

“Thus Should He Be Honored Whom the King Desires to Honor!”

Just as there are angelic hierarchies and orders of ministry in heaven, so also are there human hierarchies and orders of grace within the Church on earth, excelling in proportion to their approximation to God.

The highest of all these orders, whether angelic or human, is the order of the Hypostatic Union, in which is Christ Jesus, God and Man. By the Hypostatic Union is meant that the Eternal Son of God, in His Incarnation, assumed human nature, and united it to Himself in Personal unity; in other words, that in the one Divine Person of Jesus Christ, the two Natures, the Divine Nature and the Human Nature, ever distinct in themselves, became inseparably and eternally united. ...

Now, Joseph by divine predestination was placed in this sovereign order. Three only composed it—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Jesus is true God and true Man; Mary is true mother of God and mother of men; Joseph is true spouse of Mary and putative father of Jesus. Jesus is the principal subject of the Incarnation, and the author of the Redemption of the world; Mary is the immediate co-operatrix and, so to say, the executrix of the Incarnation itself; Joseph, the faithful depository of these two most precious pledges, was to provide that this sublime mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption should be brought about with the greatest possible congruity, so that the honour of the mother and of the God-Man, her Son, should remain intact.

To rule and govern this august family belonged of right to Jesus, who was God. Mary and Joseph, exalted as they were in dignity, were, nevertheless, only creatures; but Jesus willed to give an example of the most perfect humility. It was His will to magnify our saint, and to concede to him this high glory, making him the head and guardian of His family so that Joseph had rule and authority over the Son of God Himself and over the very Mother of the Son of God. And Joseph, being thus destined to be head and guardian of Jesus, the head and guardian of Mary, became at the same time the patron and guardian of the church, which is the Spouse of Jesus and, in a manner, the daughter of Mary (Edward Healy Thompson, THE LIFE AND GLORIES OF ST. JOSEPH, Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, IL, Pgs. 5-11.)

Thus, when Pius IX proclaimed Joseph Patron of the Church, he was not declaring something new but was affirming Joseph’s most ancient prerogative which the Church had not fully promulgated until then.

The dignity God conferred upon Joseph in placing him at the side of the Virgin-Mother of God, merited spiritual prerogatives and singular graces next only to Mary’s and higher than any conferred on any other saint in the Old or New Covenants. Singular graces are those granted exclusively to them and not to anyone else. Such graces for Joseph would include being speedily cleansed from original sin, even earlier than John the Baptist, who was cleansed at six months in the womb of Elizabeth when encountering Jesus in the womb of Mary at the Visitation. Joseph was filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and **“even confirmed in grace, with concupiscence subdued, if not extinguished, from the first moment of his existence.”** (Thompson, Pg. 54.) When Jesus spoke of none born of woman greater than John the Baptist, he was not speaking absolutely but comparatively; John was the greatest of the prophets of the Old Testament. Joseph, however, is the bridge between the Old and the New Testaments and belongs to the New Testament. His

humility and favor are next only to that of Mary in the order of grace, giving Joseph a pre-eminent place in holiness before God and a pre-eminent place of intercession with God that speaks to the headship of the Father in love and mercy over all His children, Joseph's spiritual children, too. Mary, though greater than Joseph in holiness and grace, was submissive to him, as was Jesus, Son of the living God. Can any humility come close to this in Jesus, Son of the living God?

God's singular privilege to Joseph was to make him an icon of Himself, standing in His place over Jesus on earth. The marriage of Joseph to Mary was fashioned in heaven and is irrepeatable on earth. This union was willed by God for the regeneration of mankind after the Fall so humankind would be re-created from conception to death in the grace of the Hypostatic Union of the God-Man entrusted to their care. God, enjoining headship upon the Father in the family of the Trinity, created humankind as a family with headship in the father to mirror Its own inner life. When Adam, the first head, sinned against God along with his wife, Eve, the entire human family had to be regenerated. Mary becomes the new Eve and Jesus the new Adam, but Jesus humbly concedes his headship in the Holy Family to Joseph, his father on earth, mirroring His submission to His heavenly Father in the Trinity. Scripture recounts the finding of Jesus in the temple where Jesus' response to Mary suggests He might have declared his coming of age and His independence of them to do His heavenly Father's work. Instead, He goes home with them and is obedient to them. Unlike other young men his age, His time was not the Father's time and would not be until He was almost thirty years of age and his earthly father would have died.

