

The Seven Sundays of Saint Joseph

Fifth Sunday

Reading:

"Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying: 'Arise, and take the Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and remain there until I tell you. For Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him.'

"So he arose, and took the Child and His mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod; that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'" (Mt. 2: 13-18)

Commentary:

Saint John Chrysostom comments on this scene: "On hearing this, Joseph was not shocked nor did he say: 'This is strange. You yourself made it known not long ago that he would save his people, and now you are incapable of even of saving Him - we have to flee, to set out on a long journey and spend a long while in a strange place; that contradicts your promise.'

Joseph does not think in this way, for he is a man who trust God. Nor does he ask when he will return, even though the angel left it so vague: 'Stay there until I tell you to return.' Joseph does not object; he

obeys and believes and joyfully accepts all the trials." (St. John Chrysostom, "In Matt. Homiliae", 8, 3)

St Joseph faithfully fulfills God's will. Monsignor Escriva de Balaguer adds: "The Gospels give us a picture of St. Joseph as a remarkably sound man who was in no way frightened or shy of life. On the contrary, he faced up to problems, dealt with difficult situations and showed responsibility and initiative in whatever he was asked to do.

I don't agree with the traditional picture of St. Joseph as an old man, even though it may have been prompted by a desire to emphasize the perpetual virginity of Mary. I see him as a strong young man, perhaps a few years older than our Lady, but in the prime of his life and work.

You don't have to wait to be old or lifeless to practice the virtue of chastity. purity comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love. Joseph had a young heart and a young body when he married Mary, when he learned the mystery of the divine motherhood, when he lived in her company, respecting the integrity God wished to give the world." (Christ is Passing By, No. 40)

Prayer:

O watchful guardian of the Incarnate Son of God, glorious St. Joseph, what toil was yours in supporting and serving the Son of the Most High, especially when you were forced to flee into Egypt, yet what joy you felt having God himself always with you and seeing the idols of Egypt fall to the ground.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that we may keep the infernal tyrant far distant especially by flight from occasions of sin; and that every idol of earthly affection may fall from our hearts; and being wholly employed in the service of Jesus and Mary for them alone may we live and happily die.

Specifically, I ask that.... (mention in silence the favor asked and pray one Our Father, One Hail Mary and one Glory Be).