
As the blossoms yielded to ripening grapes,
the heart's joy,
my feet kept to the level path
because from earliest youth I was familiar with her.
In the short time I paid heed,
I met with great instruction.
Since in this way I have profited,
I will give my teacher grateful praise.
... My whole being was stirred as I learned about her;
therefore I have made her my prize possession.
The Lord has granted me my lips as a reward,
and my tongue will declare his praises (Sirach 51:13-18, 20-22).*

Mary was filled with joy at the Annunciation and at the Visitation. The Nativity, too, had its moments of joy, but also its sorrow. But it was when Jesus was presented in the temple that she heard the prophecy:

"And a sword will pierce your own soul too — so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare" (Luke 2:35).

From that moment on, Mary pondered on the saving mission of her Son with the knowledge that she, too, must suffer with him and for him. This she faithfully did to the very last.

– *Excerpted from Lenten Weekly Meditations by Sr. M. Jean Frisk, I.S.S.M. included on the All About Mary website.*

Image: Detail of "Our Lady of Sorrows" by Arturo Olivas, S.F.O., 2009. From the Marian Library Art and Artifacts Collection.