

There is a Chinese parable: *Long ago, there was a farmer who lived in China. This was a poor farmer who had but one horse. He used his horse to plow the fields so that he could make a living. One day, the horse ran away. "Oh no!" cried the neighbors, "That is terrible!". The old farmer shrugged and said: "Good news, bad news - who knows".*

Several days later, the farmer's horse returned to the farm with several wild horses following behind. The farmer and his son managed to capture the horses, all of them of great beauty. "Oh, how wonderful!" cried the neighbors. Once again, the farmer simply shrugged and said: "Good news, bad news - who knows".

The next day, the farmer's twenty-year-old-son managed to capture one of the wild horses, but while attempting to break the steed, was thrown and his leg badly broken. The neighbors rushed over, peering at the young man in bed, "Oh, this is awful news!" they cried. The farmer shrugged, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

A few weeks later, the Chinese army came by, conscripting all the area's young men for war raging in the south. They couldn't take the young man with the broken leg...

Today is Saint Joseph's Day.

Particular devotion to St. Joseph exists in any number of ways. Not the least of which is the burial of a statue upside-down in the front lawn ... a devotion of dubious merit, which has found its way into the popular culture.

There exists a Chaplet of Saint Joseph, which recounts seven moments in his life. What is interesting about these seven moments is that there is a joy and a sorrow associated with each one of them – giving us the Seven Sorrows and the Seven Joys of Saint Joseph.

Seven Sorrows

The doubt of St. Joseph. (Matt. 1:19)
The poverty of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2:7)
The Circumcision. (Luke 2:21)
The prophecy of Simeon. (Luke 2:34)
The flight into Egypt. (Matt. 2:14)
The return from Egypt. (Matt. 2:22)
The loss of the Child Jesus. (Luke 2:45)

Seven Joys

1 The message of the Angel. (Matt. 1:20)
2 The birth of the Savior. (Luke 2:10-11)
3 The Holy Name of Jesus. (Matt. 1:25)
4 The effects of the Redemption. (Luke 2:38)
5 The overthrow of the idols of Egypt. (Is. 19:1)
6 Life at Nazareth. (Luke 2:39)
7 The finding of the Child Jesus. (Luke 2:46)

In the Letter to the Romans, St. Paul exhorts us saying, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." That is, we cannot always know the end point of something.

Let us reflect on how God has moved in our lives, and ask the intercession of Saint Joseph to bear things with an even temper – recognizing that God intends only our good ... and sometimes how we see things depends on whether or not we are acting for God's will or against God's will.