

## The Sorrowful Mysteries

People sometimes carry with them wounds from the past that still rankle within their hearts. With the passage of time the rankling may no longer be felt. But the harmful effect of the wound, if it has not healed, will persist.

For instance, a child will be overwhelmed with grief at the loss of a mother. The grief may be repressed and forgotten. But it continues to influence the life of this child now become an adult: the person may find it hard to get close to others for fear of losing them, or may not be able to take in the love people are offering, or may gradually lose interest in life and people in general because emotionally they are still standing at the mother's grave, refusing to let her go, demanding a love from her which she can no longer give.

Or you may have been deeply hurt by a friend. The hurt turns into resentment that keeps smoldering within you and gets mixed up with the very genuine love you have for the person, so that, for some mysterious reason, the warmth goes out of your relationship.

Or something may have frightened you as a child, leaving an unpleasant memory and a propensity to fear and anxiety whenever you are reminded of it or faced with similar situations today.

Or you still carry around with you a feeling of guilt which you cannot get rid of and which serves no useful purpose.

It is helpful to return to the events that produced these negative feelings so as to drain them of any harmful effect they may be having on you today.

**Return to some scene in the past where you have felt pain or grief or hurt or fear or bitterness. . .**

**Re-live the event. . . But this time seek and find the presence of the Lord in it...**

**In what way is he present there?**

**Or, imagine that the Lord himself is present at the event... What role is he playing?...**

**Speak to him.**

**Ask him the meaning of what is happening... Listen to what he says in reply...**

It is a help to return to the event in imagination again and again until you are no longer affected by the negative feeling that is produced. Till you are able to let go of something that is causing you grief, to forgive someone who caused you pain, to face calmly what formerly caused you fright... till you are able to re-live the event in peace; possibly even with feelings of joy and gratitude.

It is quite possible that in re-living these events you will begin to understand that the Lord himself has had a hand in bringing them about. It is also likely that your feelings of resentment or anger or bitterness will then turn against him. If this happens it is important that you face these feelings and express them to the Lord without fear.

The Lord knows what is in your heart and nothing is achieved by hiding it. On the contrary, a frank expression of what you are feeling — even if you have to use bitter and hard words to express those feelings — will help to clear the atmosphere and will bring you closer to the Lord. It is wonderful that you should trust him so much, be so sure of his unconditional love for you that you can say hard things to him too! It is significant that Job in his sufferings said some very hard things to the Lord while his scandalised companions chided him and urged him to blame himself and not speak harshly about the Lord but when the Lord finally appeared he exonerated Job and expressed displeasure with his well-meaning but insincere friends!

