

From Whence Does Joseph's Honor Come?

The Lord, in order to honor his name, decided to make St. Joseph the leader and the patron saint of the militant church. Before the day of judgment all the peoples will know and revere the name of the Lord, and the magnificent gifts that God has given St. Joseph, gifts he has wanted to keep almost hidden for a long period of time. It is then that the name of Joseph will abound with all the goods of the earth. Churches will be built in his honor. Peoples will celebrate his feasts and will make solemn promises to him. For the Lord will open the ears of their intelligence and great men will scrutinize the inner gifts of God hidden in St. Joseph and will discover a precious treasure such as we do not find its like in any of the fathers of the Old Testament. This will happen especially through the enlightenments given by the holy angels. St. Joseph will give graces from heaven on high to people who will invoke him, and he himself, constantly surrounded with the majesty of his glory, will borrow nothing from any mortal. The name of St. Joseph will be honorably placed on the calendar of the saints and he will no longer be the last; for a main feast will be set to venerate him. The Vicar of Christ on earth, prompted by the Holy Spirit, will rule that the feast of the foster-father of Christ and of the husband of the Queen of the world, be celebrated throughout the Church.

(Andrew Doze, **JOSEPH, SHADOW OF THE FATHER**, New York: Alba House, 1992, Pgs. 27-28.)

The above prophecy quoted in Fr. Doze's book was a revelation on the mystery of St. Joseph made by an Italian Dominican, Isidore Isolani, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, around the same time Teresa of Avila was born. Teresa had a great devotion to St. Joseph. At forty-five years of age, Teresa, a religious in the Convent of the Incarnation, was convinced she had to do something new. She was given a vision of hell as a place of darkness, suffocation and horrible despair of heart, where love was impossible. It strengthened her resolve to establish a new convent, which Jesus had described to her, as a little Holy Family of Nazareth on earth dedicated to St. Joseph. In 1562 she started the First Reformed Carmel, the Convent of St. Joseph of Avila. Our Lord had explained that St. Joseph would watch over them at one door and Our Lady at the other; that Christ would be with them, and the convent would be a star giving out the most brilliant light. Joseph's door was the entrance door, drawing one in from the world of sin and confusion. Mary's door was the ancient devotion called "Gate of Heaven" through which Jesus entered into the world to inaugurate the new world of Pentecost and love, the antithesis of hell. We, too, are called to enter through the first door of Joseph so the Spirit of God, who comes through the second door of Mary, might reveal the Son to us. St. Teresa boasted that no favor she asked of St. Joseph was ever refused. St. Joseph has the power to answer every need; hence, Teresa of Avila bids us always "Go to Joseph!"



In 1878, when the Loretto Chapel was built in Santa Fe, New Mexico, it had no access to the choir loft. The nuns were advised to access it by ladder, as a staircase would consume too much of the chapel. So the nuns began a novena to St. Joseph for a carpenter with a solution. On the last day, a man on a donkey, with his tool box, showed up, built a spiral staircase with two 360 degree angles, no nails but only pegs, and

no supports. Before the nuns could pay him, he disappeared. No one knew who he was, but the nuns believed it was St. Joseph who built their *miraculous stairway*. To this day it baffles engineers from around the world. Of course, railings have since been added.

A few years before this “miracle,” December 8, 1870, Pope Pius IX had begun fulfilling Isidore Isolani’s prophecy. His decree, ***Quemadmodum Deus***, declared St. Joseph “Patron of the Universal Church” and raised his feast on March 19th to the rank of double first class in these magnificent words:

As almighty God appointed Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, over all the land of Egypt to save grain for the people, so when the fullness of time had come and He was about to send to earth His only-begotten Son, the Savior of the world, He chose another Joseph, of whom the first had been the type, and He made him the lord and chief of His household and possessions, the guardian of His choicest treasures. Indeed, he had as his spouse the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom was born by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord, who deigned to be reputed in the sight of men as the son of Joseph, and was subject to him.

Him whom countless kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw but conversed with, and embraced in paternal affection, and kissed. He most diligently reared Him whom the faithful were to receive as the bread that came down from heaven whereby they might obtain eternal life. Because of this sublime dignity which God conferred on his most faithful servant, the Church has always most highly honored and praised blessed Joseph next to his spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble.

And now therefore, when in these most troublesome times the Church is beset by enemies on every side, and is weighed down by calamities so heavy that ungodly men assert that the gates of hell have at length prevailed against her, the venerable prelates of the whole Catholic world have presented to the Sovereign Pontiff their own petitions and those the faithful committed to their charge, praying that he would deign to constitute St. Joseph Patron of the Church.

All of St. Joseph’s dignity and grace derive from this unique and intimate relationship with God’s two most precious treasures, His beloved Son and the Mother of His Son. Joseph, with Mary, was ordained to share in the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption as no others. As the human family began with the marriage of a man and a woman who brought sin and death to their posterity, so the restoration of the human family began with a marriage made in heaven, necessary to establish the supernatural kingdom of grace upon the earth, as God took flesh and made the Holy Family His new tabernacle on earth. It was pride and disobedience that brought sin into the world. So the Redeemer and the two chosen souls who formed the hypostatic order of grace with Him, would reverse the power of sin with the utmost humility and obedience to the Will of God. Stripped of His divinity, Jesus would ask his earthly father and mother to embrace His poverty, His purity, His humility and His obedience in like manner. And so they did. This is where St. Joseph’s greatness lies, in his complete conformity to His divine Son in all things. His home was a sanctuary of quiet adoration of the Godhead present in Jesus. Speech was not often necessary, only the look of love and awe, for unnecessary chatter would desecrate the splendor of God’s Presence in their midst. Need we wonder that the Scriptures record no words spoken by Joseph? His was the “glory of domestic life.” He is the humble and obedient “Terror of demons!”

Imagine living day in and day out in the Presence of the Holy One of God, to absorb the love pouring out from Him upon them, the knowledge implanted in their souls through

the Spirit who dwelt in their midst. What joy to the heavenly Father St. Joseph must have been as he held God's beloved Son, fed Him, walked and talked with Him, watched Him sleep, worked with Him and taught Him the Scriptures and the trade he himself held as a carpenter. Fr. Droze rightly calls Joseph the shadow of the Father. Joseph is something of the face of the Father for us, too. Many saints believed that Jesus obeys Joseph's every wish in heaven as He did on earth. What a gift St. Joseph's intercession is to us!

In the apparition of Our Lady of America to Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, St. Joseph spoke to her, and us, his spiritual children, about his unique and privileged vocation as Virgin-Father of Jesus and Virgin-Spouse of Mary, and of the Secret of the Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity that dwelt in their home in Nazareth

“My child, I desire a day to be set aside to honor my fatherhood. 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.

Dear child, I was king in the little home 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.” ...

“Thus should he be honored whom the King desires to honor.” ... “I am the protector of the Church and the home, as I was the protector of Christ and His Mother while I lived upon earth. Jesus and Mary desire that my pure heart, so long hidden and unknown, be now honored in a special way.”

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, *The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA*, Fostoria, OH, Pgs. 28-31.

The Church has long designated Wednesday as a day to honor St. Joseph. Now St. Joseph asks us to honor him especially on the First Wednesday of the month with the recitation of the Joyful Mysteries of the rosary which recount his time on earth with Jesus and Mary, and the reception of the Eucharist on that day. Our Lady herself addressed the powerful intercession of St. Joseph in heaven when she spoke these words to Mary of Agreda as recorded in **The Mystical City of God**, pages 167-168.

“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.”

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