

INTRODUCTION

I did not understand him [St. Joseph] well enough, but that will change.¹

— St. John of the Cross

In the 16th century, St. John of the Cross, one of the greatest mystics of the Church, humbly acknowledged that he lacked a proper understanding of the greatness of St. Joseph. Inspired by the tremendous love that his friend, St. Teresa of Avila, had for St. Joseph, St. John of the Cross made a firm resolution to get to know and love St. Joseph better.

What about you? Do you know St. Joseph? Do you feel you understand his greatness and love for you? Well, my friends, get ready! *Consecration to St. Joseph* is going to unveil the wonders of St. Joseph like never before!

Now is the time of St. Joseph!

It's a bold claim, I admit. Yet I truly believe that in our day the Lord wants to direct our hearts, families, parishes, dioceses, and Church to St. Joseph in a major way. This action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church has been gaining momentum for a very long time.

Don't get me wrong: Saint Joseph has always held a special place in Christians' hearts. Across the centuries, saints, popes, mystics, scholars, and laity alike have praised and extolled the greatness of St. Joseph. In the 16th century, the Holy Spirit used St. Teresa of Avila to bring about a greater awareness of St. Joseph in the Church. Even before St. Teresa, saints such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Bernardine of Siena, and St. Lawrence of Brindisi strongly emphasized the greatness of St. Joseph.

In more recent times, Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, St. Peter Julian Eymard, Blessed Petra of St. Joseph, and St. André Bessette have kept devotion to St. Joseph prominent in the lives of God's people. Indeed, St. André Bessette initiated construction on what has become the world's largest church dedicated to St. Joseph — St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, Canada. Saint José Manyanet, a priest in 19th-century Spain, fervently promoted devotion to St. Joseph and the Holy Family. He prophesied that a "time of St. Joseph" would soon arrive in the life of the Church. He wrote:



I believe that the true time of Saint Joseph has not arrived yet: after two thousand years we started only now to glimpse something of the mystery in which he is immersed.²

Well, my friends, guess what? Now is the time of St. Joseph! How can I state this with such conviction? Simple: God has given us clear indications that he wants his people to pay more attention to St. Joseph — clearer indications than in any previous era in Church history. In 1961, St. Pope John XXIII put it very bluntly. He wrote:

In the Holy Church's worship, right from the beginning, Jesus, the Word of God made man, has enjoyed the adoration that belongs to him, incommunicable as the splendor of the substance of his Father, a splendor reflected in the glory of his saints. From the earliest times, Mary, his mother, was close behind him, in the pictures in the catacombs and the basilicas, where she was devoutly venerated as "Holy Mother of God." But Joseph, except for some slight sprinkling of references to him here and there in the writings of the Fathers [of the Church], for long centuries remained in the background, in his characteristic concealment, almost as a decorative figure in the overall picture of the Savior's life. It took time for devotion to him to go beyond those passing glances and take root in the hearts of the faithful, and then surge forth in the form of special prayers and of a profound sense of trusting abandonment. The fervent joy of pouring forth these deepest feelings of the heart in so many impressive ways has been saved for modern times!³

What the Vicar of Christ clearly stated is that *now* is the time of St. Joseph. We are living in modern times, the time in which the Church is witnessing an unprecedented era of devotion to St. Joseph. According to St. Pope John XXIII, God desires devotion to St. Joseph to surge forth in our day in the form of special prayers of "trusting abandonment." This means one thing in particular: *It's time for total consecration to St. Joseph!*

Let me explain further about how God has been leading the Church to this moment.

In 2018, I published a daily devotional to St. Joseph entitled *St. Joseph Gems: Daily Wisdom on Our Spiritual Father*. In the introduction, I present a list of remarkable events — divine indicators, if you will — that have taken place over the past 150 years that show St. Joseph's increasing importance in the life of the Church. They clearly indicate that we are living in an unprecedented time of St. Joseph. Here's the list:

- 1868 — Blessed Jean-Joseph Latasse, OP, writes a letter to Blessed Pope Pius IX asking him to declare St. Joseph the "Patron of the Universal Church."
- 1870 — Blessed Pope Pius IX declares St. Joseph the "Patron of the Universal Church."
- 1871 — Founding of the Josephites by Cardinal Herbert A. Vaughan
- 1873 — Founding of the Congregation of St. Joseph by St. Leonardo Murialdo
- 1878 — Founding of the Oblates of St. Joseph by St. Joseph Marella
- 1879 — Apparitions at Knock, Ireland. Saint Joseph appears with the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Apostle, and Jesus (appearing as the Lamb of God).
- 1889 — Pope Leo XIII writes *Quoniam Pluries*, an encyclical letter on St. Joseph.
- 1895 — Blessed Petra of St. Joseph begins construction on a shrine to St. Joseph in Barcelona, Spain. It is consecrated in 1901. At her beatification in 1994, St. John Paul II calls Blessed Petra the "apostle of St. Joseph of the 19th century."
- 1904 — Saint André Bessette constructs an oratory dedicated to St. Joseph in Montreal, Canada. It expands, is declared a minor basilica, and finally is completed in 1967. Today, it is known as St. Joseph's Oratory and is considered by many to be the preeminent international center of devotion to St. Joseph.
- 1908 — Saint Luigi Guanella begins constructing a church dedicated to St. Joseph in Rome. It is completed and consecrated as a basilica in 1912.
- 1909 — Saint Pope Pius X officially approves the Litany of St. Joseph.
- 1914 — Saint Luigi Guanella founds the Pious Union of St. Joseph for the Salvation of the Dying.
- 1917 — Apparitions at Fatima, Portugal. During the last apparition on October 13, St. Joseph appears holding the Child Jesus and blessing the world.
- 1921 — Pope Benedict XV inserts the phrase "Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse" into the Divine Praises.
- 1947 — Spanish Discalced Carmelites found *Estudios Josefíno*, the first theological journal devoted to St. Joseph.
- 1950s — The alleged apparitions of Our Lady of America given to Sr. Mary Ephrem emphasize a renewed devotion to St. Joseph, and St. Joseph himself speaks to the visionary about this devotion.
- 1955 — Venerable Pope Pius XII establishes the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, to be celebrated on May 1.
- 1962 — Saint Pope John XXIII inserts St. Joseph's name into the Canon of the Mass (Eucharistic Prayer I).
- 1989 — Saint Pope John Paul II writes *Redemptoris Custos*, an apostolic exhortation on St. Joseph.

