

“A thanksgiving note to St. Joseph”

The Pope, Pius IX, has proclaimed Saint Joseph as Patron of the Catholic Church, as a whole Church. Among many aspects regarding the roll of Saint Joseph, his commitment was of super-eminent dignity, which was twofold in its nature. Not only he was the protector of Our Lady's honor - in that character of necessity the confidant of heaven's secrets – but also he was the Foster-Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, reliable with the guidance and support of the Holy Family - being responsible in some extent for the education of Him who, though divine, loved to call Himself the “son of man.”

Almighty God never caused the virtues and singular merit of Saint Joseph to shine with greater splendor than when He said to him: *“Take the Child and His Mother.”* It is then that He had committed to him His most precious treasures, giving him thus the preference over all the angels in heaven. Saint Joseph received under his protection Jesus and Mary, as their guardian and defender.

If heaven had made Joseph the protector of Jesus and Mary on earth, then we may say that he was at the same time the protector and patron of all men, in particular the Guardian and Defender of the Mystical Body of Christ – the Catholic Church.

In addition, when the Eternal Father confined the Incarnate Word and His Mother to Joseph, He confided us all to this great saint. To be devoted to Joseph should not be merely our interest in the highest sense, for piety sake, but it is our duty, since such is the desire of Jesus and Mary. So, the Catholic Church inspires us to this devotion like a loving mother who guides us to love our Father as the head of the family.

In this perspective, the Child Jesus was the first who had recourse to Joseph's protection. Never did a son belong so absolutely and entirely to his father as did Jesus to Joseph. It was conformable to reason that He who had written in our hearts that beautiful precept, *“Honor thy Father, and thy Mother,”* should Himself keep it most exactly. Also, never did a son serve his father with such care and love, as the Incarnate Word served Joseph. Our Lord has given us a great example of filial duty.

This desire of Jesus Christ is mirrored on the examples of some people, as a mirror reflects the sunny light. Saints reflect God's perfections. Thus, it's certain that our Savior wills that His saints should be venerated on earth. In fact, the Blessed Lord some times gives them power to work miracles, other times He undertakes their defense when unjustly accused, promising a hundred-fold reward to those - who for His sake - are despised and rejected. Needless to say, the Son of God desires that men honor with love and devotion His saintly imitators. As part of the accidental glory, His justice regards them into that proportion and degree of their merits. He would have those most highly honored who had merited the most. This is the case of Joseph.

There is, however, another sublime office, which Joseph faithfully discharged: St. Joseph has been united with our Savior in the quality of a coadjutor. Indeed, God the Father entrusted to His Son the most magnificent of all His works, the redemption of men. It is not without mystery that Christ was promised to Abraham as man, and to David as his successor in his kingdom. Joseph performs the promise of the royal human family, under the same Savior's mission. So, Joseph contributed in performing the Savior's mission, when journeying and laboring and toiling along with Him. Joseph was associated in supporting Christ's salvific mission by the fruit of his toils during the years of Jesus on earth.

As we know, Saint Joseph was the last of the Patriarchs whom the Messiah was promised, but in a more excellent manner than all. He became the support of whole human race because, in taking the charge of the upbringing of Jesus Christ, he contributed much to the salvation of men. To Him he devoted the best years of his life; for Him he renounced every personal thought, in order to aid in bringing about this one affair, the reparation of lost man, and the opening to sinners the way of eternal life. No wonder, then, that the Catholic Church should give him the title of cooperator with the Savior in the redemption of men. The justice of Jesus requires that Joseph should receive upon earth the honor, which he merited by having assisted Him in the great work, which He came down from Heaven to accomplish.

Nevertheless, the Blessed Lord wants us that we should honor Saint Joseph, not only out of justice's sake, but also out of gratitude. It belongs to noble and generous hearts to dispense gratitude. The more we are noble and generous, the more we lively show our gratitude. Great souls are tenderly thankful even for small services, while little and mean souls overlook the greatest. What heart can compare with the Heart of Jesus?

In one hand, we can consider what Joseph did for Jesus Christ during his thirty years' service on earth, with his paternal care and journeys, with his fatigues and exile, with his daily unceasing toil and all suffering endured for God's sake.

On the other hand, we can contemplate the adorable Son of Mary labored while on earth to let men know how we should know, love and serve not only His invisible Father in Heaven, but also His Foster Father of Nazareth. In addition, He disposes all things by His Providence to exalt the glory of His visible father on earth, and moves all hearts by the Holy Ghost, which dwells in His Church, to an ever-increasing love and veneration of him. The very quality of Foster Father of Jesus in itself gives to Joseph an incontestable title to be called the Father of All-faithful, as Protector of the Holy Church (Title given by Pope Leo XIII). The Savior of the world made no difficulty in recognizing Joseph as His father, and in doing so He gave him power to receive us all, as his children. Then, if Joseph is truly the father of all Christians, so may we be assured that God has given him the heart of a father for all of us. Joseph therefore is our patron and our protector. And Jesus in assuming our human nature made us His brethren, therefore in accepting Joseph, as His Foster-father, made him necessarily our father also, and He desires with all the love of His adorable Heart that we should consider him as such.

In this regard, the Blessed Virgin Mary wishes also our devotion and love to Joseph, once again not only out of love but also out of gratitude. Joseph was her protector as her spouse as well. Joseph was espoused to the Mother of God that he might be to her a tutor and guardian, and an aid near to her in every vicissitude of life. He was to protect her and defend her from all injury. From the very first moment, he began to be her shield and her protection in guarding her reputation from all slanderous attacks. At once, he was the protector of her virginity. Mary remembers his affectionate care, his fatigues, his sufferings, his anxieties, and the perils to which he exposed himself to save both the Child and the Mother, for the two were never separated. Both were confided to him, and Mary has not forgotten his self-sacrificing discharge of the stupendous responsibility, laid upon him. It was a common gratitude of such services as Joseph's and Mary's gratitude merged in the work of Jesus's mission.

In consequence, Saint Joseph would seem to be an inseparable companion, and perhaps a necessary aid in our earthly life. His assistance contributes to us in a great manner in the performing of our religious practices, as a powerful driving-force of prayers and devotions. It was under the leadership of Saint Joseph and by his instrumentality that it was the preservation of the life of the Founder of the Catholic Church. By his care and devotion Joseph was the first preacher of Christianity during his recollection on Nazareth, as he has been the first Confessor professing with exterior acts of Faith.

Therefore we may well believe that God desires and wills to cause His Church to flourish and spread, and receive an abundant outpouring of graces, through the all-prevailing intercession, and under the patronage of the Royal, and Patriarchal, and religious Joseph's family.

Let's thank to Saint Joseph for having given us a Traditional Bishop in order to keep the seed of the True Catholic Priesthood so that we may preserve the Deposit of Faith. Thank you Bishop Williamson for being a providential instrument in the Episcopal Succession.

With my blessing

Father Zendejas