

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> century by Father John da Fano, a Capuchin, in a little work he wrote about devotion to St. Joseph. It spread in the early 18<sup>th</sup> 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.\*\**

### First Sunday, February 5, 2023

First Sorrow: The doubt of St. Joseph. (Matt. 1:19)

*But Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was minded to put her away privately.*

First Joy: The message of the Angel. (Matt. 1:20)

*But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit."*

**O** chaste Spouse of Mary most holy, glorious St. Joseph, great was the trouble and anguish of your heart when you were minded to put away privately your inviolate Spouse, yet your joy was unspeakable when the surpassing mystery of the Incarnation was made known to you by the Angel!

By this sorrow and this joy, we beseech you to comfort our souls, both now and in the sorrows of our final hour, with the joy of a good life and a holy death after the pattern of your own, in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

*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 20<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*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.