

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church**

**Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love. (Psalm 86:4-5)**

### **Genesis 3:9-15, 20**

In the garden, man enjoyed an intimacy with God which was destroyed by disobedience. Ashamed and afraid man and woman hid themselves from God. This excerpt tells us that through disobedience sin entered the world, and as a result, man and woman experienced separation, suffering, and ultimately death. Man and woman failed to be faithful to what God made them to be. Sin is a violation of what God made us to be.

**Be faithful to what God made you to be.**

### **Psalm 87**

His foundation is on holy mountains,  
The LORD loves the gates\* of Zion  
more than any dwelling in Jacob.  
Glorious things are said of you,  
O city of God!

### **John 19:25-34**

This is a beautiful and inspiring story of how Jesus, even as he hung on the cross, was thinking of other's pain rather than his own. He stepped into the sorrow of others around him. The same chapter also tells us how those who loved him remained faithful and loyal to the one they loved as he suffered and eventually died on the cross. They stepped into and shared each other's sorrow.

This is what the sorrowful mother did. She stepped into the pain, rejection, loneliness, anguish, and passion of her son and that of his disciples, without going under. She stood strong and steadfast for her son and for his disciples. She became strength for the suffering, lonely, rejected and the sorrowful. She emerged from her pain and sorrow to become for us a fearless, powerful, courageous, and moving figure.

Let us be inspired by the example of the sorrowful mother and learn to be present to each other in times of disappointment, pain, suffering and sorrow.

## **Saint of the Day, May 29 - St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and 28 other saints are remembered this day.**

Madeleine Sophie was born on December 12, 1779, in Joigny, France, next door to a house on fire. The stress and terror of the fire caused Sophie's mother, Madame Madeleine Fouffé Barat then pregnant with her third child, to go into labour. Born two months premature, Madeleine Sophie was considered so fragile that she was baptised early the next morning. Although her parents had arranged godparents in advance, there was no time to call them to the church and so, at five o'clock on the morning of December 13, 1779, Louise-Sophie Cédor, a local woman on her way to early Mass, and Sophie's older brother, Louis, stood in as her godparents.

Madeleine Sophie was born into a financially comfortable family. Her father, Jacques Barat, was a cooper and vine-grower. The Barats were Jansenist Catholics, and Jansenism is often said to have shaped Sophie's spirituality profoundly. She was always willing to help people in need and to pray for others.

Sophie was brought up in strict but loving home. Her older brother Louis, a seminarian, homeschooled Sophie and brought her to Paris with him when she was 16. He was overbearing and made all decisions for her for the next five years. Sophie became emotionally lost and anxious, but it was during this time that God awakened her to the truth of his divine love.

In 1800, Sophie met Father Joseph Varin who asked her to head an order of teaching nuns dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She accepted and professed her vows that same year. The number of convents and schools of the Society of the Sacred Heart grew quickly. Her leadership was centered on the love of God, a life of prayer, and reflection. Sophie was elected Superior General for life in 1806. By 1857, the Society had spread from France to 13 other countries in Europe, Africa, and North and South America. At the time of her death, her community consisted of 3,359 women. Today, there are over 2000 schools operated by the Society of the Sacred Heart in 41 countries. Madeleine Sophie Barat died on May 25, 1865 in Paris, France and was canonized in 1925 by Pope Pius XI.

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