

19 March: St Joseph—His Glory

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will tomorrow consider the two fundamental titles of the devotion to St Joseph: first, he was the father of Jesus; second, he was the spouse of Mary. We will then make the resolution: first, at this feast to renew our devotion to St Joseph; second, often and confidently to invoke him. We will retain as our spiritual nosegay the words of Pharaoh respecting Joseph the son of Jacob: "*Go to Joseph.*"

Meditation for the Morning

Let us raise ourselves in spirit to heaven before the throne of St Joseph; let us thank God for the greatness to which He has raised him, and let us lay at the feet of this holy patriarch all that our hearts contain of praise, of admiration, and of love.

ST JOSEPH, THE FATHER OF JESUS

How different are the judgments of God from those of men! If the world had been consulted upon the choice of him to whom was to be confided the adoptive paternity and the care of the Word Incarnate, it would doubtless have fixed upon some powerful monarch; but what, in the presence of God, are all earthly grandeurs? With a breath He casts them down and makes them disappear like the dust before the wind. Perhaps it would have advised that he should have been some rich person, who could have brought up the Child amidst all the refinements of luxury; but what, in the sight of God, are all riches except as so much dust, all the comforts of life and the pleasures of the senses except effeminacy, unworthy of a just heart? For want of finding a man worthy to fill such a position, perhaps the world would have raised its thoughts to heaven, and have imagined that it would be necessary to depute some prince of the heavenly court to come here below and surround, with his care and his love, the Incarnate God. But no; even the highest angels are not judged to be worthy of so august a mission. Greater, in the Divine estimation, than all the principalities of heaven and of earth, the humble and just St Joseph was the elect of God, destined to receive within his arms Him who, from all eternity, dwelt in the bosom of the Father; to lodge in his house Him whose palace is the heavens; to be, lastly, the father of Jesus, as the Holy Spirit calls him in the gospel (Luke 11:33), and Mary in the temple (Ibid. 48). In virtue of this choice, Joseph was substituted for God Himself, commissioned to hold His place in the eyes of men, honoured with a paternity of jurisdiction over Jesus, in virtue of which he had a right to command the Incarnate Word to perform all the duties of a son, and the Word, by whom all things are made, obeyed him as though he were His father. O sublime title! O incomparable dignity! It was through this title that on the day of the Circumcision Joseph gave to the Infant God the name of Jesus; that on the day of the Presentation He took the Ruler into the temple and placed Him upon the altar; that during the days of His infancy he received His sighs, appeased His cries, dried His tears, solaced His pains, and that, in order to shelter Him from the fury of Herod, his paternal hands carried Him into Egypt, far more honoured thereby than if they had borne the sceptre for which they were made. It was through this title, lastly, that he fed Him at the cost of his labours and his sweat; that he gave Him lodging and clothing,

and provided for all His wants. What a heavenly and magnificent mission! How it aggrandises St Joseph! How it ought to render the devotion to him dear and venerable to us! How it ought to inspire us with confidence in his protection!

ST JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF MARY

Under this new title, Joseph shares the glory of the Blessed Virgin, chosen from amongst all the descendants of Judah, and raised above all nations, who will forever call her blessed. As being the husband of Mary, he is her master and lord; for the Apostle says that “man is the head of the woman.” So that, O miracle of elevation! the Mother of God, the Queen of heaven and earth, calls Joseph her lord and master, and she from whom the angels consider it an honour to receive commands was subject to him in all things. As the husband of Mary, he was her guardian angel, called to the honour of being her conductor in her journeys, to console her in her afflictions, to shelter, during the season she was with child, from calumnies that living tabernacle filled with the glory of the Most High. As husband of Mary, he had a portion of holiness proportioned to the holiness of the heavenly virgin. For, if it be right that the two persons united together should each bring as their dowry an equal share of possessions, who can doubt that Heaven, the author of this marriage, should not have arranged, in order to render it suitable, a certain proportion between the merits of Joseph and those of his holy spouse?

O Joseph! at one and the same time father of Jesus and spouse of Mary, how great, then, art thou! What a beautiful place thou must occupy in heaven! From here below I lovingly contemplate thee, raised upon a throne which very far surpasses the twelve thrones on which the apostles, who are destined to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, are seated. For the apostles are only the servants of Jesus Christ; and He calls thee His father. It seems to me that I behold thee seated at the very side of the Queen of heaven, since thou art her husband. By what profound enough homage can we ever sufficiently honour thee, venerate thy statues and thy pictures, celebrate thy feasts and invoke thy name, make of it our delight and often repeat it!

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.