

## WONDER 6

### SAVIOR OF THE SAVIOR

He [St. Joseph] guarded from death the Child threatened by a monarch's jealousy, and found for him a refuge.

— Pope Leo XIII

### Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys

Because St. Joseph was associated with Mary in her glorious privileges, he also had to suffer like her and his heart too was pierced by seven swords.<sup>1</sup>

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a devotion to St. Joseph began in the Church called the Seven Sorrows of St. Joseph. No one seems to know the exact origins of the devotion, but it parallels a popular devotion to Our Lady called the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

As a devotion, the Seven Sorrows of St. Joseph consists of meditation on biblical passages from the life of St. Joseph that caused him sorrow. When meditating on the biblical passages, it is customary to pray an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be.

Saint Joseph was such a great lover of God, but was afflicted by much suffering which he endured with a wonderful fortitude.<sup>2</sup>

— St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Blessed Januarius Maria Sarnelli took the Seven Sorrows of St. Joseph devotion and added another dimension to it: the Seven Joys of St. Joseph. In his preaching, Blessed Januarius told the story of how two shipwrecked Franciscans had been lost at sea for several days, clinging to a plank so as not to drown. Suddenly, a man appeared to them and guided them safely to shore. When the Franciscans asked the man who he was, the man responded that he was St. Joseph. After revealing his identity, St. Joseph asked the Franciscans to honor his Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys on the Seven Sundays leading up to his feast on March 19. As a result of Blessed Januarius' preaching about the shipwrecked Franciscans, the Seven

Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph devotion became known as the Seven Sundays Devotion to St. Joseph and quickly spread throughout the entire Church.

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 thee to shudder with mortal dread, but at the same time filled thee with a blessed joy for the salvation and glorious resurrection which, he foretold, would be attained by countless souls.<sup>3</sup>

— Blessed Januarius Maria Sarnelli

The Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph, the biblical references that go with them, and their order according to the Seven Sundays devotion are as follows:

#### 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY

1<sup>st</sup> Sorrow: *Saint Joseph Resolves to Leave Mary Quietly* (Mt 1:19)

1<sup>st</sup> Joy: *Saint Joseph's Annunciation* (Mt 1:20)

#### 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY

2<sup>nd</sup> Sorrow: *The Poverty of Jesus' Birth* (Lk 2:7)

2<sup>nd</sup> Joy: *The Birth of the Savior* (Lk 2:10-11)

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY

3<sup>rd</sup> Sorrow: *The Circumcision* (Lk 2:21)

3<sup>rd</sup> Joy: *The Holy Name of Jesus* (Mt 1:25)

#### 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

4<sup>th</sup> Sorrow: *The Prophecy of Simeon* (Lk 2:34)

4<sup>th</sup> Joy: *The Effects of the Redemption* (Lk 2:38)

#### 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

5<sup>th</sup> Sorrow: *The Flight into Egypt* (Mt 2:14)

5<sup>th</sup> Joy: *The Overthrow of the Idols of Egypt* (Is 19:1)

#### 6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

6<sup>th</sup> Sorrow: *The Return from Egypt* (Mt 2:22)

6<sup>th</sup> Joy: *Life with Jesus and Mary at Nazareth* (Lk 2:39)

#### 7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY

7<sup>th</sup> Sorrow: *The Loss of the Child Jesus* (Lk 2:45)

7<sup>th</sup> Joy: *The Finding of the Child Jesus* (Lk 2:46)

May he [St. Joseph] take charge of the affair of your salvation. Just as he led the Son of God in his travels, may he be your guide on the voyage of this life until you arrive at the haven of eternal happiness.<sup>4</sup>

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

## Savior of the Savior

To give life to someone is the greatest of all gifts. To save a life is the next. Who gave life to Jesus? It was Mary. Who saved his life? It was Joseph. Ask St. Paul who persecuted him. Saint Peter who denied him. Ask all the saints who put him to death. But if we ask, “Who saved his life?” Be silent, patriarchs, be silent, prophets, be silent, apostles, confessors and martyrs. Let St. Joseph speak, for this honor is his alone; he alone is the savior of his Savior.<sup>1</sup>

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

“Savior of his Savior?” That sounds heretical, doesn’t it? Don’t worry: Blessed William Joseph Chaminade is not claiming that St. Joseph is God or greater than Jesus. Blessed William Joseph was a very holy priest and had a tremendous devotion to St. Joseph. He lived through the French Revolution and suffered many hardships during a very anti-Catholic era of France’s history. Blessed Chaminade’s love for Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph gave him the strength to resist the evil intentions of the revolutionaries.

At the height of the French Revolution, Blessed Chaminade spread devotion to Mary and preached fervently about St. Joseph. He encouraged his religious confreres to act as the heel of Mary and crush the darkness of the revolution. He knew the power of St. Joseph as well, and encouraged everyone to seek refuge beneath the fatherly protection of St. Joseph.

Make him [St. Joseph] responsible for the protection of your person, he who saved the life of his Savior.<sup>2</sup>

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

To understand and justify Blessed Chaminade’s description of St. Joseph as the “Savior of his Savior,” we turn to the Gospel of Matthew.

When they had departed [from Bethlehem], behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the