

St. Joseph and the Precious Blood of Jesus

What this glory was which the Ever-Blessed Trinity conceded to Joseph we learn from the Evangelist. He tells us that when Joseph had risen from his sleep, he faithfully fulfilled the mandate of the angel, that is, the command of God by the mouth of His angel, namely, to recognize as his true spouse her who had conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and was about to bring forth a son to whom he should give the name of Jesus. In this command all the Three Divine Persons concurred. The Son, who was to be born of Mary, had no earthly father.



It belongs to His Heavenly Father to confer upon Him His name; that is the father's office and right; and the Eternal Father transferred this right to Joseph, willing that in His place he should impose on Him the name of Jesus, and, in doing so, He constituted him His representative in all a father's rights, and expressly confided to his paternal care His Only-Begotten Son.

Jesus, the Son of God who was to be born of the Virgin Mary willed that she should be joined in marriage and live with a virgin spouse, so that men should not repute His birth as illegitimate; and He willed to recognize this virgin spouse as His father in affection, adoption, government and education, and to be constantly obedient and subject to him. The Holy Ghost, who had operated the incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of Mary, willed that to Joseph this His spouse should be entirely confided. He was to be the zealous guardian of her virginity, her guide, her aid, her support, and her inseparable companion through all the vicissitudes of life. And where, apart from the Divine Maternity, can so great a dignity be found upon earth as that which was conferred on Joseph by the Three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity?

(Edward Healy Thompson, M.A., THE LIFE AND GLORIES OF ST. JOSEPH, Tan Books and Publishers, Pgs. 209-210.)

This passage states clearly how God the Father chose Joseph to be a true father to His Beloved Son, and how, through the angel, He transferred to Joseph all His authority, rights and duties over His Son, e.g., giving Jesus His name, which means "Savior," the only name by which we can be saved. Earlier the angel had appeared to the priest Zachariah and announced that his wife, Elizabeth, would bear a son in her old age and he was to call the boy John, a name which means "God is gracious." The angel had also appeared to Mary to announce that she, too, would bear a son, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He would be the Son of the Most High. Mary pondered these things in her heart, not knowing how to explain this to Joseph, nor did she feel she had the authority to do so. This was God's work and she trusted God to reveal it to Joseph in His own time. Once Joseph became aware Mary was with child, he, too, pondered how this could be. He trusted Mary, both having made a vow of virginity, and he knew the Scriptures well that the coming Messiah was to be born of a virgin. Could the promised Messiah be coming into his household? He sensed some divine grace at work in Mary and felt unworthy to be part of it; hence, his thoughts of separating himself from her, but the angel unveiled the workings of the Holy Spirit to Joseph in a dream, confirming the predestination of this holy marriage in God's plan for our salvation. It is presumed that the Archangel Gabriel was the messenger in each of these instances: three annunciations,

two sons born by divine intervention, and six people's lives intertwined in the magnificent tapestry of mankind's redemption. Zachariah, Elizabeth and John prepared for the coming of Jesus. The Son of God-made-man, His Virgin-Mother and His Virgin-Father effectively ushered in the beginning of our Redemption. It was Joseph's role to conceal the divine maternity of Mary and the divinity of Jesus from the world and the devil until the appointed time. Outside the Holy Family, Joseph was presumed to be the natural father of Jesus. (Ref: Thompson.) <https://slmedia.org/blog/simeon-and-anna-senior-citizen-prophets>

The marriage of Joseph and Mary is the only marriage truly made in heaven for God's purpose. The Father chose Joseph to stand in his place over Jesus; Jesus chose Joseph to be his earthly father; and the Holy Spirit chose Joseph to be guardian of His most holy Spouse. Because of this eternally ordained marriage, some doctors of the Church contest that Joseph has as much right to be called father to Jesus as he does husband of Mary, for marriage binds the two as one. St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine both held the belief that, while Jesus was not born naturally of Joseph, it might well be said that He was born in the flesh of this holy alliance. Some theologians believe, as the sole natural parent, Mary would have had the rights of both mother and father, but the rights that would have been any natural father's she conferred upon Joseph. Surely it would belittle the design of God to call St. Joseph merely a foster father, or even an adoptive father. As a devout Jew, Joseph was the legal father of Jesus, having given Him His name, and assumed all the legal rights and responsibilities demanded of any natural father toward a son, but he was so much more. (Reference: Thompson.)

