



# Visitation of the Seven Churches



The Seven Churches Visitation is a powerful way to spend time in adoration, meditating on Christ's sacrifice of love for the salvation of souls in preparation for the joy of Easter. The pilgrimage to each church corresponds to the seven "stops" or "stations" of the via crucis that were made by Jesus on His way to Calvary. There is something special about visiting churches late into the night. It is not just because of the opportunity to visit other parishes, it's because of intentionally seeking Christ to spend time with Him and contemplating the gift of His love.

*"God dwells in our midst, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar."*

- St. Maximilian Kolbe

# First Visit

**Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane  
 (Luke 22:39-46)**



39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. 40 When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." 43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. 45 When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, 46 and said to them, "why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

**We adore You, Most Holy Lord, Jesus Christ, here and in all churches of the whole world, and we bless You because by Your Cross You have redeemed the world. Have mercy on us.**



## On the way to the next parish

### Opening Meditation

In the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary we see a reflection of the suffering and bitter anguish of the human Christ. Just as Mary accepted the total mystery of Christ into her life, so may we see in our sorrow, our fear, and humiliation, a dim, but real participation in His passion and death, recalling that if we wish to follow Him, we must "take up our cross" each day. Let us pray that we may accept Christ's call, and become co-sufferers of His passion.

### I THE FIRST SORROW

#### The Prophecy Of Simeon

Many of us are parents. We know that only by sharing life with God is life fulfilled. That is why we also sense a fear about the future of our loved ones. Simeon's prophecy was a blessing for all mankind, but foretold grief for you, Mary. Your first sorrow was much more than a parent's fear.

(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)

## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** It would be about 10 pm when Jesus arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane. His soul was filled with sadness, he went into agony at the sight of the sufferings that were upon him and the ingratitude of humanity. He prayed for about three hours with tears and bloody sweat, the drops of which fell to the ground. Judas arrived here and with a kiss he handed him over to those who came to apprehend him, although rather it was his love for you that handed him over.

**Prayer:** We pity you Jesus and we thank you for what you suffered for our Salvation in the Garden Prayer. We are hurt by the betrayal and treachery with which you were imprisoned. Grant us strength in our sufferings and give us the gift of prayer.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**



# Second Visit

Jesus bound and taken before Annas

(John 18:19-22)



19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. 20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 21 Why do you question Me? Question those who heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said." 22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

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## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** Jesus, handcuffed like a common criminal, questioned by Annas about his disciples and doctrine, replies with integrity and meekness that he ask those who have listened to him and who know well what he has said and taught. A guard gave him a slap that surely made him stagger.

**Prayer:** Jesus, we pity you; we thank you for the unjust humiliation you suffered by being slapped. We ask you to help us speak truthfully, calmly and politely and to respect our interlocutors.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**



## On the way to the next parish

### II THE SECOND SORROW

#### The Flight Into Egypt

What can a mother do when the life of her child is threatened? When Herod decreed death for all those innocent children, God warned Joseph. With no time for packing or goodbyes, you escaped into the night. Homeless and tired, with an uncertain future before you, you were secure in nothing but the love of those who needed you.  
(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)



# Third Visit

Jesus taken before the High Priest, Caiaphas  
(Matthew 26:63-65)



63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus \*said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless, I tell you, hereafter you will see the son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need to we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy!"

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## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** Here Jesus has to hear how his doctrines are distorted. How false testimony is adduced against him. How he is challenged to proclaim that he is the Son of God, but with no intention of acknowledging him. How Peter denies knowing him. How do you declare him guilty of death?

**Prayer:** Jesus, you are the truth and lies are piled up to shut you up. You have said: "the truth will set you free" but you have to see how the lie enslaves us. You have said: "you are my friends" and how easily we deny you. In you we are children of God and what poverty of our life. We pity you, Jesus, for these betrayals and we ask you for the grace to be your courageous witnesses, faithful to your love.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**



## On the way to the next parish

### III THE THIRD SORROW

The Loss Of Jesus In The Temple

A child is lost. What panic grips the hearts of parents at such a time! They wonder, "Is he safe?" "Will I ever see him again?" And then they imagine things too terrible to express. It was the same for you and Joseph. Mary, for three days you sought Jesus. It took faith to continue the search in the pain of separation.

(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)



# Fourth Visit

**Jesus taken before Pilate  
(John 18:35-37)**



35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." 37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

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## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** Jesus is accused before Pilate of criminal, troublemaker of the people, who prohibits paying tribute to Caesar and who proclaims himself king. Jesús announces that everyone who is of the truth listens to his voice. They ask he be sentenced to death.

