September 15th: Our Lady of Sorrows

Gospel text (*Lk* 2:33-35): The father of Jesus and his mother wondered at what was said about the child. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, «See him; He will be for the rise or fall of the multitudes of Israel. He shall stand as a sign of contradiction, while a sword will pierce your own soul. Then the secret thoughts of many may be brought to light».

«A sword will pierce your own soul»

Fr. Josep Mª SOLER OSB Abbot Emeritus of Montserrat
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, in the celebration of the feast of our Lady of Sorrows, we hear the most unspeakable words in the mouth of old Simeon: «And a sword will pierce your own soul» (Lk 2:35). From its context, we can assert this declaration does not only concern Jesus Christ's passion, but his missionary work, that will stir up the division of the people of Israel, and therefore, a painful grief in Mary's heart. All along Jesus' public life, the Virgin Mary will experience great sufferings upon seeing Jesus rebuked and threatened with death by the city authorities.

As the rest of Jesus' disciples, Mary has to learn to place her family relations in a different context altogether. She must also leave her Son because of the Gospel (cf. Mt 19:29), and have to learn not to appraise the Christ for his flesh, despite the fact He is flesh of her flesh. She is to crucify also her flesh (cf. Gal 5:24) to be able to transform herself into the image of Jesus Christ. But the topmost peak of her suffering, where she lives the cross more deeply, is Jesus' crucifixion and death.

Also in her pain, Mary is the model of perseverance of the evangelic doctrine while sharing Christ's suffering through her patience (cf. Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue 50). She has done it all her life, and most than all, while in the Calvary. There she becomes the prototype and model for all Christians. Because she has been so closely linked to Christ's death, she is linked afterwards to his resurrection too (cf. Rm 6:5). In her excruciating pain, Mary's perseverance to abide by the Father's will, deserved her a new irradiation in benefit of the Church and of Mankind. Mary precedes us and helps us to follow Christ in our way of faith. And the Holy Spirit leads us to share with her this great adventure.