

Corrections

pg 7 "order of race" should read "order of grace"

pg 199 The Sixth Sorrow – Jesus is Placed in the Arms of Mary

Mary's own martyrdom of love was not yet complete. "For the sins of His own nation, saw Him hang in desolation, till His spirit forth He sent." (1) In one final exclamation mark that rubbed salt into the maternal wound of her heart, "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (Jn19:34). Mary must have winced, perhaps even wept, as she felt the sword pierce her own heart, as her intellect bore the full burden of Simeon's prophecy, as the weight of His body sagged upon the cross. "At the stroke of the spear the cross shook ... the heart of Jesus was divided in two ... only a few drops of blood remained and even those our Savior was pleased to shed, that (2). So close were they, that the "lance which opened His side passed through the soul of the Blessed Virgin, which could never leave her Son's heart." (3) The spear was like the last sword that seeks to finish the victim, a final indignity, a final mutilation. Such was the horror of the battlefield, where the injured and dying were put out of their misery and suffering. Such was the revulsion of the cross. Such was the sheer tortuous agony of His Mother.

It must have been difficult taking His body down from the cross and painful for His Mother to watch. His body was placed in her arms for one final embrace. Michelangelo's *Pieta* would capture that moment so that all mankind could bear witness to His Mother's anguish. The "earth held nothing one half so sacred" (4) and one half so agonizing as at that moment. Those who mourn cannot truly express their misery. How inexplicable that agony was for the one who was "full of grace," united to God Incarnate, inflamed and juxtaposed with memories of the newborn Child in her arms, her grief now all-consuming. "She spoke not. Her voice broke not the silence, mingled not with the moans of the dying thieves; but the silence of her prayer was loud in heaven." (5) What mother does not cry out, weeping, My God, My God why have you abandoned me, as their only child dies in her arms?

1. Matthew Britt (Ed.). *Stabat Mater (Dolorosa)*, 132.
2. Alphonsus Liguori. *The Glories of Mary*, 441.
3. Alphonsus Liguori. *The Glories of Mary*, 441.
4. Frederick William Faber. *The Foot of the Cross*, 347.
5. Frederick William Faber. *The Foot of the Cross*, 348.