**Prayer:** Jesus, we proclaim you Christ the King, because you are the only King of Truth, Life and Love. We pity you for the sadness that the impudence with which they slander you must give you and for the blindness with which they play with words out of your mouth. We ask you to cleanse these lips and these hearts with which we receive you, and that our lives bear witness to you.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**



## On the way to the next parish

### IV THE FOURTH SORROW

Mary Meets Jesus On the Way To Calvary

What mother called suddenly to the hospital to see her sick or injured child has not wished: "If only I could suffer instead of you!" But she remains only a spectator. Mary, you saw Jesus beaten and bloody. You felt powerless to help Him, and yet through your love you shared His pain.

(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)



# Fifth Visit

**Jesus taken before Herod  
(Luke 23:8-11)**



8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. 9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. 11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.

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## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** Herod, curious but uncommitted, is glad to see Jesus. He hopes to have fun watching him perform some miracle. Jesus remains silent before the verbiage with which Herod flatters him. Having no answer, he despises him, mocks him, putting a white robe on him.

**Prayer:** Jesus, Wisdom of the Father, you are now silent. Because of you the simple and humble have seen the power of God and have celebrated it with great joy. Now you are downcast. We thank you for the lesson you give us, we pity you for the outrage you receive and we ask you for the grace to speak and remain silent in a timely manner.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**



## On the way to the next parish

V THE FIFTH SORROW

Jesus Dies On The Cross

It has often been said, "To lose a child is the worst death for a parent to endure."

Mary, in those long hours, at the cross, perhaps your thoughts returned to earlier days. How horrible now to face the reality of death! His breath grew labored. The time had come. Yet He spoke to you and consoled you. In dying he gave life to others and made you mother of all mankind.

(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)



# Sixth Visit

**Jesus taken before Pilate again  
(Matthew 27:22-26)**



22 Pilate \*said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all \*said, "Crucify Him!" 23 And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!" 24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." 25 And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!" 26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

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## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** Pilate acknowledges that Jesus is neither a troublemaker nor has he committed any of the crimes that accuse him. It's like he wants to set him free; but he yields to the pressure of the adversaries who have sworn to kill Jesus because they find him uncomfortable, his behavior and his teachings collide with his interests. Jesus is condemned to death on the cross, scourged, crowned with thorns.

**Prayer:** Jesus, we pity you for the injustices committed in this process to which you were subjected and in which we put our hands. We pity in you those who are unjustly treated for being faithful to the truth and to the cause of God in their children. We ask you for the grace of divine mercy in the face of our injustices.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**



## On the way to the next parish

### VI THE SIXTH SORROW

Mary Receives The Dead Body of Jesus  
He is dead . . . and it hardly seems real. How many of us have paused before the body of a loved one and wondered: "Can this be happening to me?" Death is real, all too real! As you held Jesus in your arms, Mary, you probably wondered as we have, "Is this the end of everything?" (One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)



# Seventh Visit

Jesus is given a crown of thorns and led to His crucifixion  
(Matthew 27:27-31)



27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. 28 They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29 And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. 31 After they had mocked Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

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## On the way home

### VII THE SEVENTH SORROW Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

The garden and the tomb . . . there is something strangely consoling about the burial of Jesus, Mary. Perhaps a flower or blade of grass reminded you of his words "Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it cannot produce new life." It is always difficult to see death and life together, but you continued to believe, hope, and love. His words filled your heart.

(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)

#### Closing Prayer

Lord God, our Father, from the passion and death of Jesus, shared by the compassion of his Mother, you brought healing to fallen man. Grant that we, your people, may experience this healing and rise from the power of sin to a wholeness of life promised by Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, AMEN. (Three Hail Marys) and wondered: "Can this be happening to me?" Death is real, all too real! As you held Jesus in your arms, Mary, you probably wondered as we have, "Is this the end of everything?"  
(One Our Father .... Seven Hail Marys)



## Meditation & Prayer:

**Meditation:** Jesus has died on the cross between unspeakable pain, ridicule, and contempt. His Mother and the friends who have accompanied him in these hard times have not been able to do anything. Some friends piously bury him. The scriptures have been fulfilled. Now to wait for the third day. He, the mighty in deeds and words, has said that he will rise again.

**Prayer:** Jesus, we will accompany you in silence these days, waiting for your word to germinate in our hearts and with you we will resurrect as new men and women in your Resurrection. Thank you, Father God, you have always listened to your Son and thus, victorious over his death and ours, you have resurrected him.

**3 Our Fathers are prayed.**