The Mosaic Law required the circumcision of all males in Israel as a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham that He would be their God and they, His people. It would take place on the eighth day after birth but did not need to be done in the temple nor by a priest. Some Church fathers concluded that the circumcision of Jesus would



have taken place in the cave of Bethlehem. In the absence of a priest, Joseph, as father, would have performed the rite, with Mary holding Jesus on her lap. Since the ritual was also seen as a remedy for sin, and Jesus had no sin, why was He circumcised? Thompson cites the following reasons: He came to fulfill the Law and so submitted to this painful ritual in obedience to the Mosaic Law and as an example of humility; He wished to prove to heretics that He had a real human body, born of Mary; He wished to show that he was of the race of Abraham who was to inherit the Promised Land and from whose race the promised Messiah would come; He wished to conceal from the devil that He was the Messiah by submitting to the remedy for sin from which the Messiah would be exempt; He wished to bury the Mosaic Law with honor and circumcise all carnal desire so Christian virginity and chastity might reign in us. Having performed this paternal duty, Joseph, with Mary, witnessed the first shedding of Jesus' Most Precious Blood in anticipation of the shedding of every drop of that Precious Blood on Calvary. This marked the beginning of Redemption when the Lamb of God would be slain in atonement for all sin. It is obvious that Joseph and Mary collaborated, shared in, the redemptive work of Jesus as no others. Mary gave Jesus His body and blood to lay upon the altar of sacrifice. In the message of Our Lady of America, Our Lady calls herself co-redemptrix with Christ,

and St. Joseph calls himself co-redeemer with Jesus and Mary through compassion for their sufferings. How can it be otherwise when God Himself ordained this marriage within the Hypostatic Order of Grace for the precise purpose of making the Hypostatic Union of God with man possible in the incarnation of Jesus, the only Savior of the world? Reference: Thompson.)

The firstborn is another concept dear to the Jewish people, as God had commanded Moses to consecrate to Him the first-born male, human and beast, that issued forth from the womb among all Israelites in memory of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt when the angel of death slew the firstborn of the Egyptians so Pharaoh would let His people go. This consecration to God took place when Jesus was presented to the priest in the temple. Many images of the Presentation depict Mary handing Jesus over to the priest, while Joseph stands in the background, but if we understand correctly Joseph's true fatherhood and his duties according to the law, it would have been Joseph who presented Jesus to the priest. Thus, we see again how Jesus belonged to Joseph according to Jewish law and according to the transference of authority over Jesus from the Heavenly Father.



<https://reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/torah-commentary/why-firstborns-are-such-big-deal-torah>

This deepening appreciation of the true fatherhood of St. Joseph over Jesus corresponds to Sister Mildred Neuzil's magnificent vision of the glorious St. Joseph found on pages 29 and 30 of her diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA.

I was favored with a unique and marvelous vision of the glorious St. Joseph. 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.



The color of his hair as also of his rather small and slightly forked beard seemed a very dark brown. His eyes resembled in color the hair and beard. He was clothed in a white robe that reached to his ankles. Over this he wore a sort of cloak which did not come together at the throat, but covering the shoulders and draped gracefully over each arm, reached to the hem of the robe. The cloak at times had, or seemed to have the appearance of a brown, sometimes a purple hue, perhaps a slight blending of the two. The belt about his waist was of a gold color as were his sandals.

His appearance, though quite youthful, gave at the same time the impression of rare maturity combined with great strength. He seemed a bit taller than medium height. The lines of his face appeared strong and purposeful, softened somewhat by a gentle serenity. I also saw his most pure heart at this time. Moreover, I saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovering above his head.

Standing sideways, facing each other, were two angels, one on the right, the other on the left. Each carried what appeared to be a small pillow in a satin covering, the pillow on the right bearing a gold crown, the one on the left, a gold scepter. The angels were all white, even their faces and hair. It was a beautiful whiteness that reminded me of the stainlessness of heaven. Then I heard these words:

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

And so we honor St. Joseph every First Wednesday of the month!

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