



“Fatherhood is from God...

*and it must take once again
its rightful place among men.*

The privilege of being chosen by God to be the Virgin-Father of His Son was mine alone, and no honor, excluding that bestowed upon my Holy Spouse, was ever, or will ever, be as sublime or as high as this. The Holy Trinity desires thus to honor me that in my unique fatherhood all fatherhood might be blessed. ...I was king in the little house of Nazareth, for I sheltered within it the Prince of Peace and the Queen of Heaven. To me they looked for protection and sustenance, and I did not fail them; I received from them the deepest love and reverence, for in me they saw Him whose place I took over them.

Through me the Heavenly Father has blessed all fatherhood, and through me He continues and will continue to do so till the end of time. My spiritual fatherhood extends to all God’s children, and together with my Virgin Spouse I watch over them with great love and solicitude.”

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, OH, Pgs. 28, 27.)

God is the first and eternal family, a communion of three persons in the one godhead: the Eternal Father, the Eternal Word and image of the Father, and the Holy Spirit Who is the love spirated between Father and Son. God’s mighty deeds of creation, redemption and sanctification all take place in the context of family. When the first human family sinned, it separated all its descendants from their Trinitarian ancestry. God, in His great love, designed a new human family and bestowed upon it a fullness of grace and holiness that would ensure His loving relationship to all its posterity, born of His own flesh and blood and Holy Spirit. This is the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Joseph is so like to the Heavenly Father that he is referred to as the Shadow of the Father. Andrew Doze, in his book **JOSEPH SHADOW OF THE FATHER**, speaks of the pillar of cloud that was present to the Chosen People as they traveled through the desert from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land. The cloud manifested the Father’s love, a merciful love, a maternal love, as Hosea, Isaiah and other prophets understood so well. **“The Most High ...will love you more than does your mother...”** **“but it also commands as an exacting and demanding Father.”** (Page 94.) When the cloud, dark on one side and light on the other, was taken up from the tabernacle, the people would set out on their journey; when it was not taken up, they remained until the cloud directed them to go forth.

Indeed, as the Jewish thinkers had felt, this cloud has a maternal side to it although it expresses the mystery of the Father. It perfectly represents the Father acting through his Spirit to raise sons in the Son. It expresses exactly what the couple Joseph and Mary will become, Joseph providing shelter for Mary at the service of the Incarnation, the shadow of the holy marriage....

Our Joseph...is the one who conceals the incarnation and guides it: he alone receives the light of the angels from the Almighty for this role. It is uniquely because of this man of the night that the intelligence of the learned of Israel is confused, that the police of the cruel potentate Herod are tricked, that the Devil so subtle when it comes to

do harm, seems to be ignorant of his prey. At one with his wife, he [Joseph] embodies this loving shadow to perfection, a shadow possessing an invincible power in its apparent weakness and unequalled tenderness.

Together, they are the two conditions for the work of the Holy Spirit who is pursuing but one goal: to be able at least "to groan" in the heart of humanity with the "unutterable groanings" of the Son lovingly saying to His father: Abba, Daddy, this Father who is acknowledged at last. (Pages 91-97.)

There is no redemption without the Incarnation, and there is no Incarnation without the Mother of the Incarnate Word and without the earthly father who is the third person in the Hypostatic Order of Grace and the third person in this Holy Family. St. Joseph's fatherhood is founded on the mystery of the Incarnation. St. John Paul II, in his encyclical, *Redemptoris Custos*, addresses St. Joseph's role in this mystery.

This is precisely the mystery in which Joseph of Nazareth "shared" like no other human being except Mary, the Mother of the Incarnate Word. He shared in it with her; he was involved in the same salvific event; he was the guardian of the same love, through the power of which the eternal Father "destined us to be his sons through Jesus Christ." (Eph 1:5).

St. Joseph spoke to Sister Mildred Neuzil about his unique role in the work of redemption and the singular privileges bestowed upon him because of this role: being cleansed from original sin immediately after his conception, being confirmed in grace and never having the slightest stain on his soul. Grace was infused into his soul in such abundance that he surpassed the highest angel in the angelic choirs. In St. Joseph God revealed himself, not as a tyrant but as a Father leading his children from slavery into sonship and inheritance in His own house. St. Joseph spoke of his silent suffering with the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, his vocation to hide and shield them from the malice of men as long as God willed. His greatest sorrow was to know beforehand of their passion and not be there to console them. "Their future suffering was ever present to me and became my daily cross. I became, in union with my holy spouse, co-redemptor of the human race. Through compassion for the sufferings of Jesus and Mary I co-operated, as no other, in the salvation of the world." (The Diary, Pg. 13.) Sacred Scripture identifies Joseph's marriage to Mary as the juridical basis of his fatherhood and his vocation as guardian of Jesus and Mary.

It follows that Joseph's fatherhood - a relationship that places him as close as possible to Christ, to whom every election and predestination is ordered (Rom 8:28-29) - comes to pass through marriage to Mary, that is, through the family.... And while it is important for the Church to profess the virginal conception of Jesus, it is no less important to uphold Mary's marriage to Joseph, because juridically Joseph's fatherhood depends on it. Thus one understands why the generations are listed according to the genealogy of Joseph... The Son of Mary is also Joseph's Son by virtue of the marriage bond that unites them: "By reason of their faithful marriage both of them deserve to be called Christ's parents, not only his mother, but also his father, who was a parent in the same way that he was the mother's spouse: in mind, not in the flesh." In this marriage none of the requisites of marriage were lacking: "In Christ's parents all the goods of marriage were realized-offspring, fidelity, the sacrament: the offspring being the Lord Jesus himself; fidelity, since there was no adultery: the sacrament, since there was no divorce."... it is in the Holy Family, the original "Church in miniature (Ecclesia domestica)," that every Christian family must be reflected. Through God's mysterious

design, it was in that family that the Son of God spent long years of a hidden life. It is therefore the prototype and example for all Christian families." (Redemptoris Custos.)

We should not be surprised then that on March 19, 1958, St. Joseph asked that a day be set aside to honor his unique fatherhood. He asked that we recite the Joyful Mysteries of the rosary on the First Wednesday of the month in memory of the time he spent on earth with Jesus and Mary. He asked that we receive Holy Communion in union with the love with which he received the Savior for the first time and each time he held Him in his arms. The more nearly a man is destined by his office to serve the person of the Incarnate Word, the more eminent must be the graces given to him for the worthy performance of that office.

St. Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood. It is precisely in this way that, as the Church's Liturgy teaches, he "cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation" and is truly a "minister of salvation." His fatherhood is expressed concretely "in his

having made his life a service, a sacrifice to the mystery of the Incarnation and to the redemptive mission connected with it; in having used the legal authority which was his over the Holy Family in order to make a total gift of self, of his life and work; in having turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of self, an oblation of his heart and all his abilities into love placed at the service of the Messiah growing up in his house." (Custos Redemptoris)



"Thus should he be honored whom the King desires to honor."

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The Glorious St. Joseph, Virgin-Spouse of Mary, Virgin-Father of Jesus

Guardian of the Redeemer

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