2013 — Pope Francis, echoing and fulfilling the intentions of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, inserts the name of St. Joseph into all Eucharistic Prayers. He also consecrates Vatican City State to St. Joseph.

Whoa! Did you know all that? Most people are unaware of these remarkable events. Without exaggeration, the Church has done more to promote St. Joseph in the last 150 years than in the previous 1,800 years of Christianity! But why now? Why St. Joseph?

There are many reasons, but I believe there are two that are especially important.

First, we need the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph to help us protect marriage and the family. Marriage and the family have always been under attack, but in modern times, the threats have reached extraordinary heights. Many people no longer know what it means to be a man or a woman, let alone what constitutes a marriage and a family. Many countries even claim to have redefined marriage and the family. There is great confusion on these matters, greater confusion than in any previous era of human history. The Servant of God Sr. Lucia dos Santos, the longest-lived visionary of the Fatima apparitions, knew the seriousness of the times and made a powerful statement about this issue. She wrote:

The final battle between the Lord and the kingdom of Satan will be about marriage and the family.⁴

To combat and overcome Satan's deceptions, the Church needs St. Joseph. His example and protection are the only way out of the confusing mess we are in. Who else can we turn to who can help us understand what marriage and the family are all about if not to the Head of the Holy Family and the Terror of Demons?

Second, the entire world needs to be re-evangelized, including the vast majority of baptized Christians. Saint Joseph was the first missionary. Today, he desires again to bring Jesus to the nations. Many nations and cultures that were previously Christian have fallen away from their Christian roots and are on a path of self-destruction. Countries once established on Judeo-Christian principles have become overrun by ideologies and organizations that seek to strip society of all that is sacred. Without a major turnaround, civilization itself is going to self-destruct.

In an apostolic exhortation on St. Joseph in 1989, St. John Paul II reminded us of the necessity of invoking St. Joseph in the work of

re-evangelizing the world. He wrote:

This patronage [of St. Joseph] must be invoked as ever necessary for the Church, not only as a defense against all dangers, but also, and indeed primarily, as an impetus for her renewed commitment to evangelization in the world and to re-evangelization in those lands and nations where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and are now put to a hard test.⁵

Now is the time to consecrate yourself to St. Joseph! God is telling his Church that, in order to defend marriage and the family, elevate morals, recover lost ground, and win souls for Jesus Christ, we need to bring St. Joseph onto the battlefield. He is the Terror of Demons! With his powerful spiritual fatherhood, incredible love for his spiritual children, and constant intercession, the Church can be renewed as a light to the nations, a beautiful city on a hill (see Mt 5:14-16)!

What exactly is consecration to St. Joseph? In other words, what does it mean for a person to be consecrated to St. Joseph? Well, it basically means that you acknowledge that he is your spiritual father, and you want to be like him. To show it, you entrust yourself entirely to his paternal care so that he can lovingly help you acquire his virtues and become holy. Total consecration to St. Joseph means you make a formal act of filial entrustment to your spiritual father so that he can take care of your spiritual well-being and lead you to God. The person who consecrates himself to St. Joseph wants to be as close to their spiritual father as possible, to the point of resembling him in virtue and holiness. Saint Joseph, in turn, will give those consecrated to him his loving attention, protection, and guidance.

Perhaps someone reading this has already consecrated themselves entirely to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and is wondering if they can consecrate themselves to St. Joseph and entrust everything to him, as well. The answer is a resounding "Yes!" God desires that all children be committed to the love and care of a mother and a father. You are not a member of a single-parent spiritual family. Mary is your spiritual mother, and St. Joseph is your spiritual father. The spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph is extremely important for your spiritual growth. Total consecration to Mary is not diminished by total consecration to St. Joseph. Mary wants you to consecrate yourself to St. Joseph! Everything you have given to Jesus and Mary can also be given to St. Joseph. Be at peace. The Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph are one.

"How is consecration to St. Joseph done?" you ask. To be honest, there are an endless number of ways. A simple prayer of entrustment is sufficient. However, if you truly want to understand the greatness of your spiritual father, it is best to follow a thorough program of preparation and consecration. Such a program should cover St. Joseph's person, privileges, titles, and virtues, especially his paternal love for God the Son and the rest of humanity. *Consecration to St. Joseph* offers a comprehensive program of preparation and consecration to St. Joseph for individuals, families, parishes, and dioceses. Through this program, I hope to spark the first worldwide movement of consecration to St. Joseph!

So what's the program? What's the method? Well, as I prayed about how to organize this preparation for consecration to St. Joseph, I thought it best to emulate the tried-and-true 33-day preparation method employed by St. Louis de Montfort in his Marian consecration. Why re-invent the wheel, right? The method of 33-day preparation is simple, straightforward, and allows a person to cover the subject matter quite well. Saint Louis de Montfort's method of preparation also requires a very important element: prayer.

Like St. Louis de Montfort's program of Marian consecration, *Consecration to St. Joseph* has three parts.

PART I 33-Day Preparation

Before you start the 33-day preparation, you need to pick a consecration date (Day 33), which will then guide you to a beginning date. You are free to begin and end on any day you like, but I have provided a chart on page 10 that lists the liturgical feasts associated with St. Joseph. Personally, I think it is best to choose a date for your consecration that coincides with a liturgical feast of St. Joseph. It is very important for you to remember that the consecration date is Day 33.

As for the content of the 33-day preparation, the Litany of St. Joseph serves as the template for the program. The Litany of St. Joseph is a powerful prayer and will help you come to know and love your spiritual father. The Litany of St. Joseph highlights many of St. Joseph's titles, privileges, and heroic virtues. On each day of the 33-day preparation (Day 1 and Day 2 are the only exceptions), a short exposition on one of the invocations in the Litany of St. Joseph is presented (in Part I), followed by a reading on St. Joseph (a section

of Part II), concluding with the recitation of the Litany of St. Joseph (found in Part III). Following this method, you will come to know and love St. Joseph in a deeper way, and be prepared for total consecration to your spiritual father. The 33-day preparation requires about 20 to 30 minutes a day. Oh, and if you miss a day, don't panic. Just make it up and continue your preparation. You can do this!

PART II The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father

Part II contains the material for the readings assigned on each day of the 33-day preparation. The majority of the readings are short. Ten of them are a little longer, but don't worry. None of them are burdensome. Trust me: You are going to fall in love with St. Joseph as a result of these readings.

