

The Woman: Take-Home 9

Session 9: The New Rachel

What We Found

Matthew hears Rachel weeping when Bethlehem's sons are slaughtered (Matthew 2:16–18, quoting Jeremiah 31:15). We traced the voice to its grave: Rachel died on the Bethlehem road giving birth, naming her son Ben-oni, 'son of my sorrow,' whom his father renamed Benjamin, 'son of the right hand' (Genesis 35:16–20). Read typologically, the Messiah carries both names at once: the man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3) enthroned at God's right hand (Psalm 110:1), and in that reading his mother's motherhood lives in the hyphen.

Jeremiah answers the weeping on the same page: 'there is hope for your future... your children shall come back' (Jeremiah 31:16–17), in the very chapter that promises the new covenant (31:31). Christian sorrow is real sorrow inside a promised reversal.

Simeon prophesied the sword over Mary on the fortieth day of her Son's life: 'a sword will pierce through your own soul also' (Luke 2:35). Her share in his Passion is participation, never substitution: Christ's one offering is fully sufficient (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Timothy 2:5), and her unrepeatable cooperation flows entirely from the superabundance of his merits. We ended standing where she stood: 'standing by the cross of Jesus... his mother' (John 19:25).

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

St. Bernard teaches, in substance, that Simeon's sword passed through Mary's soul at the Cross: she is more than martyr, suffering in the soul what the martyrs suffered in the body.

Sermon within the Octave of the Assumption (*Sermo infra octavam Assumptionis*), used in the Office of Readings for the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15 (summary)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

"There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart..."

Lumen Gentium 58 (as quoted in CCC 964)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE STABAT MATER

At the Cross her station keeping, stood the mournful Mother weeping, close to Jesus to the last. The hymn asks to share, not merely admire, her love: make me feel as thou hast felt.

Stabat Mater (13th-century liturgical hymn)

Live It This Week

- Pray one decade of a Sorrowful Mystery this week for someone who is grieving.
- Read Jeremiah 31:15–17 and 31:31–34 together once: tears and covenant on one page.
- If you carry an unmourned grief, write down one concrete step toward mourning it well, and take it.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

Luke 2:35 (RSV2CE)

Before next session: We finish the scene exactly where we stopped. Before next session, sit once more with John 19:25, and no further.

Catechism references: CCC 964; 618; 970