
[When Mothers Cry](#)

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SWARTZ CREEK MI (ANS) -- Like a recurring nightmare, we again hear of carnage and senseless violence, a bizarre attack and unanswerable questions; and a school is again the setting. A lone perpetrator, but a million mysteries. Worse than only hearing the news, we see these days the anguish and fear, the confusion and panic; we see distraught children, and we see the tears on the cheeks of mothers.

Before those tears have dried, there are calls from some quarters to change laws and outlaw guns. But in the same week a school in China was invaded, and children died at the hands of a knife-wielding maniac. Arsonists have, throughout history, claimed the lives of men, women... and children. Innocents. History's pages are, in some ways, chronicles of the slaughter of innocents.

Would that we had the power to outlaw hatred and evil, not just guns and knives. Then we might be spared seeing mothers' tears... and mothers themselves might be spared the constant fears, and all-too-common realities, that continuously, cruelly plague them as protectors of their precious children.

Mothers' tears must burn like acid. I write as a man, a father, who cannot imagine that special bond. We grieve for mothers as well as their lost children in these nightmare situations. What I have been slowly comprehending, as time goes on, is the news footage of events around the world, seemingly different, are more and more alike to me. Mideast terrorism, wars in Afghanistan, genocide in Africa, religious persecution everywhere, and random attacks in our own neighborhoods: I used to listen to statistics, see the weapons, read the demands or justifications, the "claims of credit" of armies and groups. They all

become as white noise. Now I only see, more and more, the tears on the cheeks of grieving mothers.

Are the tears of a Palestinian mother any less sacred, after a missile strike, than the tears of an Israeli mother after a bus bombing? An Afghan mother whose village has changed "sides" every week for months -- are her tears less precious when one side or the other patrols her streets? A Christian mother in Pakistan loses her child to Muslim zealots; a mother from an African tribe loses all her children when a rival tribe sweeps her village; mothers all over the globe lose their daughters to traffickers and slave masters -- do we harvest those tears to weigh and measure them... against what? The humble teardrop is a leveling agent.

There was one mother in history who shed such tears, and in fact witnessed almost all these separate, horrible events happening to her son. She experienced grief a hundredfold, for her son was persecuted, taken from her, framed, tortured, abandoned by almost everybody except her, and murdered. She witnessed it all. The woman who cried those tears was Mary. It is a risky thing to attempt to quantify grief, but hers was unique because she KNEW these things would happen to her son -- and to her -- 33 years in advance.

Mary was chosen to be the one who would fulfill prophecy, a virgin who would bear the Incarnate God, sent to humankind to assume our sins and suffer the punishment we deserve. Mary knew these Old Testament prophecies, and she listened to the angles who visited her. When she in turn visited her sister (who was pregnant with John the Baptizer), Mary spoke the classic "Magnificat":

My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. Because He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations to them that fear Him. He has showed might in His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. ...

Christians remember Mary's prayer in the Advent season. We remember the promises of God, knowing they are blessings. We meditate upon the ways of God, as Mary ultimately had to; and about the obscene vagaries of life, as Sandy Hook mothers must.

There is sin in the world. A loving God gave us free will, desiring that we experience life. He did not create us as angelic robots. Such beings cannot know sorrow nor joy. Redemption and salvation cannot be experienced by beings who need them not. No angel ever sang "Amazing Grace" with tears of joy streaming down the cheeks.

But with life, in all its fullness, comes the other tears, to which we return in sadness; and, can we all agree, in confusion and bitterness and at times unspeakable grief. There is no escaping it. It is human nature to feel these emotions, even when we trust God fully. In our seasons of pain we can try to understand human nature, and sometimes hear people apologize for it. But our attempts to understand are futile.

In that futility -- beyond the fundamental proposition that it is a sinful nature -- we must recognize on the other hand that God's antidotes are easy to understand. He knows our

sorrows, He understands our weaknesses, He feels our pain, He identifies with our losses, He has sent the Holy Comforter on whom we can call, He offers us peace that passes understanding.

Let us pray that weeping mothers and grieving families find that peace, and draw closer to, not farther from, God at these times. To lose one's faith, after losing a child, would intensify the unbearable misery of those who suffer.

It has long been warned that if God were removed, so to speak, from America's classrooms, trouble, danger, and evil would fill the void. This week one Adam Lanza entered a school to fill that vacuum. And all the mothers' tears alone cannot wash away the horror.

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Mary cried tears of joy and tears of grief, as the mother of Jesus. May the timing of the Sandy Hood school massacre in the Advent season find some little connection as we contemplate the tears of mothers. The beautiful and profound new Christmas song "Mary Did You Know" is coupled with images of Mary and her Son. They are moments of birth and joy, pride and love, loss and death, and are from the movie "Passion of the Christ." As is well known, these are difficult images to behold, so this is a Warning to Viewers; yet they correctly portray the grief of one mother who witnessed, not just learned about, the massacre of her Son.

[Video | Mary Did You Know](#)

About the Author

Rick Marschall is the author of 65 books and hundreds of magazine articles in many fields, from popular culture (Bostonia Magazine called him "perhaps America's foremost authority on popular culture") to history and criticism; country music, television history, biography and children's books. He is a former political cartoonist, editor of Marvel Comics, and writer for Disney comics. For 10 years he has been active in the Christian field, writing devotionals; co-author of *The Secret Revealed* with Dr Jim Garlow. His biography of Johann Sebastian Bach for the "Christian Encounters" series (Thomas Nelson) was released in April, 2011. His history of cartoon Advertising, *Drawing Power*, will be published in July 2011 by the Marschall Books imprint of fantagraphics Books. In October his major biography of Theodore Roosevelt, *BULLY!*, will be published by Regnery History of Washington DC. He is currently working on a One-Year CDevotional for Tyndale House; and edits the reissue of Harper's Weekly -- the Civil War Years for NOVOink e-books. Rick is a former Director of Product Development for Youth Specialties. He is recipient of the 2008 "Christian Writer of the Year" award from the Greater Philadelphia Writer's Conference, and produces a weekly e-mail devotional, "Monday Morning Music Ministry." His e-mail address is: RickMarschall@gmail.com.