

## MARY QUEEN OF MARTYRS<sup>of</sup>

The title of Queen of Martyrs is found in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, approved by papal authority in 1587. Early tradition had maintained that the Virgin's suffering as she witnessed the birth, ministry and passion of her son brought her into a special relationship with his redemptive mission. The image of God the Father holding the body of Christ crucified (called the throne of grace<sup>as</sup>)

the Latin sign placed on Christ's cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." To the right an angel approaches with a crown. To the left is a heart pierced by seven swords representing the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. This rhetorical symbol is developed from the prophecy of Simeon when Christ was presented in the Temple. The prophet turned to Mary, saying, "and you yourself shall be pierced with a sword" (Luke 2:35).

At a time before widespread literacy, it was common to develop sequences of concepts in numerical patterns to aid memory. Thus Mary was described as undergoing Seven Joys and also Seven Sorrows, which include the Presentation in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, the Search for the Boy Jesus in the Temple, the Road