I have designed Part II to be a book within a book. What this means is that Part II is to be used for each day of the 33-day preparation, but it can also be read as its own book, apart from the 33-day preparation.

Let me explain why I set it up this way.

Most likely, the majority of people who acquire *Consecration to St. Joseph* are going to go straight into the 33-day preparation. However, there might be some people who get the book but are not quite ready for consecration to St. Joseph. Some people might feel that they want to get to know St. Joseph better before committing to a month-long preparation for consecration to a saint they don't know much about. Those folks can skip Part I (the 33-day preparation) and simply read Part II as its own book. You should know, though, that if you choose to read Part II without doing the 33-day preparation, you will need to re-read the assigned sections from Part II if you decide to do the 33-day preparation. (The designated daily reading from Part II follows a different order when you do it with the 33-day preparation in Part I.)

So why is Part II called *The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*? I could give you a long answer, but I'll let St. Josemaría Escrivá give you a hint. He states:

Saint Joseph, more than anyone else before or since, learned from Jesus to be alert to recognize God's wonders.⁶

Our God is a God of wonders! One of his greatest wonders is St. Joseph. The wonders of your spiritual father are about to be

revealed to you like never before. Naturally, there are a lot of wonders associated with St. Joseph, but in researching and writing this book, I discovered that there are 10 wonders of St. Joseph that really stand out. In focusing your attention on these 10 wonders, you will acquire a fuller picture of who St. Joseph is and why you should deeply love him.

PART III Prayers to St. Joseph

Part III of your preparation for consecration to St. Joseph is extremely important. It involves prayer. Your preparation for consecration to St. Joseph *must* include prayer. Daily prayer. Without daily prayer, your preparation for consecration to St. Joseph would only impart information about St. Joseph and not help you to acquire a filial relationship with St. Joseph. You definitely need to know many things about St. Joseph, but it is very important that you also fall in love with him. Daily prayer to St. Joseph will help you develop a loving relationship with your spiritual father. For this reason, the book not only unpacks the Litany of St. Joseph for its theological richness, but also leads you to pray the Litany on a daily basis. By the end of the 33 days, you might just find that you have the Litany of St. Joseph memorized!

Part III includes several acts of consecration to St. Joseph, as well as many other prayers to your spiritual father. On the day of your consecration, feel free to use whichever act of consecration you like best; you can also make up your own, if you like. If you are doing the preparation and consecration as a group, it is recommended that you all recite the same consecration prayer together as a group. You will also find the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* prayer in this section.

At the end of the book, you will find the instructions on "How to Make the 33-Day Preparation and Consecration as a Group" (see page 249). Everything you need to do for the weekly group meetings is provided, as well as discussion questions for each meeting. The group preparation and consecration is perfect for parishes and prayer groups. Everything your group needs to do the preparation and consecration is contained in one book. (Each person does need to have their own book, though.)

Consecration to St. Joseph concludes with a meditation for the Solemnity of St. Joseph by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade; an incredible article by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP; a brief list

of churches and shrines dedicated to St. Joseph around the world; and beautiful artwork that has been exclusively commissioned for this book.

My dear friend, you are about to embark on a journey that is going to change your life. To be close to St. Joseph is a special grace from God. By making this 33-day preparation and consecration to St. Joseph, you will be truly blessed. In his day, St. Maximilian Kolbe asked the question, "Who are you, O Immaculate Conception?" He sought to provide an answer to that question through his preaching, writing, and an apostolate of Marian consecration. Today, many people are asking a similar question about St. Joseph: "Who are you, St. Joseph?" *Consecration to St. Joseph* will answer that question and offer to the Church a renewed understanding and appreciation of the great St. Joseph.

Now is the time for consecration to St. Joseph!

Very Rev. Donald H. Calloway, MIC, STL
Vicar Provincial — Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception
Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy Province

Consecration Chart

START OF THE 33 DAYS	FEAST DAY	CONSECRATION DAY
December 22	Feast of the Holy Spouses*	January 23
January 1	Presentation of the Lord	February 2
February 15**	Solemnity of St. Joseph	March 19
March 30	St. Joseph the Worker	May 1
April 11	Our Lady of Fatima	May 13
July 20	Our Lady of Knock	August 21
September 30	All Saints	November 1
November 8	Our Lady of Loreto	December 10
November***	Holy Family	December

* For more on this feast, see pg. 125.

** During a leap year, when February has 29 days, the starting date is February 16.

*** The Solemnity of the Holy Family generally falls on the First Sunday after Christmas. If Christmas itself is on a Sunday, be sure to check what day the bishops designate as the Solemnity of the Holy Family and begin your consecration 32 days before the consecration date (Day 33).

PART I

33-Day Preparation

DAY 1

Why Consecration to St. Joseph?

When God wishes to raise a soul to greater heights, he unites it to St. Joseph by giving it a strong love for the good saint.¹

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

Do you want to ascend to greater heights in the spiritual life? Consecration to St. Joseph will take you there.

Many Christians have consecrated themselves to the Virgin Mary so as to be more closely united to Jesus. Without a doubt, consecration to Mary is one of the best things you can do for your spiritual life. The essence of Marian consecration is to help you become “another Mary” for Jesus, a faithful, loving, and trusting companion of the Savior. Consecration to St. Joseph does something similar.

