



## **The Feast of our Patron, St. Joseph**

This year March 19 falls on a Sunday in Lent, therefore, the Solemnity of St. Joseph is moved to Monday March 20. Our St. Joseph Table is postponed for this year because of the restoration work in our Church. We will have it again next year. So let our celebration for the Feast be a spiritual one.

As we honor St. Joseph, we call to mind that this year we observe the 100th Anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady at Fatima. In the last apparition, St. Joseph appeared with the Child Jesus who blessed the world. So St. Joseph also has a place in this special Centenary Year, just as he had in the lives of Jesus and Mary and now in the Church.

Have you ever wondered what their lives would have been like without St. Joseph? How would they have managed to live in safety, have enough to eat or a place to sleep or survive a single day, even in the small town of Nazareth? St. Joseph was crucial to God's entire plan and to the history of salvation. He did indeed "change the course of human history" because his presence, his love and protection were so necessary for Jesus and Mary.

But his privileged place in this plan came at tremendous cost to himself because the demands on his fortitude and fidelity were immense. Righteous as he was, he still needed exceptional help from heaven. Thus it was that three times we read how he was directed by angels in the accomplishment of his mission. An angel reassured him in his confusion over Mary's mysterious pregnancy. An angel warned him to flee from Herod's wrath. An angel directed him to leave Egypt and return to the land of Israel.

Add to all this Joseph's concern to find a place for Mary and her newborn Baby in Bethlehem, his hard work and sacrifice in Nazareth to provide a life of relative peace and security for them, his determined acceptance of God's will in every circumstance. All of these and probably much more not related in the gospel required of St. Joseph tremendous courage, unflinching self denial, unshakable faith and unqualified love.

Truly, the fullness of grace transformed his heart and enabled him "to do something so great as to change the course of human history" by his unassuming fidelity and courageous obedience amid so many different challenges and trials. What an example he is for us! We won't receive directions from an angel as St. Joseph did, or as the children of Fatima did, but we will always have the teachings of the Church, the examples of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the grace of our particular vocation and the protection of our personal Guardian Angel. In this Centenary Year of Fatima, may we learn from St. Joseph how to give ourselves to God's plans and live always in the love of Jesus and Mary.

## ***Novena Prayer***

At Fatima, Our Lady asked for the daily recitation of the Rosary. In honor of St. Joseph, we pray these Meditations.

### **1st Mystery— THE ROLE OF JOSEPH**

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. It is through the Holy Spirit that this 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.”

***St. Joseph, enable the Church to bring Jesus and His salvation to all peoples.***

### **2nd Mystery— THE FAITH OF JOSEPH**

When Joseph awoke he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

***St. Joseph, help married couples and families to live in love and reverence for one another.***

### **3rd Mystery—THE OBEDIENCE OF JOSEPH**

Joseph went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with Child. While they were there, she gave birth to her first-born Son.

***St. Joseph, protect the homeless, the helpless and the unborn and obtain peace for cities, nations, the world.***

### **4th Mystery—THE COURAGE OF JOSEPH**

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.” Joseph rose and took the child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt.

***St. Joseph, be with the fearful and all in need, suffering, pain and trouble.***

### **5th Mystery—THE FIDELITY OF JOSEPH**

The angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph 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.

***St. Joseph, intercede with Them for all our intentions. Amen.***