



Reflection 4

FOLLOWING CLELIA'S FOOTSTEPS
TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS

Saint Joseph: “With a father’s heart: that is how Joseph loved Jesus”

On the occasion of the Year of Saint Joseph, a **Plenary Indulgence** is granted to “the faithful who shall recite any prayer legitimately approved or act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph, . . . especially on the occasions of March 19 and May 1, on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, . . . on the 19th of every month and every Wednesday, the day dedicated to the Saint’s memory, according to the Latin tradition.”

Pope Francis, in the Apostolic Letter **Patris Corde**, written for this occasion, reminds us that “**the spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that explains, but accepts.** Only as a result of this acceptance, this reconciliation, can we begin to glimpse a broader history, a deeper meaning.”

“Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, **but courageously and firmly proactive.** In our own lives, acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit’s gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.”

“Just as God told Joseph: ‘Son of David, do not be afraid!’ (Mt 1:20), **so he seems to tell us: ‘Do not be afraid!’** We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with

mere resignation but with hope and courage. In this way, we become open to a deeper meaning.”

“Joseph’s attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak (cf. 1 Cor 1:27). He is the ‘Father of orphans and protector of widows’ (Ps 68:6).”

Matthew 1: 18 -25 – The Birth of Jesus

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed 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 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.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son,^{*} and he named him Jesus.

✓ *How did Joseph accept Mary? How did he act?*

“Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble,” Frances assures us. “Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation.” Model of tenderness and obedience, Saint Joseph shows us how salvation is accomplished through our

weakness. "All too often, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty. . . . [Joseph] teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course."

Mother Clelia

"Love the glorious and most powerful St. Joseph very much and be very devoted to this saint! Turn to him in all your needs with great trust and you will obtain marvelous favors from him." (SA, p. 205)

"As soon as I woke up I offered Jesus my heart and that of my Daughters and of all those persons towards whom I owe a debt of gratitude. I offered to the Eternal Father the merits of the most holy Precious Blood of Jesus, the merits of Mary most holy and of St. Joseph to obtain the grace of conversion for all those sinners who will die this month." (Diary p. 127)

"There is nothing left for me but to wait with resignation the moment when God will shed a little light on my darkened spirit. I do not want to oppose His divine plans. I wish to abstain from drinking every Wednesday in honor of St. Joseph." (Diary p. 207)

To be a family, you must dream (Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to the Philippines, Meeting with families, January 16, 2015)

"You can't have a family without dreams. Once a family loses the ability to dream, children do not grow, love does not grow, life shrivels up and dies. So I ask you each evening, when you make your examination of conscience, to also ask yourselves this question: Today did I dream about my children's future? Today

did I dream about the love of my husband, my wife? Did I dream about my parents and grandparents who have gone before me? . . . So it is very important to reclaim love by what we do each day. Do not ever stop being newlyweds!”

Prayer to Saint Joseph

Saint Joseph, most gentle spouse of Mary and foster father of Jesus, you who guided and protected the Holy Family with great serenity and love, we ask you to protect us, save us from danger, and defend us from the snares of the Evil One. Amen.

PLEDGE

- READ THE APOSTOLIC LETTER *PATRIS CORDE* OF POPE FRANCIS ON THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF SAINT JOSEPH AS PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.
- PRAY THE PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH EVERY DAY IN THE SPIRIT OF MOTHER CLELIA.
- WHAT ARE MY DREAMS FOR MY FAMILY?