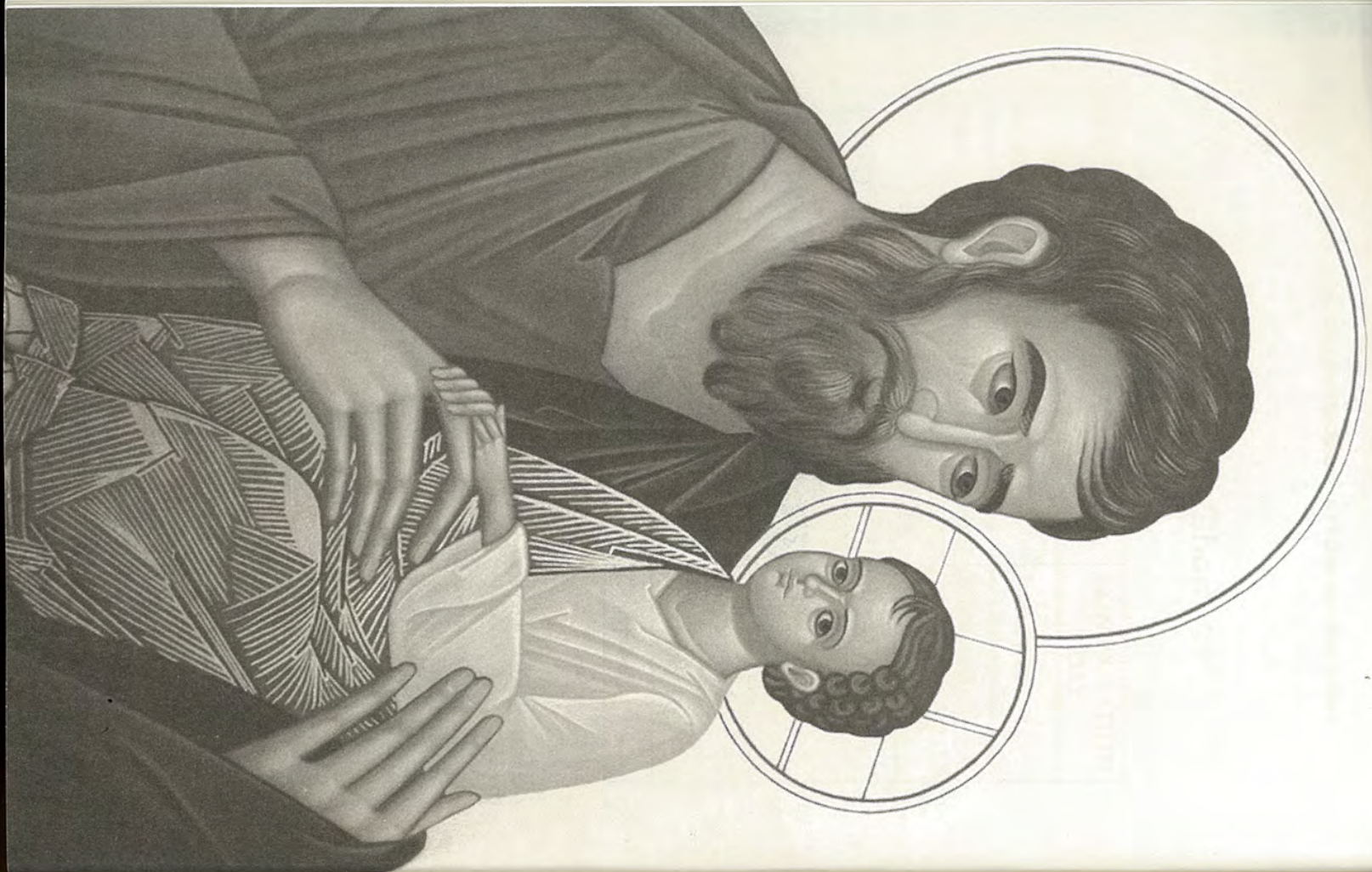
CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH WILL HELP YOU BECOME “ANOTHER JOSEPH” FOR JESUS AND MARY. That is, entrusting yourself entirely to St. Joseph helps you become a faithful, loving, and trusting companion of Jesus and Mary!

In the New Testament, we read that Jesus “increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Lk 2:52) under the watchful care of his parents. Such an “increase” can happen to you, too, if you entrust yourself to the paternal care of St. Joseph. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux explains how it works. He writes:

Who and what manner of man this blessed Joseph was, you may conjecture from the name by which, a dispensation being allowed, he deserved to be so honored as to be believed and to be called the father of God. You may conjecture it from his very name, which, being interpreted, means “Increase.”²

Saint Joseph is “The Increaser.” He has paternal love for you and the power to increase the presence of God in your life and take you to greater heights in the spiritual life. For centuries, this “secret” of St. Joseph lay hidden. Saints, mystics, and a handful of popes knew of it. Now it is your turn to discover it.

NOW IS THE TIME OF ST. JOSEPH! The Church and the world greatly need St. Joseph. We need him to help us return to the love of Jesus and to living lives of virtue. We desperately need St. Joseph’s protection



as well. The family — the foundation of society — is under attack. The family of God — the Catholic Church — is also undergoing vicious assaults from the world, the flesh, the devil, and some of her own children. We need St. Joseph to protect us. He is our loving and merciful spiritual father, holy, strong, and ready to help. He is forever linked to Jesus, Mary, and the Church. He protected the Holy Family; he will protect us, too, if we entrust ourselves to his paternal heart and his spiritual care.

SAINT JOSEPH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER. All children resemble their parents. You are a child of St. Joseph. You need to resemble him, especially by imitating his virtues and faithfulness to Jesus and Mary. Saint Joseph plays a vital (life-giving) role in your spiritual growth and well-being. This is the heart of consecration to St. Joseph. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade explains it well. He states:

He [St. Joseph] was not a passive instrument in the great work of our salvation; he played a very active role, and that is why he was included in the merciful counsels of the Incarnate Wisdom.³

The merciful love of God has given St. Joseph to you as a spiritual father. Are you ready to ascend to greater heights in the spiritual life? Are you ready to draw nearer to Jesus and Mary, and experience an increase in virtue? Let's go to Joseph!

We are going to consecrate ourselves to St. Joseph. We shall place at his feet all that we are and all that we have.⁴

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

Pray the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* (page 247)*
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

* If the 33-day preparation is being done by a group, the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* has already been prayed.

DAY 2

The Litany of St. Joseph

Knowing by experience St. Joseph's astonishing influence with God, I would wish to persuade everyone to honor him with particular devotion. I have always seen those who honored him in a special manner make progress in virtue, for this heavenly protector favors in a striking manner the spiritual advancement of souls who commend themselves to him.¹

— St. Teresa of Avila

You have probably heard of St. Maximilian Kolbe, the heroic priest who gave his life for another prisoner in the concentration camp at Auschwitz. Saint Maximilian was a zealous promoter of Our Lady and Marian consecration. He founded the Militia Immaculatae in 1917 to spread devotion to Our Lady around the world. But have you heard of Fr. Joseph Kentenich, another great promoter of devotion to Our Lady?

In 1941, Fr. Kentenich was arrested by the Gestapo and put in prison in Germany. For medical reasons, the Nazis did not intend to send him to a concentration camp. Zealous for Our Lady, however, Fr. Kentenich requested he be sent to the concentration camp at Dachau. He wanted to offer his suffering for the Marian movement he had initiated in 1914, called Schoenstatt. He founded the Schoenstatt Movement in order to teach Our Lady's virtues to people and transform the world through Marian consecration. Father Kentenich spent three years in Dachau.

