

Can There Be a Nativity with Jesus Alone?



According to God's design, No! There are three persons in every creche scene and each has a mission in accordance with God's plan for our salvation. Mary, the Immaculate Virgin-Mother, gave Jesus her flesh so He could assume a human nature and satisfy divine justice for human sin. The mission of Joseph, Virgin-Spouse of Mary and Virgin-Father of Jesus, was to stand in place of the Heavenly Father over Jesus until the time of His public mission. It was also to conceal the mysteries of Jesus' divinity and Mary's Divine Maternity, and the virginity of the three of them, until God willed these mysteries to be revealed. In the Jewish family, headship is with the father who has the responsibility to name the child and root the child in the lineage of the father. Joseph called Mary's son Jesus, Savior, which identified Jesus as the fulfillment of all the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. This naming made him the legal, adoptive father of Jesus, not a foster father. Joseph also, as a descendant of David, rooted Jesus in the line of David, the beloved shepherd king of Israel over whose kingdom the Messiah would rule forever as the Good Shepherd and King of kings. Genealogy is traced by the father's descent. Joseph is sometimes called the "putative father of Jesus", which simply means that to all external appearances, Joseph and Mary looked like an ordinary couple with Jesus as their natural born son. Mary and Joseph's roles of co-operation and collaboration with Christ are unique in human and salvation history and are clearly confirmed in the messages of Our Lady of America to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil.

"I am the Mother of the sacred humanity, and it is my special work as co-redemptrix of the human race to help souls reach the sanctity of the Father in eternal union by showing them how to put on Christ, to imbibe His Spirit, and thus become one with Him." (Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, Ohio, Page 24.)



"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 Diary, Page 28.)

"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. ... I surpassed 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 before hand 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.” (The Diary, Page 13.)

The Incarnation of Jesus is the starting point of our Redemption. God as Trinity is three Persons, a family, and He created humankind in His trinitarian likeness. The first family was a man and a woman who would become one flesh and bring forth new life. This natural institution of marriage and family reflects the inner life of the Trinity in which the Father and the Son are one and breathe forth the Holy Spirit. When God created the material world in the natural order, he placed man at the pinnacle of creation and gave him preternatural gifts, gifts beyond his natural state. When Adam sinned, he lost for mankind the preternatural gifts and was reduced to the lower **natural** state. God’s plan of salvation was not merely to restore mankind to that original **preternatural** state, but to wash away original sin and raise mankind to a more transcendent **supernatural** state, with sanctifying grace, a share in His own life as His adopted children, not merely His creatures. Sin required a Redeemer, a God-man, to satisfy divine justice and to represent mankind, and a new family, the Holy Family, to model God’s life more perfectly for us, so we, too, like them, might be His paradise on earth. Hence, redemption is two-fold, washing away sin and divinizing us with divine life. The union of God with man is the Hypostatic Union, one divine person with two natures, both human and divine. This union takes place in the Hypostatic Order of Grace and necessarily involves a mother and a father, Mary and Joseph, in order to give Jesus a full human nature and identity in human history and the human family. There is a descending degree of collaboration in this order: Jesus is first as Redeemer; Mary is second as Mother of the Redeemer; and Joseph is third as Father and Guardian of the Redeemer. All three persons are necessary, for God willed that it be so.

Sin always demands atonement. Only persons with intelligence and free will can sin against God, so atonement must be made by a person, not an animal, if reconciliation is to be achieved between man and God. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament could only prefigure the one, perfect sacrifice of the Savior Who is both God and man and whose sacrifice is infinite in its merits and effective in forgiveness. In this perfect sacrifice, Jesus is both the priest and the victim. Since He is the Eternal High Priest and the perfect, unblemished Lamb of God, His sacrifice transcends the limitations of time and can be made present on every altar where the memorial of His sacrifice is celebrated until the end of time. In Heaven it is celebrated as the Supper of the Lamb, the wedding feast of the Bride, the Church, with the Bridegroom, Christ, God. God wishes to marry us. So He told His Chosen People. Both **redemption** and **divinization** are the reasons this Child was born and laid in a manger of wood that prefigured the cross of wood on which He would sacrifice Himself for our sins and entrust us to His Mother as our own, His brothers and sisters by adoption. Jesus is born as a baby and confined to nine months in the womb in order to redeem the



whole of human nature from the first moment of conception through birth and every stage of human life, until death. He sanctified all human life in a new way by His participation in it! Jesus is the only Savior of the world, the only one able to be a bridge between God and man because He alone is both God and man. Yet, that does not deny God's will to involve Mary and Joseph intimately in His plan, nor to involve us in it, too.



What lessons do we learn at the foot of the crib?

We see the enormity of the love and humility of God, the Almighty, Who stripped Himself down to a child's small size in the womb, becoming totally dependent upon His own creatures. We see in the shepherds the *anawim*, the poor and the lowly, often outcast by society, dirty and homeless, but for whom God has proclaimed a special bias. We see that the first to hear the Good News of salvation are the poor and the pure of heart. We learn that wise men are those who follow the Light, wherever it leads, confident it leads to a King who is always just and merciful, not like the Herods and Neros and Hitlers of our day. We learn that we must leave many things behind if we are to be obedient to God, and that these things are not as essential as we once thought they were. We can reason well that Mary and Joseph received the gifts of the Three Kings on behalf of Jesus and, therefore, gifted them in turn to the temple, back to God. We learn many gifts are given to us, not for ourselves, but to give away. We also learn that if we wish to encounter God, we must go some space apart, like Mary and Joseph did, into our inner room, that stable within our own souls where God most truly dwells, waiting for us. No matter how wretched or poor our stable-souls might be, the light of His Presence will seek out every bit of darkness that seeks some corner to hide therein. Like the *shekinah* surrounding the Ark of the Covenant with unfathomable light, Christ, Light of the World, fills every night and every dark place with a new and glorious day!

We learn by Faith that every Eucharist is an experience of Bethlehem, for our bodies and souls are like the poor stable where God comes to dwell. The gift He gives us is more precious than the gifts of the kings, for He gives us the Bread of His own Body to be our food for everlasting life. In His Presence we learn miracles are ordinary for God. Was not Mary's Immaculate Conception miraculous? Was not Jesus' birth miraculous, too? This simple nativity scene says clearly that nothing is impossible to God, and we should pray, always, in faith, expecting a miracle! If we are wise, we would pray, too, with Mary and Joseph, knowing Jesus follows His own command to honor his father and his mother. He refuses them nothing if it is in accord with God's Will. St. Joseph revealed to Sister Mildred the Secret of secrets of the Divine Indwelling in the interior kingdom of her soul. **Let us go to our own interior kingdom to sing with Deacon Cody Miller in honor of St. Joseph. This song may be used for non-commercial purposes. deaconcody.com dcncody@gmail.com**



A MAN CALLED
JOSEPH (NEW EDIT).

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