

St Frances of Rome, March 09, 2013

The Church will soon celebrate the feast of St Joseph, Patron Saint of the Church. To help prepare for this we attach below a small article by Paul Kokoski, a Canadian, who reminds us that St Joseph is also the Patron Saint of that country. We would also like to bring our readers' attention to the [preparatory document prepared by the SSPX for a Novena to St Joseph](#). (← Click here for article) This contains many reflections on St Joseph by Popes and theologians.

St. Joseph, Patron Saint of Canada and the Universal Church - Article by Joseph Kokoski:

On March 19 we celebrate the solemnity of St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On May 1 we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. Scripture tells us that St. Joseph was of royal lineage, a descendent of David, the greatest king of Israel. He was the foster father of Jesus. To him, "son of David", God entrusted the safekeeping of the Eternal Word, made man by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

St. Joseph is described in the Gospel as a "just man", that is to say a godly man, and for all believers he is a model of life in faith. Even in difficult and sometimes tragic moments, the humble carpenter of Nazareth never disputed God's plan. Rather he fulfilled it with docile responsibility. He listened attentively to the angel when he was asked to take the Virgin of Nazareth as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned and fled with his family into Egypt. He then waited patiently until the angel told him it was safe to return.

St. Joseph was a poor but humble man, rich in compassion. He was the protector of our Lady's good name, the caring guardian of Jesus, an attentive and faithful husband who exercised his family authority in a constant attitude of service. It was Joseph's trade that Jesus learned. It was his manner of speech that the boy Jesus would have imitated, it was he whom our Lady herself seemed to invest with full parental rights when she said "Thy father and I have sought the sorrowing".

Speaking on fatherhood Jesus once told his disciples: "You have only one Father and that is your father in heaven" (Mt. 23:9). Though there is but one fatherhood, man, created in the image of God, has been granted a share in this one paternity of God (Eph 3:15). St. Joseph is a striking example of this since he is a father, without fatherhood according to the flesh. Though he was not the biological father of Jesus he lived his fatherhood fully and completely by putting himself at the service of Christ. As Jesus teaches us "the leader must become as one who serves" (Lk 22: 26). Joseph thus understood that Jesus was superior to him even as he submitted to him, and, knowing the superiority of his charge, he commanded him with respect and moderation. There is a lesson here for everyone: frequently a lesser man is placed over people who are greater, and it happens at times that an inferior is more worthy than the one who appears to be set above him. If a person of greater dignity understands this, then he will not be puffed up with pride because of his higher rank; he will know that his inferior may well be superior to him, even as Jesus was superior to Joseph.

St. Joseph, whose only reward was to be with Christ, teaches us that it is possible to love without possessing. He teaches us that we can experience healing from our emotional wounds if we embrace God's plan for us by devoting our lives fully to Christ whether that be through the priesthood, the consecrated life through the different forms of lay engagement. In St. Joseph, faith is not separated from action. Every day St Joseph had to provide for the family's needs with hard manual work. The human being, Pope John Paul II tells us "is the subject and the primary agent of work... Human activity... proceeds from the human person and is ordered to the person... it must serve the true good of humanity". Thus the Church rightly points to St. Joseph as the patron of workers. We celebrate this feast on May 1.

Apart from these few details Sacred Scriptures tells us very little about St. Joseph. This silence, however, contains the special style of his mission: a life lived in the greyness of everyday life, but with steadfast faith in Providence. It is not known for certain when St. Joseph died but many historians believe it was probably before Jesus entered public ministry. In the Coptic document "The History of Joseph the Carpenter" a full account is given of St. Joseph's last illness. It speaks of his fear of God's judgments, of his self-reproach, and of the efforts made by Our Lord and his Mother to comfort him and ease his passage to the next world, and of the promises of protection in life and death made by Jesus to such as should do good in Joseph's name. St. Joseph is thus the patron of the dying and of a happy death because he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth.

St. Joseph is also patron of the universal church as well as the patron saint of Canada. May St. Joseph, a great and humble saint, watch over the church in these days of severe trials and be an inspiration especially to Christian workers and all whom should call on him in every circumstance.