Father Kentenich's method of Marian consecration is known as the "covenant of love." He believed that a covenant of love with Mary would transform the world by turning the members of Schoenstatt into "apparitions of Mary." Not literal apparitions, of course; rather, by imitating Mary's virtues, the members of Schoenstatt would become reflections of Mary, "apparitions" of Our Lady, in the world. The Church and the world need such apparitions!

The Church and the world also need "apparitions" of St. Joseph: men and women who radiate the virtues of St. Joseph, especially his faithful love as a husband and father. In a world plagued with gender ideology and confusion about marriage and the family, reflections of Mary and St. Joseph are very much needed. Consecration to St. Joseph and imitation of his virtues will make this happen.

THE LITANY OF ST. JOSEPH WILL PREPARE YOU FOR TOTAL CONSECRATION TO YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER AND TEACH YOU HOW TO RESEMBLE HIS VIRTUES. The litany dates back to at least the 16th century and has been prayed by countless saints. The version you will pray was approved and indulgenced by St. Pope Pius X in 1909. Through the Litany of St. Joseph, you will learn the virtues and wonders of your spiritual father and become an “apparition of St. Joseph” in the world.

I take refuge in thy arms [St. Joseph], so that thou mayest lead me in the path of virtue.²

— St. Clement Mary Hofbauer

SAINT JOSEPH IS YOUR MODEL FOR LOVING JESUS, MARY, AND SOULS. Models are meant to be replicated. Through imitation of St. Joseph’s virtues, you will become like your model and have a tremendous impact on the world. Saint Joseph’s virtues will become your virtues. You are to become “another Joseph.”

His [St. Joseph’s] eminent virtues constitute his merit and he becomes our model.³

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

St. Joseph is our guide and our model. Because our vocation is like his, we must live his life, practice his virtues, and assimilate his spirit.⁴

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

Let us love Jesus above all, let us love Mary as our mother; but then, how could we keep from loving Joseph, who was so intimately united to both Jesus and Mary? And how can we honor him better than by imitating his virtues? Now, what else did he do in all his life but contemplate, study, and adore Jesus, even in the midst of his daily labors? Behold, therefore, our model.⁵

— St. Madeleine Sophie Barat

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

Pray the *Memorare* to St. Joseph (page 240)

DAY 3

God, the Father of Heaven, Have Mercy on Us

Our heavenly Father has had only one saint to represent him on earth. Hence he bestowed everything he could on that favored saint, and equipped him with all that he needed to be his worthy representative.¹

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

God the Father loves you. He loves you so much that he sent his Son into the world to save you. But saving you is not all the Father sent his Son to do for you. He sent his Son to save you *and* make you a child of God. Through Jesus, you are able to have a filial relationship with God the Father. Through Jesus, you can cry out, “Abba, Father!”

To be a child of God is why you were created; it’s the very purpose for which you exist. And there is only one way to the Father: Jesus Christ (see Jn 14:6). Only Jesus has the power to take you to the Father. Yet, in God’s merciful love, St. Joseph plays a very important role in your spiritual growth and journey to the Father.

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH WILL INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF THE FATHER IN YOUR LIFE. We learn this truth from the life of Jesus himself. When the Heavenly Father sent his Son into the world to save us and make us his children, he selected one saint to represent him on earth: St. Joseph. Jesus, in living under the roof of St. Joseph and being his Son, gave us a personal example of total entrustment to St. Joseph. Jesus loved, obeyed, and imitated his earthly father. Saint Joseph is the only man that Jesus ever called father; Jesus delighted in being known as the “son of Joseph” (see Jn 6:42). We, too, should consider it an honor to be his children. If, according to the plans of the Father, Jesus needed St. Joseph, how much more do we need him, too!

THE FATHERHOOD OF ST. JOSEPH INCREASED THE PRESENCE OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER IN THE LIFE OF JESUS. Now, to be clear, St. Joseph is not God. He cannot add anything to the divine and eternal communion existing between God the Father and God the Son.

Nor can St. Joseph improve the ability of Jesus, as a Divine Person, to perpetually behold the presence of his Heavenly Father. Rather, St. Joseph was chosen to stand in the place of the Heavenly Father *according to the demands of Jesus' human nature*.

God the Father doesn't have a human nature. Every time Jesus saw St. Joseph, heard him speak, watched him work, or witnessed his chaste love for Mary, the humanity of Jesus witnessed a perfect reflection of the Heavenly Father.

God chose to make Joseph his most tangible image on earth, the depository of all the rights of his divine paternity, the husband of that noble Virgin who is Mistress of angels and men.²

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

WHAT THE HEAVENLY FATHER DID FOR JESUS, HE WANTS TO DO FOR YOU. God the Father wants you to entrust yourself to the loving paternal care of St. Joseph in a manner similar to God's entrustment of the human nature of Jesus to St. Joseph. God planned these entrustments, both of Jesus to St. Joseph and of the members of the Church to St. Joseph, from all eternity; they were not done haphazardly. Saint Joseph is the shadow of the Heavenly Father. He was the image and reflection of the Father for Jesus. God the Father wants you to accept St. Joseph as your spiritual father as well. Jesus is the one in whom we see most perfectly the image of the mercy and love of his heavenly Father (as he said: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" [Jn 14:9]), but Jesus also wants to share with us the one who was for him the earthly image of his heavenly Father.

This holy man [St. Joseph] had such towering dignity and glory that the Eternal Father most generously bestowed on him a likeness of his own primacy.³

— St. Bernardine of Siena

Read "Our Spiritual Father" (page 100)
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

DAY 4

God, the Son, Redeemer of the World, Have Mercy on Us

The holy example of Jesus Christ who, while upon earth, honored St. Joseph so highly and was obedient to him during his life should be sufficient to inflame the hearts of all with devotion to this saint.¹

— St. Alphonsus Liguori

Are you familiar with the phrase "*To Jesus through Mary*"? It's a wonderful expression of devotion coined in the early 18th century by St. Louis de Montfort. In his book *True Devotion to Mary*, St. Louis taught that Mary is the surest, easiest, and fastest way of going to Jesus. To instill this message in people's hearts, St. Louis fervently promoted the rosary and Marian consecration. What is interesting, though, is that in all of St. Louis' writings, he only mentions St. Joseph a few times. Why is that? Didn't he love St. Joseph? Oh yes, St. Louis de Montfort loved St. Joseph very much. Every saint loves St. Joseph. The reason he didn't offer any significant teaching on St. Joseph is because the Church had not yet developed a theology of St. Joseph.

