

MARCH 19, 2022
Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Matthew 1: 16, 18-21, 24a

“ST. JOSEPH, PROTECT US!”

There are many moments in our lives that we are put to the test. Maybe to test our loyalty, honesty, and faithfulness. Some failed but some passed the test because of their truthfulness. St. Joseph before he accepted Mary, he too was put to the test. We heard in our gospel today he was engaged to Mary who was found to be with child. Joseph has doubt or even fear of backlash to accept Mary. As we know during that time, when a woman found to have a child without a man, she will be punished even the punishment of death. But God has its own way of explaining that to Joseph, that is, in a dream. The angel of the Lord said to him: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” The angel gave Joseph three things: 1) the angel recognized Joseph as a descendant of David where the promised Messiah will come from; an acknowledgment that his son-to-be will be from a great descendant through him; 2) a child, a son will be conceived by the Holy Spirit, whom Joseph will name Jesus is a Son of God; 3) the mission of Jesus, that is to save the people from their sins, Joseph will take a great part in the redemption of mankind as the foster father of the Messiah.

St. Joseph’s faith and trust with Mary, brought about the fulfillment of the promised Messiah. As parents of Jesus, they became the exemplar model of parents. They raised Jesus with love and humility, patience and understanding, trust and faith, and entrusted everything to God as they are stewards of God who became Man.

“Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph in his Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient

father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows. (The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.) Saint Joseph, in fact, concretely expressed his fatherhood by making an offering of himself in love, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home. Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his 'fiat' he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to do the will of the Father. Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he cooperated in the great mystery of Redemption. At the same time, Joseph is an accepting father because he accepted Mary unconditionally and did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it. He is a father in the shadows, centred on Mary and Jesus. He knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus. Happiness for Joseph involved a true gift of self."¹ So, let us ask his intercession to become like him that we may always be good examples to others, protector of good, and support, care and love those who are in need. May St. Joseph be our guide in following the will of God the Father.

I would like to end this homily, with Pope Francis' prayer to St. Joseph²:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

¹ www.vaticannews.va

² *ibid*