

Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary
March 19, 2019

We celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph in the Church today. Specifically, St. Joseph, Husband of Mary. Could you imagine if Mary had been married to a different man? What if Mary had been stuck with a man who was not so holy and loving? Think about the weakness of our present age and think what it would have been like if Joseph was a man with the heart of the world. When he found out about Mary being pregnant, instead of how he was kind and “unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly,” he could have reacted with anger and cruelty because of the pain this news caused him. These days we could see him tweeting terrible things about Mary, or taking her on a terrible talk show to shame her in public with the news that he was not the father. But Joseph does not have the heart of the world. He loves with the heart of the Father in Heaven. There are so many ways that Joseph shows true love for Mary and for her child, and this is why we honor him as a patron and Father of the Church.

In the prayer over the offerings at this Mass we will pray “that, just as St. Joseph served with loving care... so may we be worthy to minister with a pure heart at your altar.” What an amazing example to have during this season of Lent. My friends, how do we love? Do we love with the heart of the world or with the heart of our father in faith, St. Joseph? When we are hurt by others, when we see things that distress us, when we are confronted by disappointment, what happens in our heart? If we look around in the Christian community

today, it might hurt to see so many of us reacting just like the world reacts. Angry words online, or sarcastic comments whispered and received with dark delight. The world is an angry place, so angry and despairing. Certainly there are reasons, and we should not pretend that there are not things that require serious attention. But our response should be that of people who trust in the Lord. Our joy and hope is not based on circumstance, but on the life of the Lord who overcame sin and death. The desert is not everlasting. No, we pass through the desert into the garden of life.

May we learn this attitude in a new way today from the great St. Joseph, Husband of Mary. As Pope Francis has said: “Joseph was a man who always listened to the voice of God... He did not persist in following his own plan for his life, he did not allow bitterness to poison his soul; rather, he was ready to make himself available to the news... He thereby became even freer and greater” (22 Dec 2013).

In this Lenten Season, may we make ourselves available to hear the Good News, which is always challenging news. Just like St. Joseph, may we accept this challenge with faith and hope, so that God may show us more fully the plan he has for us and his beloved Church.

St. Joseph, husband of Mary, pray for us.