An understanding of the greatness of St. Joseph did not begin to flourish in the devotional life of the Church until the mid-19th century, 100 years after St. Louis de Montfort lived. Were St. Louis de Montfort preaching in the streets of France today, he would most likely be heard extolling the wonders of St. Joseph. He might even add St. Joseph to his famous phrase, and say, "*To Jesus through Mary and Joseph!*" Jesus wants you to know and love his mother *and* his father.

Mary and Joseph form the most faithful image of Jesus; and for this reason I can formulate the shortest path to holiness: "For me, to live is Jesus, it is Mary and Joseph."²

— Venerable Francis Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận

The two greatest saints in Christianity are Mary and St. Joseph. Consecration to St. Joseph flows naturally from baptismal consecration to Jesus Christ and filial consecration to Mary. Indeed, consecration to St. Joseph, your spiritual father, allows you to be consecrated to each person of the Holy Family!

In our day, marriage and family are under attack. Jesus and Mary want you to be consecrated to St. Joseph because there is no father or husband who knows more about the sacredness of marriage and the family or the self-sacrificing love required of fathers and husbands than St. Joseph. His paternal mission continues from heaven. He is our guardian, loving protector, and fearless defender. He is the model of saintly fatherhood. After Christ, St. Joseph is the model of heroic manhood and the defender of marriage, chastity, and life itself. Consecration to St. Joseph is the key to overcoming the anthropological confusion so prevalent in our times. Under the watchful, steadfast love and care of St. Joseph, all ideologies and idols will crumble and fall before Jesus Christ!

How thou [St. Joseph] didst rejoice to have always near you God himself, and to see the idols of the Egyptians fall prostrate to the ground before him.³

— Blessed Januarius Maria Sarnelli

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH WILL INCREASE YOUR LOVE FOR JESUS! The entire life and mission of St. Joseph points to Jesus. Saint Joseph never points to himself. His role is to lead everyone to Jesus, just as Mary does. Mary was predestined to be the Immaculate Mother of the Savior; St. Joseph was predestined to be the earthly father of the Savior and your spiritual father. Your spiritual father has been given all the graces necessary to complete his mission, a mission that includes increasing your relationship with Jesus.

Joseph carried Jesus Christ first to Egypt, then to Judea, and so traced for us the path of the apostles who preached his name to the Jews and to the Gentiles.⁴

— St. Hilary of Poitiers

Saint Joseph was the guardian of Jesus and Mary. He was naturally also the one who introduced those souls eager to approach them more closely.⁵

— Blessed Jean Joseph Latarte

Read “Privileges of Devotion to St. Joseph” (page 226)
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

DAY 5

God, the Holy Spirit, Have Mercy on Us

How great his [St. Joseph's] union with God, how sublime his gift of prayer, how wonderful the direction of the Holy Spirit!¹

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminate

The Holy Spirit wants you to know and love St. Joseph. With the exception of Our Lady's life, the Holy Spirit was more active in the life of St. Joseph than in any other saint. The earthly father of Jesus never did anything without seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit. Saint Joseph's docility to the Holy Spirit made it possible for him to communicate with God even while he slept!

SAINT JOSEPH WANTS YOU TO BE DOCTILE TO THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SO THAT YOU CAN BE LED IN THE WAYS OF HOLINESS.

What is holiness, anyway? Is it some unattainable spiritual summit you can never hope to reach? No, it is not. Holiness is living in intimate, loving communion with God. More specifically, holiness is observing the two great commandments of love of God and neighbor, avoiding sin, leading a life of virtue, and abiding in sanctifying grace. None of this is possible without the Holy Spirit in your life.

Wherever St. Joseph is present, the Holy Spirit is present. And St. Joseph would tell you that if you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit there is one absolutely necessary thing: prayer. Without prayer, you will never be able to have intimacy with God. Without prayer, you will not be able to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit.

To be holy, you need to imitate St. Joseph. You need to maintain a heart aflame with love of God and neighbor through committing to a devout interior life. Don't panic after reading this. You don't have to become a monk or a nun. Holiness is for everyone. Yet, no matter what your vocation in life, holiness is only attained by those who pray and have an active interior life, ignited and sustained by the Sacraments, fueled by prayer and a life of charity.

SAINT JOSEPH IS A MODEL OF THE INTERIOR LIFE FOR ALL HIS CHILDREN. Saint Joseph was not a priest, yet he is holier than all priests, including the patron saint of parish priests, St. John Vianney. After

Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph is the holiest, most prayerful, and most virtuous person who has ever lived. He avoided anything and everything that displeased the Holy Spirit. How did he do it? Prayer. Through prayer, St. Joseph perfectly exercised the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, as well as the moral virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude.

Consider that the entire life of Saint Joseph was interior and hidden in God; so little known to the world that but a few holy writers mention him in a few places; and of his death give no information. His was a life of prayer, quiet work, and constant sacrifice, and at the same time, a life shining with the splendor of all virtues.²

— St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar

There has never been another quite like St. Joseph, and there never will be. Yet you can become “another Joseph” in the world. You can become an “apparition” of Joseph for others. If you imitate St. Joseph’s dedication to prayer and the interior life, you can resemble your spiritual father.

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH WILL INCREASE THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE. Through consecration to St. Joseph, the Holy Spirit will recognize St. Joseph in you and pour extraordinary graces into your heart, mind, and soul. You can be a saint! Ask the Holy Spirit to make you into “another Joseph.” Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with graces similar to those he gave to the paternal heart of St. Joseph.

Those souls most sensitive to the impulses of divine love have rightly seen in Joseph a brilliant example of the interior life.³

— St. John Paul II

Read “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” (page 153)
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

DAY 6

Holy Trinity, One God, Have Mercy on Us

He [St. Joseph] is head of the Holy Family, father of the trinity on earth which resembles so closely the Holy Trinity on high.¹

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

The Holy Trinity is a family, a Holy Family. They want you to be a member of their family. To make this happen, they have established a trinitarian replica on earth — an earthly trinity. The trinity on earth consists of Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph. In a sense, they are the first church. Membership in this family will prepare you for membership in God’s eternal family in heaven.

