

SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

MARCH 19

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Cf. Lk 12: 42

Behold, a faithful and prudent steward, whom the Lord set over his household.

INTRODUCTION

St. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster-father of Jesus, was probably born in Bethlehem and probably died in Nazareth. His important mission in God's plan of salvation was "to legally insert Jesus Christ into the line of David from whom, according to the prophets, the Messiah would be born, and to act as his father and guardian". St. Joseph was an ordinary manual labourer although descended from the royal house of David. In the designs of Providence, he was destined to become the spouse of the Mother of God. His high privilege is expressed in a single phrase, "Foster-father of Jesus." About him Sacred Scripture has little more to say than that he was a just man—an expression which indicates how faithfully he fulfilled his high trust of protecting and guarding God's greatest treasures upon earth, Jesus and Mary.

The darkest hours of his life may well have been those when he first learned of Mary's pregnancy; but precisely in this time of trial Joseph showed himself great. His suffering, which likewise formed a part of the work of the redemption, was not without great providential import: Joseph was to be, for all times, the trustworthy witness of the Messiah's virgin birth. After this, he modestly retires into the background of holy Scripture.

Of St. Joseph's death the Bible tells us nothing. There are indications, however, that he died before the beginning of Christ's public life. His was the most beautiful death that one could have, in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Humbly and unknown, he passed his years at Nazareth, silent and almost forgotten he remained in the background through centuries of Church history. Only in more recent times has he been accorded greater honour. As we celebrate his feast, let us implore God's help to be like St. Joseph, humble and obedient to God's will.

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that by Saint Joseph's intercession your Church may constantly watch over the unfolding of the mysteries of human salvation, whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING: 2 SM 7:4-5A, 12-14A, 16

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, `Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'"

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: PS 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29

R. (37) The son of David will live forever.

I will sing of thy steadfast love, O LORD, for ever;
with my mouth I will proclaim thy faithfulness to all generations.
For thy steadfast love was established for ever,
thy faithfulness is firm as the heavens.

Thou hast said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
`I will establish your descendants for ever,
and build your throne for all generations.'"

He shall cry to me, `Thou art my Father, my God,
and the Rock of my salvation.'
My steadfast love I will keep for him for ever,
and my covenant will stand firm for him.

SECOND READING: ROM 4:13, 16-18, 22

The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants -- not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations" -- in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, "So shall your descendants be." That is why his faith was "reckoned to him as righteousness."

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL PS 84:5

Blessed are those who dwell in your house, O Lord; they never cease to praise you.

Gospel MT 1:16, 18-21, 24A

and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife,

Or LK 2:41-51A

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: The Lord is the source of all holiness. Let us therefore pray to Our Lord God who gave St. Joseph the light and strength he needed to be faithful at all times.

Our response is: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

1. For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, our Bishop, Paul, and all priests, that they follow the example of St. Joseph and lead us through a responsible and dedicated leadership, let us pray to the Lord.

2. For our Christian community, may we respect and love each other, and be dedicated to our families by following the example of our patron Saint Joseph, let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those entrusted with responsibility in various ministries of the church, may they set a model Christian example for the people they lead, let us pray to the Lord.

4. For all labourers, may Saint Joseph the Worker inspire us to work wholeheartedly in this world, seeking always to give God glory and be faithful to the duties assigned to them, let us pray to the Lord.

5. For all mankind, that through the intercession of Saint Joseph, they may find the opportunity to have secure employment and a fitting standard of living, let us pray to the Lord.

6. Invoking Joseph the just man, we pray for all in public office who are called to guide civil affairs with justice.

7. Invoking Joseph who placed his faith in divine Providence, we pray for ourselves, that we may act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

Celebrant: Father, we praise you for having led Saint Joseph to serve your Son Jesus and his Mother so faithfully; help us to be faithful to our responsibilities and serve you with love. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We pray, O Lord, that, just as Saint Joseph served with loving care your Only Begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, so we may be worthy to minister with a pure heart at your altar. Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE: The mission of St. Joseph

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
and on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph
to give you fitting praise,
to glorify you and bless you.

For this just man was given by you
as spouse to the Virgin Mother of God
and set as a wise and faithful servant
in charge of your household,
to watch like a father over your Only Begotten Son,
who was conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him the Angels praise your majesty,
Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you.

Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim
worship together with exultation.
May our voices, we pray, join with theirs
in humble praise, as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Mt 25: 21

Well done, good and faithful servant. Come, share your master's joy.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Defend with unfailing protection, O Lord, we pray, the family you have nourished with food from this altar, as they rejoice at the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, and graciously keep safe your gifts among them. Through Christ our Lord.