

Joseph Sanctified Immediately After Conception Because of His Place in the Order of the Hypostatic Union

It is now an article of our Faith that the Blessed Virgin by a singular privilege was prevented by grace and preserved in entire immunity from original sin. From Holy Scripture we also learn that some souls through the divine predilection, as those of Jeremias and of the Baptist, were sanctified before they saw the light of day. Now, what shall we say of Joseph? Since in dignity and holiness he is inferior to Mary, we cannot assume with any certainty that God granted to him the same privilege as to her; and the Church has never made any utterance on the subject. Still, Joseph surpasses all the other saints in dignity and sanctity; we are, therefore, free to conjecture that, although this is not signified in Scripture, he must have been sanctified before his birth earlier than any of them, for all the holy doctors agree in saying that there was no grace conceded to any other saint, except Mary, which was not granted to Joseph. As Mary, above all, was nearest to Jesus, so Joseph was nearest to Mary; and for the sake of Jesus, and also for Mary's sake, we may justly conclude that to Joseph must have been conceded a privilege second only to hers.

[Joseph was created to be associated with the Incarnation and the decree of redemption. His noble genealogy was pre-announced in Scripture.] Now, in order to correspond to so lofty a vocation, which, after that of the Virgin Mother, was superior to all others, whether of angels or saints, Joseph must needs have been sanctified in a most eminent degree, that he might be worthy to take his place in this most sublime order of the Hypostatic Union, in which Jesus held the first place and Mary the second. [His was the third place, forming the trinity on earth.]

(Edward Healy Thompson, M.A., THE LIFE AND GLORIES OF SAINT JOSEPH, Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, IL, 1980, Pgs. 41-42.)

Edward Healy Thompson states there are two ways in which Joseph's sanctification may have been effected: his beautiful soul may have been protected from contracting original sin at the first moment it was infused into the body, or at the second moment, when the stain was scarcely contracted, it might have been instantly cancelled and purged by the grace of the future Savior. (Healy, Pg. 43.) Hence, we see the doctrine the Church fathers have always held, that when God elects one for some great work, He first prepares and disposes the person for its performance. After the Divine Maternity and Mary's sanctification via the first way, there is no work superior to that of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus and true Spouse of the Virgin-Mother. Hence, he was sanctified via the second way because of his great but lesser role than Mary's.

In early October of 1956, about a week after Our Lady's first appearance as Our Lady of America, St. Joseph spoke to Sister Mildred Neuzil.

"It is true, my daughter, that *immediately* after my conception, I was, through the future merits of Jesus and because of my exceptional role of future Virgin-Father, cleansed from the stain of original sin. I was from that moment confirmed in grace and never had the slightest stain on my soul. This is my unique privilege among men."

"My pure heart also was from the first moment of existence inflamed with love for God. *Immediately*, at the moment when my soul was cleansed from original sin, grace was infused into it in such abundance that, excluding my holy spouse, I surpassed the holiness of the highest angel in the angelic choir. My heart suffered with the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Mine was a silent suffering, for it was my special vocation to hide and shield, as long as God willed, the Virgin Mother and Son from the malice and hatred of men."

"The most painful of my sorrows was that I knew beforehand of their passion, yet would 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."

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Fostoria, OH, Pg. 13.)

On the eve of his feast, March 19, 1958, St. Joseph appeared to Sister and spoke of his spiritual fatherhood over all God's children and his perfect obedience to the Divine Will. All fatherhood is blest in him and he urged all fathers to imitate his virtue and purity of life. He said fatherhood must take once again its rightful place among men. Sister then saw St. Joseph's pure heart lying on a brown cross, the cross of his passion. Flames poured out of the top of the heart and a pure white lily rose out of the flames. The next day Sister saw a vision of the glorious St. Joseph suspended a short distance above what seemed to be a globe surround by clouds. His head was raised and his eyes gazed upward as if in ecstasy. His hands were in a position similar to those of the priest at Mass. His hair and small beard were a dark brown. His eyes resembled the color of his hair. He wore a white robe and a cloak that draped over each arm and reached to the hem of the robe. His belt and sandals were of a gold color.

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." (The Diary, Pgs. 27-30.) [We find these same words spoken of Mordecai in the Book of Esther.]

Later that month, March 30th, St. Joseph appeared again saying that the Most Holy Trinity had chosen the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph to bring peace to the world. He stated he is the protector of the Church and of the home just as he was the protector of Christ and His Mother while he lived here on earth. He then said that Jesus and Mary wished that his pure heart, so long hidden and unknown, be honored in a special way on the First Wednesday of each month by reciting the Joyful Mysteries of the rosary in memory of his life on earth with Jesus and Mary and the love he bore them and the sorrow he suffered with them. Sister's letters indicate that St. Joseph did not wish to interfere with the Church's designation of the Glorious Mysteries on Wednesdays; he asked that the First Wednesday rosary devotion praying the Joyful Mysteries in his honor be an extra rosary that day. He also asked that we receive Holy Communion in union with the love with which he received the Savior the first time and every time he held Him in his arms. **"Those who honor me in this way will be consoled by my presence at their death, and I myself will conduct them safely into the presence of Jesus and Mary."** (Diary, Pgs. 31-32.)

Sister Mildred had a special love for Mary and Joseph. Her February 11, 1957 letter recounts Our Lady and St. Joseph's visit. Our Lady spoke to her: **"My child, I place your purity into the hands of my glorious Spouse, St. Joseph."** Mary glanced at Sister and then at St. Joseph; he and Mary were both smiling, which made Sister very happy. She herself then placed the purity of her body, soul, mind and heart into the keeping of Mary's Holy Spouse, knowing that Our Lord loves His Mother and earthly father both very dearly and it gives Him great joy when one places oneself into their keeping. Sister wrote: **"As He [Jesus] was kept safe in their care, so shall we be. Oh if only we had more confidence in Mary and Joseph. How much closer we would be to Jesus."**

"Oh how I love her, how I love Our Lady." (Sister Mildred, Letter, February 3, 1957.)

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