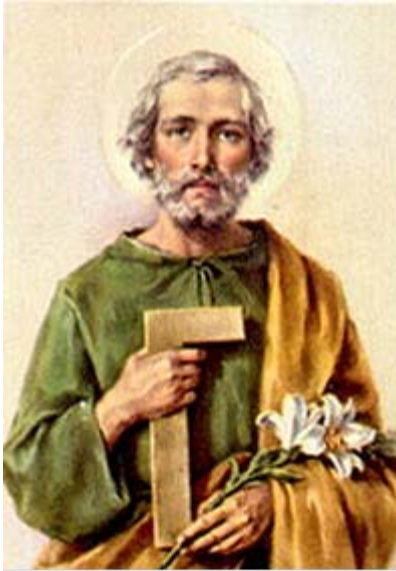




May 2021

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ST. LOUIS COUNCIL 3335



Saturday May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker: Model of a True Man of God

To counteract the repressive and atheist communist holiday, May Day ostensibly to honor the worker, Pope Pius XII in 1955 designated May 1 as the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. Last December 8 marked 150 years since St. Joseph was officially designated as the Patron Saint of the Church. Thus Pope Francis declared the next 12 months as the “*Year of St. Joseph*”, which our parish observes with a large poster to the right of the altar, thanks to the gift of the Catholic Women’s Club. It depicts St. Joseph as a young very virile man, strong and tough, yet very spiritual and well prepared for his mission of being the foster father of the Christ child, provider, protector, and head of the Holy Family and his domestic church. He was a just man, chaste and pure.

For much of His human life on earth the Son of God and Mary his spouse, --later to be the Mother of the Church, Queen of Heaven and

Earth-- were subject to his leadership. St. Joseph bore this awesome responsibility with grace, humility, and obedience to the will of God with complete trust in Him. He taught the Christ child the rudiments of the Faith, virtue, and the values of hard work and honesty as his helper in heavy carpentry work for construction. Thus he raised his foster son to be a strong and tough man, able to bear the super human suffering of his passion on the cross.

Why is St. Joseph a model of a true man of God? The Bible says little about St. Joseph and does not quote him at all. Yet the biblical accounts of St. Joseph demonstrate or imply several of his virtues; tradition shows others.....stories written and unwritten that have been handed down through the generations.

Ever chaste. According to tradition, Mary's parents, Joaquin and Ann asked God for a sign as to which man would be best for their daughter. Within a group of men St. Joseph's staff suddenly sprouted a white Lilly, a symbol of purity. St. Joseph was ever chaste and able to control his passions and give up the privilege of having children of his own so that Mary could maintain her virginity as God willed.

Sensitivity. We see that in Matthew 1:18-21. *When His mother Mary was betrothed (engaged) to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that the child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save His people from their sins."*

Joseph shows sensitivity in not exposing Mary to shame and protecting her from scandal or even stoning. Thus he tried to quietly separate from her. But Joseph obeys the angel without question and trusting in God, takes Mary into his home and provides for his wife and child.

Complying with the decree of Caesar Augustus for a census, Joseph took his pregnant wife on a trip of at least four days to travel the 80 miles from Nazareth to enroll in Bethlehem the city of David because he was a descendent of David. They had to patiently cope with the uncertainty that Mary would have to give birth on the side of the road as they continued to trust in God throughout their lives. Thus they probably traveled slowly with frequent rest stops during a long, tiring, and bumpy ride. According to tradition, Mary rode on a donkey and Joseph showed toughness in walking at their side. He did the same in the over 300 mile flight to Egypt and annual trips to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Passover.

Once in Bethlehem they could not find room in any of the inns and had to resort to the humiliation of staying in a stable. On top of that Mary gave birth to the Christ child. Joseph courageously coped with these difficulties, continued to trust, and made the best out of a bad situation which was transformed into the joy of the promised Messiah's birth.

In the presentation in the Temple and going there every year for the Passover, St. Joseph is *faithful to Jewish law*. They presented and consecrated Mary's first born son to the Lord while sacrificing two young pigeons (Luke 2:22-24). May we consecrate our families to God and raise them according to His will.

Obedient and Trust in God. To save the Christ child from

Herod's slaughter of the holy innocents, Mathew 2:13-15 shows that *the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod.* In verses 19-20: *When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, showing great *prudence*.*

Clearly, St. Joseph has the role of *protector* from the brutal Herod and on the long and arduous journey of a couple weeks to travel over 300 miles to an unknown land, Egypt. According to tradition, a Coptic church in Cairo *Saints Sergius and Bacchus Church*, also known as *Abu Serga* claims to be the site of the home of the Holy Family. Again, Joseph places his *trust* in the provident God and obeys. Again Joseph bends his will to the will of God, his plans to God's plans. On their return, St. Joseph is *prudent* in not returning via Judea for fear that Herod's son, Archelaus now king of Judea and even more violent than his father, would put the Holy Family in danger again. Thus Pope Leo XIII entrusted the Church to the protection of St. Joseph in 1870. Being a quiet man and dependent upon God demonstrated his *humility*.

When the 12 year old Christ child was lost in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52), Joseph and Mary had "great anxiety". Surely thoughts of failure in their mission entered their minds, but Joseph knew that God was in control and would work it out. They trusted in Him and indeed

they found the Christ child. St. Joseph led the Holy Family through these difficulties with faith as we must lead our families through the many trials, difficulties, and problems that are part of the human condition.

Physically Strong and Rugged. St. Joseph was a carpenter and according to custom trained his son in his trade. They worked together during those hidden years which are not recorded in scripture. We can only draw on tradition, private revelation to the mystic, Anne Catherine Emmerich as well as legend and speculation. Holy pictures show a small carpenter shop for furniture making. But some scholars say that St. Joseph and the young Jesus were construction carpenters that did heavy work. There was considerable construction in the Nazareth area at the time. Therefore both St. Joseph and his son were *strong, rugged, and tough*, epitomizing the dignity of work as creating with God. St. Joseph was able to walk the 80 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem and over 300 miles to Egypt. This contradicts some popular depictions of St. Joseph as effeminate. Thus Christ was able to walk all over Palestine and drag the cross or carry the crossbeam which weighed 100-150 pounds. Clearly, St. Joseph served Mary and Jesus by being the breadwinner and by providing for the Holy Family.

Piety. St. Joseph, being a pious man, certainly led his family in prayer and taught his son how to pray and observe the mosaic law. He probably took the Holy Family to the local synagogue every Saturday. St. Luke (2:41) explicitly states in his Gospel: “*Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover*”. Each time the angel communicated God's will that the Holy Family should flee to Egypt and again when to return, it was to Joseph, the head. Clearly St. Joseph was the spiritual and material leader of the Holy Family. His quiet way indicated that he loved his family without being controlling.

So we can see that St. Joseph was **holy, a self-giving husband, a loving father, and a true man** in every respect as God intended. **ST.**

JOSEPH, MODEL OF A TRUE MAN OF GOD, PRAY FOR US.

Men, let's emulate St. Joseph, model of a true man of God and virtue, in fathering our children, giving ourselves completely to our wives, and leading your family, the domestic church.