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**PASTORAL VISIT TO INDIA**

 **13-15 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**HOLY MASS AT THE TOMB OF**

 **BLESSED MOTHER TERESA (MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY)**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF CALCUTTA**

***HOMILY: Tuesday, 15 September 2015***

*Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows*

Readings: 1st Reading: Hebrews 5, 7-9

 Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 31

 Gospel: Luke 2, 33-35

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we remember the sorrows of our Blessed Virgin Mother Mary, above all the sorrow of seeing her son die on the Cross.

Mary’s sorrow was profound. The fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary was human, although we know that according to Catholic doctrine she was preserved from the original sin, does not mean that she was without feelings. On the contrary, Mary lived her womanhood to the full: she loved, she had her worries, she felt the pain of loss, she exercised hope when facing her difficult moments. In a word, she lived every moment of her life intensely.

Today we celebrate this liturgical memorial one day after having celebrated the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, the instrument upon which Mary’s son Jesus was crucified, a scene that she personally witnessed in sorrow and in prayer.

Mary’s sorrow was lived with the same faith by which she accepted her divine maternity. It is the same spirit of faith that is ours as we experience the sorrow and tragic intensity of the crucifixion.

Mary’s sorrow was connected to the sufferings of Christ. Moreover, at the foot the Cross, as her Son was gasping for his last breath, Mary once again became the mother of a newborn infant, the Church.

In this sense Mary’s sorrow, as labor pains, was not without hope. In the Resurrection of Christ she came to understand what Christian hope truly is: a theological virtue that holds the other two virtues of faith and charity together. Her hope, therefore, did not keep her from feeling pain, nor did the pain keep her from expecting the Resurrection of Jesus.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is our mother and like every good mother, she teaches us, she is an example for us, and she walks with us throughout our life.

Today we gather together at the tomb of another “mother,” who, when confronted with pain and sorrow, sought to do something about it. Blessed Mother Teresa restored dignity to the suffering, the abandoned, indeed, to the “poorest of the poor”. She offered self-giving love to myriads of people. More than that, she offered “love until it hurts”. She alleviated the pain that human beings can inflict upon one another through injustice. She offered rays of hope to those, who through her kindness were given shelter and food. She led by example; she evangelized through her “simple love” put into deeds and actions.

Her maternal example towards the underprivileged managed to captivate a great number of young people who were inspired to follow her. There is no doubt that she inspired many to imitate her in answering God’s call. Perhaps this was the most captivating aspect of her human and Christian endeavor.

This extraordinary fascination continues to captivate a great multitude of people in India, of all creeds and religions, as well as millions of others throughout the world, including all of the members of the Religious family she founded, the Missionaries of Charity. May she continue to be an inspiration and model of love for God and for the poor; a beacon of light and hope; a friend and intercessor to all; and, as she always was, a caring Mother. Through her intercession may God bless your Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity with more vocations! Finally, I urge and encourage you my dear brothers and sisters to continue the precious work that Blessed Mother Teresa initiated for the good of the Church and the world.