

### Mary at the Cross

**Leader** A week ago we celebrated the birthday of Mary the Mother of Jesus. Yesterday the Church celebrated Holy Cross day. So, put the two together, and you get today's feast of "Mary at the Cross" – otherwise known as "Our Lady of Sorrows." We think of Mary at Calvary, standing at the foot of the Cross with Jesus's disciple John. Jesus is supported by the presence of his female disciples, but John was the only one of Jesus's male disciples not to have fled.

**Reader From the Gospel according to St John**

19.25-27

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

**Leader Part of an ancient hymn of praise**

You, Christ, are the King of glory, the eternal Son of the Father.

When you took our flesh to set us free you humbly chose the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You are seated at God's right hand in glory.

We believe that you will come and be our judge.

**Reflection** Mary, it is said, "won the martyr's palm without dying." This is to say, she endured watching the torture and agonizing death of her son, very close up. I think we all know what it's like when someone we love is suffering, and we wish we could take their place. It would be easier to bear if we had to suffer ourselves. Jesus was strengthened in his passion by the presence of his mother – who had played her part in making him who he was and is and ever shall be: the Saviour of the human race and of the world. In the midst of the agony, Jesus is not just thinking of himself. He provides for the future care of his mother. And in doing so he creates new relationships ("son" and "mother") which go beyond the confines of ordinary family. Indeed, this is laying the foundations of the Christian Church in which we are all taken into the family of God.

### Prayer

**Leader** Lord Jesus in nurturing you, your Blessed Mother grew in faith and endurance, so that she could take her place with you at Calvary, giving and receiving love.

**Reader** Lord Jesus, as we behold the cross, increase our love for you and for all. Amen.

**Leader** And when the days of our life are ended,

**Reader** may we reflect the image of Christ in his Passion, that we may become sharers in his glory. Amen.

### Lord's Prayer

**Leader** Let us bless the Lord    **Reader** Thanks be to God