

Seven Sundays Devotion: Prayers in Honor of the Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph

composed by Blessed Gennario Sarnelli, C.S.S.R. (d. 1744)*

The Seven Sundays Devotion developed after St. Joseph appeared to a couple of friars who were aboard a ship that sank off the coast of Flanders sometime before the beginning of the 16th century. They managed to stay afloat for three days, all the while praying for help. Because they had always been devoted to St. Joseph, they continuously asked him to save them. On the third day, a man appeared to them, quite radiant, and told them to have faith and trust in St. Joseph. They listened. The man rescued them, getting them safely ashore. Once on land the friars asked him who he was and how could they thank him or what honor they could they pay him. He identified himself as Joseph. He told them that if they wanted to honor him, daily recite the Our Father and Hail Mary seven times while meditating on his Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys during his life with Jesus and Mary. The account was recorded in the 16th century by Father John da Fano, a Capuchin, in a little work he wrote about devotion to St. Joseph. It spread in the early 18th century when Redemptorist Father Gennaro Sarnelli (beatified by St. John Paul II in 1996) put together the official prayer--meditations to go along with the seven Our Fathers and Hail Marys. As the devotion spread, popes approved and promoted it by attaching indulgences to this powerful devotional prayer, including Blessed Pius IX.**

Fourth Sunday, Vigil and Sunday Masses, February 20, 2022

Fourth Sorrow: The prophecy of Simeon. (Luke 2:34)

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold this Child is destined for the fall and the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And your own soul a sword shall pierce.

Fourth Joy: The effects of the Redemption. (Luke 2:38)

And coming up at that very hour, she began to give praise to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

O most faithful Saint who shared the mysteries of our Redemption, glorious St. Joseph, the prophecy of Simeon regarding the sufferings of Jesus and Mary caused you to shudder with mortal dread, but at the same time filled you with a blessed joy for the salvation and glorious resurrection which, he foretold, would be attained by countless souls.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that we may be among the number of those who, through the merits of Jesus and the intercession of Mary the Virgin Mother, are predestined to a glorious resurrection.

Our Father Hail Mary Glory be

*The Seven Sundays in honor of St. Joseph are observed by receiving Holy Communion in his honor on seven consecutive Sundays, and on each Sunday the prayers in honor of the Seven Sorrows and the Seven Joys of St. Joseph are recited. This devotion may be practiced at any time of the year, but especially on the seven Sundays preceding his solemnity on March 19th. At St. Veronica, we began at all Masses on Sunday, January 30th (and the Vigil Mass the previous evening) and will conclude on the weekend of March 12th/13th.

**Based on "It's Time to Start the Seven Sundays Devotion to St. Joseph," *National Catholic Register*, <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/saint-joseph-seven-sundays>, Joseph Pronechen, January 28, 2021.