

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.***

Second Sunday, February 12, 2023

Second Sorrow: The poverty of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2:7)

And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Second Joy: The birth of the Savior. (Luke 2:10-11)

And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all people; for today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord."

O most blessed Patriarch, glorious St. Joseph, who was chosen to be the foster father of the Word made flesh, your sorrow at seeing the Child Jesus born in such poverty was suddenly changed into heavenly exultation when you did hear the angelic hymn and beheld the glories of that resplendent night.

By this sorrow and this joy, we implore you to obtain for us the grace to pass over from life's pathway to hear the angelic songs of praise, and to rejoice in the shining splendor of celestial glory.

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 20th.

**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.

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Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be . . .

Third Sorrow: The Circumcision. (Luke 2:21)

And when eight days were fulfilled for His circumcision, His name was called Jesus, the name given to Him by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Third Joy: The Holy Name of Jesus. (Matt. 1:25)

And he did not know her until she brought forth her first born son. And he called his name Jesus.

O glorious St. Joseph you faithfully obeyed the law of God, and your heart was pierced at the sight of the Precious Blood that was shed by the Infant Savior during His Circumcision, but the Name of Jesus gave you new life and filled you with quiet joy.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us the grace to be freed from all sin during life, and to die rejoicing, with the holy Name of Jesus in our hearts and on our lips.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be . . .

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 . . .

Fifth Sorrow: The flight into Egypt. (Matt. 2:14)

So he arose, and took the Child and His mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt.

Fifth Joy: The overthrow of the idols of Egypt. (Is. 19:1)

Behold the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt will be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof.

O most watchful Guardian of the Incarnate Son of God, glorious St. Joseph, what toil was yours in supporting and waiting upon the Son of the most high God, especially in the flight into Egypt! Yet at the same time, how you did rejoice to have always near you God Himself, and to see the idols of the Egyptians fall prostrate to the ground before Him.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us the grace of keeping ourselves in safety from the infernal tyrant, especially by flight from dangerous occasions; may every idol of earthly affection fall from our hearts; may we be wholly employed in serving Jesus and Mary, and for them alone may we live and happily die.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be . . .

Sixth Sorrow: The return from Egypt. (Matt. 2:22)

But hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee.

Sixth Joy: Life with Jesus and Mary at Nazareth. (Luke 2:39)

And when they had fulfilled all things prescribed in the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, into their own town of Nazareth.

O glorious St. Joseph, an angel on earth, you did marvel to see the King of Heaven obedient to your commands, but your consolation in bringing Jesus out of the land of Egypt was troubled by your fear of Archelaus; nevertheless, being assured by the Angel, you dwelt in gladness at Nazareth with Jesus and Mary.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that our hearts may be delivered from harmful fears, so that we may rejoice in peace of conscience and may live in safety with Jesus and Mary and may, like you, die in their company.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be . . .

Seventh Sorrow: The loss of the Child Jesus. (Luke 2:45)

And not finding Him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of Him.

Seventh Joy: The finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. (Luke 2:46)

And it came to pass after three days, that they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

O glorious St. Joseph, pattern of all holiness, when you did lose, through no fault of your own, the Child Jesus, you sought Him sorrowing for the space of three days, until with great joy you did find Him again in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers.

By this sorrow and this joy, we supplicate you, with our hearts upon our lips, to keep us from ever having the misfortune to lose Jesus through mortal sin; but if this supreme misfortune should befall us, grant that we may seek Him with unceasing sorrow until we find Him again, ready to show us His great mercy, especially at the hour of death; so that we may pass over to enjoy His presence in Heaven; and there, in company with you, may we sing the praises of His Divine mercy forever.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be . . .

Antiphon [Conclusion]: And Jesus Himself was beginning His ministry about the age of thirty years, being (as it was supposed) the Son of Joseph.

V. Pray for us, O holy Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray.

O God, Who in Your ineffable Providence did vouchsafe to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Your most holy Mother, grant, we beseech You, that he whom we venerate as our protector on earth may be our intercessor in Heaven. Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.