

Prayers in Honor of the Seven Sundays of St. Joseph

Seventh Sunday

The Sorrow of Losing the Child Jesus and the Joy of Finding Him in the Temple



Reading

Lk 2: 41-50

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but, supposing Him to be in the other's company, they went a day's journey, and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances. When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. After three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when they saw Him they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done so to us? Behold, Your father and I have been looking for You anxiously."

And He said to them, "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which He spoke to them.

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and His Mother kept all these things in her heart.

Meditation

We can easily understand Mary and Joseph's sorrow on realizing that Jesus had disappeared. They were filled with apprehension as they searched for their son. Those sorrowful days were a premonition of the time that would intervene between Calvary and the Resurrection. Suddenly, they hear His dear voice. There He is! They are greatly comforted, and their pent-up emotions overflow with great joy. In this scene, St. Luke uses the word "parents" a number of times to designate the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. But this word has its deepest meaning when Mary tells her Son: "Behold, Your father and I have been seeking You in sorrow."

"Joseph, of whom Mary had just used the words 'your father,' heard this answer. That, after all, is what all the people said and thought: Jesus was *'the son (as was supposed) of Joseph'* (Lk 3:23). Nonetheless, the reply of Jesus in the Temple brought once again to the mind of Joseph what he had heard on that night twelve years earlier: 'Joseph . . . do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for *that which is conceived*

in her is of the Holy Spirit.' From that time onwards he knew that he was a guardian of the mystery of God, and it was *precisely this mystery* that the twelve-year-old *Jesus brought to mind*: 'I must be in My Father's house.'"

Litany of St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, hear us.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, One God,

have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,
Saint Joseph,
Illustrious son of David,
Light of the patriarchs,
Spouse of the Mother of God,
Chaste guardian of the Virgin,
Foster-father of the Son of God,
Watchful defender of Christ,
Head of the Holy Family,

pray for us.
pray for us.
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Joseph most just,
Joseph most chaste,
Joseph most prudent,
Joseph most valiant,
Joseph most obedient,
Joseph most faithful,

pray for us.
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Mirror of patience,
Lover of poverty,
Model of workers,
Glory of domestic life,
Guardian of virgins,
Pillar of families,
Solace of the afflicted,
Hope of the sick,
Patron of the dying,

pray for us.
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Terror of demons,
Protector of Holy Church,

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Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,

spare us, O Lord.
graciously hear us, O Lord.
have mercy on us.

V. He made him the lord of His household,
R. And prince over all His possessions.

Let us pray: Pattern of holiness, glorious St. Joseph, when you lost the Child Jesus through no fault of your own, with great sorrow you sought Him for three days, until you rejoiced exceedingly in finding Him in the temple among the doctors. By this sorrow and this joy, we earnestly ask you to prevent us from ever losing Jesus by mortal sin; but if through supreme misfortune we lose Him, grant that we seek Him with untiring sorrow, until we find Him again and can live in friendship with Him. Let us enjoy His presence in Heaven, and there with you and the Blessed Virgin Mary to sing His divine mercies. Amen.