SAINT JOSEPH IS THE FATHER OF THE TRINITY ON EARTH. Many saints have compared the earthly trinity (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) to the heavenly Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The comparison has its limitations, of course. Mary and St. Joseph are not divine, and the Holy Spirit is not a mother. Nonetheless, the comparison is important because it teaches us something about God’s Trinitarian family. Saint Francis de Sales offers us a great insight on this subject. He writes:

There is no doubt at all that St. Joseph was endowed with all gifts and graces required by the charge which the Eternal Father willed to commit to him, over all the domestic and temporal concerns of our Lord, and the guidance of his family, which was composed of three persons only, representing to us the mystery of the Most Holy and Adorable Trinity. Not that there is any real comparison in this matter excepting as regards our Lord, who is one of the persons of the Most Blessed Trinity, for the others were but creatures; yet still we may say that it was a trinity on earth representing in some sort the Most Holy Trinity.²

Saint Francis de Sales teaches us a very important truth in this statement. He beautifully articulates that the trinity of Nazareth (Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph) represents the heavenly Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and, therefore, consists only of three persons. In other words, Jesus did not have any biological brothers and sisters. This is what the Catholic Church has always taught. But the Church

has also always taught that the Trinity in heaven and the trinity on earth want you to be a member of their family through adoption!

Let's be clear, though: You are never going to become a divine person. You and I are not God, and we never will be. God does, however, want to bring us into the familial life of his Triune Godhead through spiritual adoption. This happens when we are baptized. As members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, we are made members of God's family on earth, the Holy Family. Membership in the Holy Family on earth prepares us to enter the Holy Family in heaven.

IF YOU WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF THE TRINITARIAN FAMILY IN HEAVEN, YOU NEED TO BE A CHILD OF ST. JOSEPH ON EARTH. Saint Joseph, your spiritual father, will help you become a true child of the Heavenly Father. Saint Joseph will teach you how to love, pray, sacrifice, and work. He will teach you how to do the will of God. The pathway to heaven is paved with virtues, and St. Joseph will give you a father's example of holiness. With his holy assistance, your transition to the Trinity in heaven will be an easy one. Membership in the family of Nazareth — accepting St. Joseph as your father, Mary as your mother, and Jesus as your brother — is the surest, easiest, and quickest way of becoming a member of the Trinitarian family in heaven.

What an honor it was [for St. Joseph] to enter into an alliance with the family of the heavenly Father, to become the third person of the created Trinity.³

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Read “St. Joseph’s Oratory” (page 83)
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

DAY 7

Holy Mary, Pray for Us

All Christians belong to St. Joseph because Jesus and Mary belonged to him.¹

— St. Leonard of Port Maurice

You belong to Jesus. He wants you to grow in virtue and holiness — that is, in true love of God and neighbor. To make this happen, you must imitate Jesus. In particular, the best way is to imitate his total entrustment to Mary and St. Joseph.

Jesus is not offended when people entrust themselves to Mary and Joseph. How could he be? He is the first one to have entrusted himself to them! He, more than anyone else, wants you to love Mary and St. Joseph. He wants you to love them and resemble them.

What brother would be offended if his younger siblings expressed reverence toward their mother and father? What man would be upset if another person wrote a song about his mother or placed roses at her feet? Likewise, what son would be disturbed if someone praised the virtues of his father? A person who honored a father would not receive condemnation from the father's son. On the contrary, such a person would receive praise and tremendous favors from the son. Well, this is exactly what Jesus stands ready to do for those who honor Mary and St. Joseph. Jesus will give them everything. Jesus stands ready to give you everything!

Now, if a son is willing to give gifts to the person who honors his mother and father, what kind of gifts would a husband give to the person who honors his wife? All we have to do is look to St. Joseph to find out. Saint Joseph will empty the treasure of heaven for those who honor Mary, his wife!

SAINT JOSEPH WILL GREATLY BLESS THOSE WHO LOVE AND HONOR MARY. The Virgin Mary is St. Joseph's wife, his queen, and the delight of his heart. She was the only woman who could ever satisfy his chaste heart. As Adam was not fulfilled until he rested in a creature similar to himself (Eve), Joseph only found rest when he found Mary. When he took Mary's hand in marriage, he consecrated himself to her and made a promise to treasure her femininity, especially her blessed virginity. He was her beloved provider, protector, and

servant. Saint Joseph earnestly desires for her to be honored and loved by everyone.

SAINT JOSEPH WILL INCREASE YOUR LOVE FOR THE VIRGIN MARY. Saint Joseph is so in love with Mary that he wants everyone to acknowledge her beauty. What husband would not want this for his wife? Doesn't every husband desire for his wife to be loved and honored by others? What husband would not do everything in his power to increase the reverence shown to his bride? If you allow St. Joseph to increase your love for his queen, he will empty the treasures of heaven for you. He has access to all the treasures of heaven!

CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH WILL MAKE YOU A KNIGHT OF THE HOLY QUEEN! Saint Joseph knows that Mary is worth living for, fighting for, and dying for. She is the Queen of the Kingdom of Heaven. To fight for her is to fight for the King. Saint Joseph, the most valiant of knights, knows that the surest, easiest, and fastest way to the King is through the Queen. His mission is to reveal this truth to souls.

For her part, Mary has full confidence in the chivalrous love of St. Joseph, her knight. She completely trusts him. Saint Joseph will teach you how to be a knight of the Holy Queen as well, making you capable of conquering hearts for the Kingdom of Heaven.

A servant of Mary will have a tender devotion to St. Joseph, and by his pious homage of respect and love, will endeavor to merit the protection of this great saint.²

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminate

O my dear father St. Joseph, I want to love you with the love that Mary has for you.³

— Blessed Bartolo Longo

Read “The Consecrated Knight” (page 121)
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)

DAY 8

Saint Joseph, Pray for Us

We see that at the beginning of the New Testament, as at the beginning of the Old, there is a married couple. But whereas Adam and Eve were the source of evil which was unleashed on the world, Joseph and Mary are the summit from which holiness spreads all over the earth. The Savior began the work of salvation by this virginal and holy union.¹

— St. Pope Paul VI

Marriage is at the heart of creation and redemption. As St. Pope Paul VI states, Adam and Eve were present at the beginning of creation (Old Testament), and Joseph and Mary are present at the beginning of God's re-creation (New Testament). Jesus himself speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven as a wedding feast (see Mt 22:2).

