

St. Joseph—Foster Father of Jesus

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Taken from: http://www.therealpresence.org/archives/Josephology/Josephology_001.htm

It is remarkable, how little the Holy Spirit says about famous people in the Bible. The classic example of this is Saint Joseph. He is the most prominent saint in the Catholic liturgy after the Blessed Virgin Mary. Yet there is not a single word in the Scriptures quoting Saint Joseph.

Our plan here is to identify just five qualities of Saint Joseph. Each quality will be briefly described and then applied to ourselves. Of the twenty five invocations in the Litany of Saint Joseph, the ones on which we shall concentrate really cover all we know about the spouse of the Mother of God. Each invocation deserves a volume of commentary.

The Humility of Saint Joseph

Humility, as we know, is the truth. It is the virtue that enables us to recognize and act on the recognition of our true relationship to God first, and to other persons.

By this standard, Saint Joseph was a very humble man.

He recognized his place with respect to Mary and Jesus. He knew that he was inferior to both of them in the order of grace. Yet he accepted his role as spouse of Mary and guardian of the Son of God.

The lesson for us is that genuine humility prevents us from claiming to be better or more than we really are. At the same time, we are not to underestimate ourselves either. A humble person does not consider himself more than he is but also not less than he is.

If we are truly humble, we do not pretend to be more than we really are, which is pride. But we also do not deny what we are, or claim to be less, which is false humility.

Humility is the moral virtue that keeps a person from reaching beyond himself. It is the virtue that restrains the unruly desire for personal greatness and leads people to an orderly love of themselves based on a true appreciation of their position with respect to God and their neighbors. Religious humility recognizes

one's total dependence on God. Moral humility recognizes one's creaturely equality with other human beings. Yet humility is not only opposed to pride. It is also opposed to immoderate self-abjection, which would fail to recognize God's gifts and use them according to the will of God.

The Chastity of Saint Joseph

The Church's constant tradition holds that Saint Joseph lived a life of consecrated chastity. Some of the apocryphal gospels picture him as an old man, even a widower. This is not the Church's teaching.

We are rather to believe that he was a virgin, who entered into a virginal marriage with Mary. This was to protect Mary's reputation and safeguard the dignity of her Son.

What is the lesson for us? That chastity has an apostolic purpose. It is meant to help us win souls. It also shows how highly God regards the virtue of chastity, seeing that He providentially arranged a series of miracles of chastity:

- The virginal conception of the Savior.
- The virginal birth of the Son of God.
- The marriage of Mary and Joseph.
- The life of Jesus Christ.

Chastity is the virtue that moderates the desire for sexual pleasure according to the principles of faith. For married people, chastity moderates the desire in conformity with their life. For the unmarried people who wish to marry, the desire is moderated by abstention until (or unless) they get married. For those who resolve not to marry, the desire is totally sacrificed.

Chastity and purity, modesty and decency are comparable in that they have the basic meaning of freedom from whatever is lewd or salacious.

Yet they also differ. Chastity implies an opposition to the immoral in the sense of lustful or licentious. It implies refraining from all acts or thoughts that are not in accordance with the Church's teaching about

the use of one's reproductive powers. It particularly emphasizes an avoidance of anything that might defile or make the soul unclean because the body has not been controlled in the exercise of its most imperious passion.

The Obedience of Saint Joseph

Joseph's obedience covers every aspect of his life.

He was obedient in entering into a marriage with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He was obedient in his willingness to put her away when, though he knew she was innocent, he found her with child.

He was obedient when he went to Bethlehem to be registered with Mary, and accepted the humiliation of having Jesus born in a stable cave.

He was obedient in taking the Child and His Mother by night and fleeing to Egypt.

He was obedient in taking the Christ Child to Jerusalem, as prescribed by the Law, and accepted God's mysterious will when the Child was lost, and God's even more mysterious will when Jesus told Mary that he must be about His Father's affairs—even to grievously paining Joseph, His foster father, in order to do the will of His Father.

What are the lessons for us? Obedience is the test of our love of God. His laws are God's way of enabling us to prove our love for Him; there is no obedience where there is no love, there is much obedience where there is much love.

Joseph was head of the Holy Family. He did not have identifiable superiors whom he should obey. Joseph's obedience consequently was mainly interior.

This is illustrated by the fact that each time Joseph was to obey, he was divinely inspired. Thus it was by a special communication from God that Joseph was told to marry the Blessed Virgin. Thus it was also by interior communication that he was told to marry the Blessed Virgin after he found that she was pregnant. It was also by divine communication that Joseph was told to flee with Mary to Egypt. It was also by divine communication that he was told to return from Egypt to Palestine. It was finally by divine communication that Joseph was instructed to live with Jesus and Mary in Palestine. We may also say that Joseph was divinely instructed to

remain in Palestine after the Holy Family returned to Nazareth.

There is not a single recorded word of Saint Joseph which he spoke during his years of caring for Jesus and Mary.

We may say that Joseph's obedience was profoundly interior. He obeyed God's will by supernatural instinct. Needless to say, he did not have to be ordered by God to exercise authority over Jesus and Mary. We may say that Joseph obeyed not because he was told to but because his mind was always conformed to the mind of God. We may further say that Joseph's faith always saw in Jesus the living God who instructed His foster father constantly in everything that the Lord wanted him to do.

