

The Seven Sundays of Saint Joseph

Fourth Sunday

Reading:

"And when the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they took Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord - as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord' - and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.'

And behold, there was in Jerusalem a man named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he has seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by inspiration of the Spirit into the temple. And when His parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he also received Him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

'Now you dismiss your servant, O Lord, according to your word, in peace because my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared before the face of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for your people, Israel.'

And His father and mother were marveling at the things spoken concerning Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, His mother:

'Behold this child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And your own soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'
(Lk 2: 22-35)

Commentary:

Simeon tells them that Jesus will be a sign of contradiction, the standard which men will either follow or oppose. And he adds that the Son's sufferings will be intimately connected with his Mother's sorrows.

The sorrows of Jesus and Mary are made known in greater detail. This revelation enables St. Joseph to glimpse more clearly the mystery of the Son's cross. It is impossible to guess the depth of his suffering. He always wanted to protect the Child whom he loved with the greatest of fatherly love, for, as St. Pius X says, he is "the virgin father of Jesus." Now he understands with new insight all the Old Testament prophecies related to Christ's passion.

St. Joseph's mind and heart have been marked by the cross. With the exception of the Virgin Mary, no other human being suffered so much.

As Mary offered her Son on the cross, so did St. Joseph. This offering constitutes the holy patriarch's greatest act of generosity. "It took all the generosity of his love to offer Jesus and Mary to God. It was his supreme sacrifice since he loved them immeasurably more than his own life." (Garrigou- Lagrange, "The Mother of Our Savior)

Prayer:

O glorious St. Joseph, model of faithful fulfillment of God's plans, the prophecy of Simeon about the future sufferings of Jesus and Mary brought mortal fear to you but at the same time filled you with blessed joy for the salvation and glorious resurrection which he prophesied would follow for numberless souls.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that we may be among those who through the merits of Jesus and the intercession of the Virgin Mother are to rise in glory.

Specifically, I ask that.... (mention in silence the favor asked and pray one Our Father, One Hail Mary and one Glory Be).