

Homily For the Solemnity of the Feast of St. Joseph - Year I

St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Tuesday, March 19, 2019

2 Samuel 7: 4,5,12-14,16 ". "

Psalm 89: 1-4,26,28 ". "

Matthew 1: 16,18-21,24 ". "

Introduction

Joseph is pretty firmly established as the 2nd most important saint of the two thousand years of Christianity. Mary easily takes the number one status. In the 1960s, Avis was the number two car rental company. They pioneered the brilliant underdog advertising campaign: We're #2. We try harder. Although there is no competition among the saints, Joseph is the model for heroic efforts on behalf of his family and the salvation of the world.

The husband of Mary. The foster father of Jesus. The one who taught him how to work with wood and stone, how to read the Torah, and how to be a man of God. There is no father ever better in the history of human fathers. There is no father or husband who plays a more important role in salvation history. Yet, he is content with his status as number two on the list of important saints.

2 Samuel

Although today's feast is in honour of Joseph, the husband of Mary, today's readings are more about fathers and sons than they are about husbands and wives. The passage from 2 Sam 7 is extremely important for us because it describes the last of the great Old Testament covenants.

David wants to build a temple to house the Ark of the Covenant, God's presence amongst the people. But God tells him through the prophet Nathan: Look, I don't need your house. But, as far as that goes, it's your son who is going to take care of that. He shall be a son to me and I shall be a father to him. The great King David is put in his place. He is to be a humble steward of God's kingship, not a famous temple builder.

On the other hand, God makes a covenant with David that the one from whom all fatherhood comes will build a different kind of house, one which will last forever. He will establish the throne of kingship. David is not to be like other kings who seek glory for their own name and to establish their own kingly lines. It is God's name which will be glorified, but for the benefit and blessing of all human kind.

Matthew

Today we celebrate the final protector of that promised blessing, the husband of Mary. Joseph was a righteous man and so wanted no public disgrace for Mary. But, when the angel said: Do not be afraid to take her as your wife. She will bear a son and YOU will name him Jesus (our salvation), he did as the angel of the Lord commanded. Took Mary as his wife. Proved his righteousness, like Abraham. Joseph did more than die for God's plan of salvation. He humbled himself and lived to protect and love his wife so she could bring the world its saviour.

How would you like to have handed to you the role of foster father of the saviour of the world, the 2nd person of the Blessed Trinity. Oh, and by the way, the actual father is the 3rd person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit. No pressure, though, but you are to protect, care for and defend with your life, the one who will give life to the Saviour, the God Bearer, the new Ark of the Covenant, Mary, your wife.

St. Joseph Mareello on the Original Saint Joseph

Many saints since have his name. One such is St. Joseph Mareello, a 19th Century Italian Saint. What Father Mareello most admired about Saint Joseph was his sole desire to serve Jesus and to do so in a way that attracted no attention whatsoever to himself. In a very real way, Saint Joseph kept himself hidden from honor and acclaim, even as he sheltered the Saviour of the world in his home.

He goes on to say that St. Joseph was the saint of silence. There are is not one word of his in the Gospels, yet they tell us of his conversation with the angels, his justice, his purity, his promptness in obeying God's commands, his journeys and hard work for Jesus. They tell of his exact observance of the divine law and his abandonment into the hands of divine providence, his sorrow at losing Jesus and

his frantic search for Him, but they do not tell us one word he ever said, even though he was the head of the Holy Family and possessed the authority of the father.

There is one word, however, that we know Joseph had to have said, out of obedience. He gave the name 'Jesus' to the Holy Child, a word straight from heaven.

Call To Action

Today it is good for us to consider the three Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, along with St. Joseph. Can we find some way to humbly fast from our own wants, and to offer, as almsgiving, an obedient response to what God might be asking to do on his behalf.

Today we are likely called to emphasize, in our Lenten prayer, a kind of silent receptivity to God's plan of salvation. Let us take the time to give our cooperation with the promise that first rested on Abraham's faith, that the great king David humbled himself before, that Mary said yes to, and that Joseph, the husband of Mary, gave all of his strength to protect.