The Prudence of Saint Joseph

The prudence of Saint Joseph is part of our Catholic faith. It is especially shown in his remarkable practice of silence. Of course, Joseph talked. Yet the Gospels do not record a single word he spoke, no doubt to teach us that if we wish to practice the virtue of prudence, we must look to our practice of silence.

We are to be silent when others want us to speak, and we practice charity by our self-control.

We are to be silent when it is clearly necessary to do something and not talk about it. For some people talk and more talk is an excuse for doing God's will, but speech is no substitute for actions.

No one has practiced prudence better than Jesus and Mary. But Saint Joseph teaches us that prudence is correct knowledge about things to be done or, more broadly, the knowledge of things that ought to be done and of things that should be avoided.

Prudence is the intellectual virtue by which a human being recognizes in any matter at hand what is good and what is evil. In this sense, prudence is a moral virtue that enables a person to devise, choose, and prepare suitable means for the avoidance of any evil. Prudence resides in the practical intellect and is both acquired by one's own acts and infused along with sanctifying grace. Prudence may be said to be natural as developed by our own efforts, and supernatural because it is conferred by God.

As an act of virtue, prudence involves three stages of mental cooperation: to take counsel carefully with oneself and from others; to judge correctly on the basis of the evidence at hand; and to direct the rest of one's activity according to the norms determined after a prudent judgment has been made.

The Love that Joseph Had for Jesus and Mary

Saint Joseph deserves our admiration for his other virtues, but he is to be especially imitated in his love for Jesus and Mary.

He was placed into their lives by an all-wise Providence and lived up to God's expectations by giving them his deepest attention and care.

What most bears emphasis is not so much that Jesus and Mary were physically so close to Saint Joseph. He was in their company day after day for many years.

It was rather that Joseph put his love into practice.

Joseph put his love to work. He did not merely tell Jesus and Mary that he loved them. He acted out his love. He lived it.

That is the secret of true love. We are as truly devoted to Christ and His Mother as we do what we know they want us to do. And what is that? It is to see God's providence in everything that enters our lives:

- The disappointments and failures.
- The unexpected turn of events.
- The frustrating delays.
- The unwanted demands on our time.
- The strange behavior of some people.

The mysterious silence of God who often hides the purpose He has and yet tells us, through people—that is the key, through people—what He wants us to do.

Saint Joseph is surely worth studying and invoking to help us love Jesus and Mary as he loved them. So we should pray:

Saint Joseph, foster father of Jesus and protector of the Virgin Mary, teach us the hardest lesson we have to learn in life; to love as you loved, by putting our affections to use, and by acting on the sentiments we so often express in our prayers. Teach us to understand what Mary meant when she said, "Be it done to me according to your will." And what Jesus meant when He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

Mass Intentions

Sunday March 19th

- 6:00 am For the repose of the soul of Josephine Emmitte; requested by A. J. Emmitte.
9:30 am For all the husbands and fathers.
11:00 am For the parish.
5:30 pm For the special intention of Dave Damasauskas; requested by a friend.

Monday March 20th

- 6:30 am Honoring St. Joseph.
12:10 pm For the deceased Milam and Steely families; requested by Stella Milam.

Tuesday March 21st

- 6:30 am For the special intentions of the extended Michels, Kiibbler, and Uschak families.
12:10 pm For the repose of the souls of John and Florine Turlak; requested by Paul and Joyce Turlock.

Wednesday March 22nd

- 6:30 am For the special intention of Ruble Clark; requested by the Super Bowl Committee.
12:10 pm For the repose of the soul of Gloria Avila; requested by Sandy Guerra.

Thursday March 23rd

- 6:30 am For the special intention of Gabriel Monreal; requested by Jonathan and Ava Camara.
12:10 pm For the repose of the souls of Vincent Nguyen and Maria Phan; requested Kevin Nguyen.

Friday March 24th

- 6:30 am For the special intention of Sr. Brigid Cummins.
12:10 pm For the protection of the unborn and end to the abortion slaughter.

Saturday March 25th

- 8:00 am For the repose of the soul of Rosa Salesi; requested by Brunello Salesi.
10:00 am For the repose of the soul of James Sullivan; requested by Mark Sullivan.
5:30 pm For the repose of the soul of Silvestra Rodriguez; requested by her family.

Sunday March 26th

- 6:00 am For the special intention of Charlie Lopez; requested by the Lopez family.
9:30 am For the repose of the souls of Sam and Josephine Covernale; requested by Bernard Covernale.
11:00 am For the special intention of Nathan Yalcin; requested by the Yalcin family.

Annunciation Catholic Church

Sunday, March 19, 2017

Vol. 29 No. 64

**3rd Sunday of
Lent**

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6:30 a.m. and 12:10 p.m., Mon.—Fri.

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Weekend Mass:

8:00 a.m. Saturday—English Novus Ordo

Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses:

5:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass—English Novus Ordo

6:00 a.m. Sunday—English Novus Ordo

8:00 a.m. Sunday—Tridentine Mass

9:30 a.m. Sunday—English Novus Ordo

11:00 a.m. Sunday—Latin Novus Ordo

5:30 p.m. Sunday—English Novus Ordo

Sacrament of Penance (Confessions): 15 minutes before Mass