

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY
THE SEVEN SORROWS OF SAINT JOSEPH

April 23, 2021

St. Peter Julian Eymard writes:

Because Saint 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.

These seven great afflictions were like the stations of the Sorrowful Way that he had to tread in company with Jesus. He suffered continually in his heart; but at certain times his agony became doubly acute, taking on a new intensity, turning the knife in its own wounds.

1. His first great trial was the torturing doubt he felt at Mary's pregnancy. About to abandon her without saying a word, he wondered "What will become of this young girl, little more than a child. Who will take care of her? Still the law enforces separation, and respect for it obliges me to leave her." What terrible anguish for so loving and devoted a heart as Joseph's, a heart that loved Mary more than we can understand.

2. He was deeply hurt when Bethlehem rejected him and forced him to seek refuge in a stable. He grieved not for himself, but for that young mother, Queen of Angels, and for the Infant, his God, who was coming into the world. What smote him hardest was the injury done them and the privations his loved ones would endure in the stable. He did not know how many days and nights they would have to stay there. God was leading him like a blind man, keeping him always dependent, and this uncertainty re doubled his distress,

3. The Circumcision of Jesus. What a shock to Joseph to think that he himself would make the Infant-God suffer and would shed the first drops of His blood. How his heart ached at the sight of that wound, the blood that flowed from it, and the tears of the divine Mother.

4. The prophecy of the aged Simeon. When Joseph learned that a sword would pierce Mary's soul, he fathomed the full meaning of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sufferings and humiliations of the Messiah. From that moment on he bore the sorrow of both Mary and Jesus thought of their sufferings never left him, but became a daily torture which he shared with them.

5. The hurried flight into Egypt. Who can imagine the fears, the terrors of that journey? God filled Joseph with dread so that he might abandon himself to Providence. In that strange land, on those deserted roads, Joseph endured constant anxiety, apprehending every misfortune. He had the heart of a father, the tenderest of hearts. There he was, a poor old man, charged with protecting alone the Treasure of God the Father against the enemies that might at any instant attack it.

6. On his return from Egypt another misfortune was awaiting him. For fear of Archelaus, Joseph was obliged to conceal the Child Jesus again. There was no rest for Joseph, no peace; he escaped one danger only to encounter another.

7. The loss of Jesus in the Temple. So great was Joseph's anguish, so bitter were his tears that the Holy Spirit has willed to immortalize them in Mary's words: "My Son, why has thou treated us so? Think, what anguish of mind thy father and I have endured, searching for thee."¹ He was all the more racked with worry as, in his humility, he accused himself of negligence in caring for the Father's sacred trust.

These were the seven great sorrows of Saint Joseph. He endured them in silence, humility, and love, neither having nor desiring any human consolation. He suffered, not for himself, but for Jesus, for Mary, for the world, for us. Blessed suffering that united him to the redemptive work of the Savior.

Further question to consider:

In times of need, did you completely surrender to Jesus and trust He will do what is best for you?

Action Item:

Take 15 minutes today and unite yourself with St. Joseph, meditating on his 7 sorrows.

Daily Prayer:

Be mindful of us, O blessed Joseph, and intercede for us with thy foster-Son by the pleading of thy prayer: do thou in like manner render the Blessed Virgin Mary, thy Spouse, gracious unto us, for she is the Mother of Him, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns world without end. Amen. (*Memorare of St. Bernardine of Siena*)

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be