

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany, February 23rd, 2025
GOD PROVIDES, RECONCILES, AND REDEEMS

Prayer

Lord, help us to understand how you foreshadowed the work of you Son through the life of Jacob's favorite – Joseph.

AMEN

Trustworthy & Loyal

How many of you have ever seen the play *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*? It's a very entertaining and surprisingly accurate summary of Joseph's Story – from Genesis 37 to 46, but it takes over 2 hours to tell in song and we don't have that long this morning.

Suffice it say that as the first-born of his mother, he was loved by his father but not well regarded by his half-brothers, who at first wanted to kill him, but then decided instead to sell him to a travelling merchant. He was taken to Egypt and proved to be a **trustworthy and loyal** servant, for which he was recognized and given positions of power and authority. More than once he was falsely accused and went from power to prison. Because of his integrity and God-given ability to interpret dreams, he ended up as the second most powerful person in Egypt.

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Joseph's character reflected that of God in this respect – He did what he said he was going to do. In numbers (23:19) we read:

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Being able to be trusted is key to solid relationships, which is why trustworthy is the first point of the scout law and loyal the second.

Prepared

God put Joseph into that position of power because He knew what was going to happen and worked through means to **prepare for it** and to preserve His chosen people. One of the dreams that Joseph interpreted for the Pharaoh foresaw seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. To be prepared for those seven years of famine, Joseph directed the Egyptians (Gen 41:49) to

store up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany, February 23rd, 2025
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In doing so, Joseph was not only able to provide for the temporal needs of the Egyptian nation, but also for his entire family, as they traveled from Israel to Egypt during those seven lean years seeking food. God reunited the family that had been split many years before because of hate and envy.

This is not unlike Christ, who came into a fallen and corrupt world to take care of those whom the Father has adopted through Word and Sacrament as his own children. While Jesus provides for all that we need to sustain life here and now, His greater provision is restoring the relationship between creator and creature, promising eternal life to all those who put their trust in Him and the free forgiveness that He offers.

Be prepared is the scout motto; like Joseph they scouts are ready for whatever situations they find themselves in.

Obedient

Even though God had prepared Joseph for the task, he could have refused the positions and the commensurate responsibilities. But He didn't – Joseph was **obedient** to the call the God has placed on his life

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany, February 23rd, 2025
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and did his best. He understood that not only was he accountable to Pharaoh, but to God as well.

Jesus was likewise obedient, even when faced with death, scripture records His words (Matthew 26:39)

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Obedience is the seventh point of the Scout Law.

Kind

In verse 5 of today's reading, Joseph displays a kindness to his brothers – the ones who sold him into slavery – that they didn't deserve. As the one who was hurt, Joseph reached out to those that sought to do him harm and was **reconciled** to them.

Christ is kind all of us - His brothers and sisters by faith – we are guilty of sin and deserve death. He took upon himself our sins and paid that penalty. Paul put it this way in his letter to the church at Rome (Rom 5:6-8)

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany, February 23rd, 2025
GOD PROVIDES, RECONCILES, AND REDEEMS

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Moreover, we who are followers of Christ are called to be kind; Paul says this when writing to the church at Ephesus (Eph 4:32)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Kind comes just after obedient in the Scout Law.

Redeemed

Later, when Jacob - Joseph's father - died, his brothers came to Joseph to ask forgiveness for what they had done. Joseph didn't presume to pass judgment on their actions, but said (Gen 50:20)

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany, February 23rd, 2025
GOD PROVIDES, RECONCILES, AND REDEEMS

Joseph recognized that God had **redeemed** his situation and used it for good purposes.

Likewise, the devil, working through both the occupying Roman government and misleading the leadership of the Jewish faith, thought that he would finally have victory over God, by putting Jesus to death.

Christ, God incarnate, prayed while on the cross (Luke 23:34)

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And the Father honored that prayer, exchanging the life of Jesus with every sinner who has lived, is living, or will live, giving them a promise of eternal life with Him instead of the death and eternal separation from their creator they deserve.

Not unlike Josephs' brothers, we can rejoice and be glad because we are forgiven by Him against whom we have sinned.

Therefore, let us give Jesus all thanks, praise, and Glory for the work which He has done. AMEN