“Not My will but Thine be done!” Jesus spoke of doing the will of the Father as His food, His sustenance. So, in the message of Our Lady of America©, on March 11, 1958, St. Joseph reminds Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil of his spiritual fatherhood over all mankind and of his own obedience to the will of God.

“My spiritual fatherhood extends to all God's children, and together with my Virgin Spouse I watch over them with great love and solicitude. Fathers must come to me, small one, to learn obedience to authority: to the Church always, as the mouthpiece of God, to the laws of the country in which they live, insofar as these do not go against God and their neighbor. Mine was perfect obedience to the Divine Will, as it was shown and made known to me by the Jewish law and religion. To be careless in this is most displeasing to God and will be severely punished in the next world.... Fatherhood is from God, and it must take once again its rightful place among men.”

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Lodi, OH, Pg. 27.)

St. Bridget of Sweden recounts Our Lady's words to her regarding St. Joseph:

“St. Joseph was so reserved and careful in his speech that not one word ever issued from his mouth that was not good and holy, nor did he ever indulge in unnecessary or less than charitable conversation. He was most patient and diligent in bearing fatigue; he practiced extreme poverty; he was most meek in bearing injuries; he was strong and constant against my enemies; he was the faithful witness of the wonders of Heaven, being dead to the flesh and the world, living only for God and for heavenly goods, which were the only things he desired. He was perfectly conformed to the Divine Will and so resigned to the dispositions of Heaven that he

ever repeated: “May the Will of God ever be done in me!” He rarely spoke with men, but continually with God, whose Will he desired to perform. Wherefore, he now enjoys great glory in Heaven.” (Tan Books, Favorite Prayers to St. Joseph, Charlotte, NC, Pg. 50)

How fitting that St. Joseph draws us to his heart to learn true union with the Divine Will. How fitting that he asks us to honor his fatherhood on the First Wednesday of every month. **“The Holy Trinity desires thus to honor me that in my unique fatherhood all fatherhood might be blessed.”** Sister Mildred describes a vision of the glorious St. Joseph with youthful but mature features. The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovered over his head.

He seemed suspended, as it were, a short distance above what had the appearance of a large globe with clouds moving about it. His head was slightly raised, the eyes gazing upward as if in ecstasy. The hands were in a position similar to that of the priest during the celebration of Holy Mass, only they extended upward somewhat more. [Angels held small pillows, one with a gold crown, the other with a gold scepter. Then she heard these words:] “Thus should he be honored whom the King desires to honor.” (Diary, Pgs. 28-30.)

Venerable Mary of Agreda relates similar words from Our Lady.

“On the last day, when all men shall be judged, the damned will bitterly bewail their sins, which prevented them from appreciating this powerful means of their salvation, and availing themselves, as they easily could have, of this intercessor to gain the friendship of the just Judge. The whole human race has much undervalued the privileges and prerogatives conceded to my blessed spouse and they know not what his intercession with God is able to do. I assure thee, my dearest, that he is one of the greatly favored personages in the divine presence and has immense power to stay the arms of divine vengeance. ... From now on, during the rest of thy mortal life, see that thou advance in devotion and in hearty love toward my spouse, and that thou bless the Lord for thus having favored him with such high privileges and for having rejoiced me so much in the knowledge of all his excellences. In all thy necessities thou must avail thyself of his intercession. ... That which my spouse asks of the Lord in heaven is granted upon the earth and on his intercession depend many and extraordinary favors for men, if they do not make themselves unworthy of receiving them.” (Venerable Mary of Agreda, THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD, Vol. III, Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, IL, Pgs. 167-168.)

In the Middle Ages a famine occurred in Sicily and the people pleaded with St. Joseph to save them from starvation. He did, and they started the practice of altars to St. Joseph to honor him on his feast. It was made in three levels to honor the Trinity. His statue would be placed on top, surrounded by other holy images and symbols and lots of food to be shared on his feast day, while giving some to the poor. May we build an altar in our hearts in his honor, and plan one, too, for in our homes. Let us go to Joseph with our every need and expect his favor, especially on his feast day.

Dear St. Joseph, we thank you for the protection you offered the Holy Family and which you now direct to the Church and all its members. May you, too, be our patron and model; may we obtain from you the grace of imitating your love for Mary and for God in your beloved Son Jesus. Amen.

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