

# St. Joseph's Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys

By [Fr. Dan Cambra, MIC](#) (Mar 19, 2019) (National Shrine of Divine Mercy, Stockbridge MA)

I have a little blue book, about the size of a wallet, that I have kept with me since who knows when. Published in 1943 and long out of print, it's called *Pious Union of St. Joseph: Manual of Devotions for Every Day* and authored by Fr. Hugolinus Joseph Storff, OFM.

Worn and well-loved, my little blue book serves as a memento to a time when Catholics in general were raised to have a strong devotion to St. Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, and the most powerful saint (next to Mary). Sadly, this hardly seems the case anymore. Saint Joseph isn't written about, preached about, or prayed to as much as he used to be. You and I must do what we can to change that.

Since we members of the Holy Souls Sodality are celebrating 2019 as our own little Year of St. Joseph, I've been revisiting this book and rediscovering some excellent pious practices that honor St. Joseph. This being March, the month we celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19), I'd like to share one of my favorite pious practices. It's called Devotion to St. Joseph's Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys.

I suggest we turn to this devotion this month, particularly for the sake of those loved ones of ours who may be facing an unhappy death, a death that leads to eternal damnation. Let's commend them to St. Joseph, the saint, *par excellence*, to whom we can turn when we seek conversion for ourselves and for our loved ones. Through our prayers to St. Joseph, our "patron of a happy death" (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1014), let's watch God work miracles.

Allow me first to explain St. Joseph's Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys. According to my beloved little book, this devotion's origin is traced to an incident involving two Franciscan priests traveling in a ship along the Belgium coast. A storm hit, and the ship was sunk. For three days and three nights, the two priests clung to a plank and prayed to St. Joseph. Then, at one point, in youthful form, the spouse of the Virgin Mary and foster father of Jesus Christ appeared to the priests, guided them to safety, and taught them the practice of reciting seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys in honor of his Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys.

You'll notice that the Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys each stem from seven powerful moments in St. Joseph's life. We are invited to learn a larger lesson from this. As my little book says, "A main issue in our life is to capitalize our sorrows and joys for eternity. Too many sufferings and consolations are lost for heaven. The method to sanctify sorrow and joy is to endure them all patiently and to offer them up in union with Mass celebrated throughout the world joined to the intercession of Mary Immaculate and St. Joseph for the salvation of the dying."

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**The devotion, with some updating in language for the sake of clarity, is as follows. Pray:**

**Day 1:** Saint Joseph, chaste spouse of Mary, great was your sorrow when, in a state of uncertainty, you were inclined to quietly divorce Mary. But great was your joy when the angel revealed to you the mystery of Christ's Incarnation.

By this sorrow and this joy, we ask you to relieve [name(s)] of all anxieties and doubts about their future and fill their hearts with confidence in the powerful protection of Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

**Day 2:** Glorious St. Joseph, chosen foster father of the Word made flesh, great was your sorrow at seeing the Child Jesus born in such poverty. But great was your joy when you beheld the brightness of that holy night in which the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will."

By this sorrow and this joy, we implore you to obtain for [name(s)] the grace that the Infant Jesus may again be born in their hearts and that, blessed with the sweet peace of God, they may join after their death in the joyful company of the angels.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

**Day 3:** 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 great was your joy when you gave Him the name of Jesus that would bring salvation to sinners.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for [name(s)] the grace to be freed from all sin during life and to die rejoicing with the Holy Name of Jesus in their hearts and on their lips.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

**Day 4:** Most faithful St. Joseph, great was your grief when, at the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, you heard Simeon's prophecy of the future sufferings of Jesus and Mary. But how great was your joy when Simeon foretold that Jesus would be the Light for the revelation to the gentiles and the glory of His people.

By this sorrow and this joy, we pray that you assist [name(s)], that through the light and the power of the Sorrowful Mother, they may see their salvation, and praise and thank God for the grace of a happy death.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

**Day 5:** Most watchful guardian of the Infant Jesus, great was your grief when, obeying the voice of the angel, you fled to Egypt with Mary and the Infant Jesus. But how great was your joy to have God Himself with you and to see the idols of the Egyptians fall prostrate before Him.

By this sorrow and this joy, I pray that you help [name(s)] to banish from their heart all sinful habits so that Jesus and Mary may come and lead their soul(s) to Heaven.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

**Day 6:** Glorious St. Joseph, head and guardian of the Holy Family, great was your sorrow when, upon the return from Egypt, you learned that cruel Archelaus was reigning in Judea. But great was your joy when the angel of God directed you to go to Nazareth where you lived peacefully with Jesus and Mary until your happy death.

By this sorrow and this joy, I ask that you assist [name(s)] that they may overcome all attacks of the evil spirits and die peacefully under the special protection of Jesus and Mary.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

**Day 7:** Glorious St. Joseph, patron of the dying, great was your sorrow when you lost, through no fault of your own, the Child Jesus for three days. But how great was your joy when you found Him in the Temple.

By this sorrow and this joy, we ask you to help [name(s)] to not lose their Savior for all eternity, but to find Him who is Divine Mercy itself, in the temple of their hearts, especially at the hour of death.

*Recite seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Marys.*

### **The Sorrows of St. Joseph**

1. His doubts about Mary
2. His pain at the lowly poverty of Jesus' birthplace.
3. Watching the circumcision, Jesus' first blood spilt for us.
4. Listening to the painful prophetic message from Simeon.
5. Having to take the Holy Family into exile.
6. The hard trip back from Egypt.
7. The loss of Jesus for three days.

### **The Joys of St. Joseph**

1. The angel's message of joy.
2. The Savior's Birth.
3. Having the honor of naming Jesus.
4. Knowing the effects of Jesus' redemptive work.
5. The idols of Egypt fell at Jesus' feet.
6. Holy life with Jesus and Mary.
7. Finding Jesus after three days.