

## 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.\*

### Seventh Sunday, March 19, 2023

**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.

\*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.