Saint Pope Paul VI's statement at the beginning of this section is incredibly profound. On some level, he is presenting the idea that St. Joseph is the head of the new covenant family, as Adam was head of the first covenant family. This is a fascinating idea, one that has rarely been explored in theological studies. Usually, when we think of the new head of the human family (the new Adam) we think of Jesus (see 1 Cor 15:45), and rightly so. Jesus is God; he alone regenerates humanity. Nonetheless, as Head of the Holy Family, St. Joseph was the head of our Head. He is the father of our Savior, the Patron of the Universal Church, and our spiritual father.

SAINT JOSEPH IS A NEW ADAM. Saint Joseph is, after Christ, the new head of the human family. As such, we are obliged to obey the Fourth Commandment in his regard: “Honor your father and your mother” (Ex 20:12). Failure to love and honor St. Joseph is an offense against God. In fact, the fatherhood of St. Joseph is so important for us that our spiritual growth depends on it. If Jesus himself increased in wisdom and knowledge through the fatherhood of St. Joseph, we need St. Joseph's fatherhood to help us acquire the “proper attire” needed for entrance into the wedding feast of heaven (see Mt 22:12).

SAINT JOSEPH WILL HELP YOU GET TO THE WEDDING FEAST OF HEAVEN. Since we know that St. Joseph loves us and so we love and honor him in return, we can trust that he will help us get to heaven.

Prayer to St. Joseph for the Salvation of a Soul

by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

O wonderful St. Joseph, I earnestly recommend to your care the salvation of _____. Jesus shed his blood for this person; let not the precious blood of our Savior have been shed in vain. Deliver _____ from the snares of the devil, heal _____ from the poison of the world, and, I beg you, do not stop interceding for _____ until the gates of heaven are opened to their soul. Beg your spouse to place _____ under her maternal mantle. While this soul lives on earth, grant them conversion, love of Jesus, Mary, and the Catholic Church, and a return to full participation in the Sacraments. Where else can I turn but to you, my spiritual father? In you I have confidence. In you I have hope. Hear my prayer, my spiritual father, and take away my fears. God will listen to you. Ask him for me for the sake of the love you have for all of us. Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph for a Soul in Purgatory

by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

Saint Joseph, reigning in heaven with Jesus and Mary, intercede for the souls in purgatory. Today, in particular, I ask you to turn your gaze to the soul who is most forgotten in purgatory. This soul longs to see the face of God, O good father. Ask the Holy Trinity to take this soul to the glory of heaven today. Remember me, St. Joseph, when I die. I beg you to be prompt in delivering me from purgatory so that I can see you, Jesus, and Mary face to face. Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph for Purity

by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC

Saint Joseph, strong spiritual father, defend me against sins of the flesh. Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." Saint Joseph, Terror of Demons, protect me from lust, immoral desires in my heart, and impure actions in my body. Help me not to offend God. Here and now, I chain myself to you and sacrifice everything for the good, the true, and the beautiful. I love you, St. Joseph, and I thank you for being my spiritual father. Amen.

Prayer to the Sleeping St. Joseph

O St. Joseph, you are a man greatly favored by the Most High. The angel of the Lord appeared to you in dreams, while you slept, to warn you and guide you as you cared for the Holy Family. You were both silent and strong, a loyal and courageous protector. Dear St. Joseph, as you rest in the Lord, confide in his absolute power and goodness, look upon me. Please take my need into your heart, dream of it, and present it to your Son (*mention your request*). Help me then, good St. Joseph, to hear the voice of God, to arise, and to act with love. I praise and thank God with joy. Saint Joseph, I love you. Amen.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus (Come, Holy Spirit)

Come, Holy Spirit,
send down those beams,
which sweetly flow in silent streams
from Thy bright throne above.

O come, Thou Father of the poor;
O come, Thou source of all our store,
come, fill our hearts with love.

O Thou, of comforters the best,
O Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
the pilgrim's sweet relief.

Rest art Thou in our toil, most sweet
refreshment in the noonday heat;
and solace in our grief.

O blessed Light of life Thou art;
fill with Thy light the inmost heart
of those who hope in Thee.

Without Thy Godhead nothing can,
have any price or worth in man,
nothing can harmless be.

Lord, wash our sinful stains away,
refresh from heaven our barren clay,
our wounds and bruises heal.

To Thy sweet yoke our stiff necks bow,
warm with Thy fire our hearts of snow,
our wandering feet recall.

Grant to Thy faithful, dearest Lord,
whose only hope is Thy sure word,
the sevenfold gifts of grace.

Grant us in life Thy grace that we,
in peace may die and ever be,
in joy before Thy face.
Amen. Alleluia.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

How to Make the 33-Day Preparation and Consecration to St. Joseph as a Group

To do the 33-day preparation and consecration as a group, there must be an organizer/leader who sets up six meetings over a period of five to six weeks.

The first thing the organizer/leader must do is pick a consecration date (Day 33). It is highly recommended that the consecration date be a feast day associated with St. Joseph, or a Wednesday, the day traditionally assigned for devotion to St. Joseph. It is very important for you to remember that the consecration date is Day 33. Once the consecration date is selected, the organizer/leader needs to establish the five dates that the group will meet prior to the consecration day (six meetings total).

Here is an example:

CONSECRATION DAY: MARCH 19 (Solemnity of St. Joseph).

1. First group meeting: February 15*
2. Second group meeting: February 22**
3. Third group meeting: March 1
4. Fourth group meeting: March 8
5. Fifth group meeting: March 15
6. Sixth group meeting and Consecration Day: March 19

*In a leap year, this particular schedule begins on February 16.

**In a leap year, this particular meeting would be February 23.

Refer to the chart on page 10 to establish a 33-day preparation schedule. You are not limited to the chart, however. Feel free to select any end date that works for your group and schedule your meetings and consecration day accordingly.

Once the dates have been set, the organizer/leader should invite people to participate in the preparation and consecration to

LITANY OF ST. JOSEPH

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, hear us.

*Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, graciously hear us.*

God, the Father of Heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, One God,

*have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary,
Saint Joseph,
Noble Offspring of David,
Light of Patriarchs,
Spouse of the Mother of God,
Chaste Guardian of the Virgin,
Foster-Father of the Son of God,
Zealous Defender of Christ,
Head of the Holy Family,

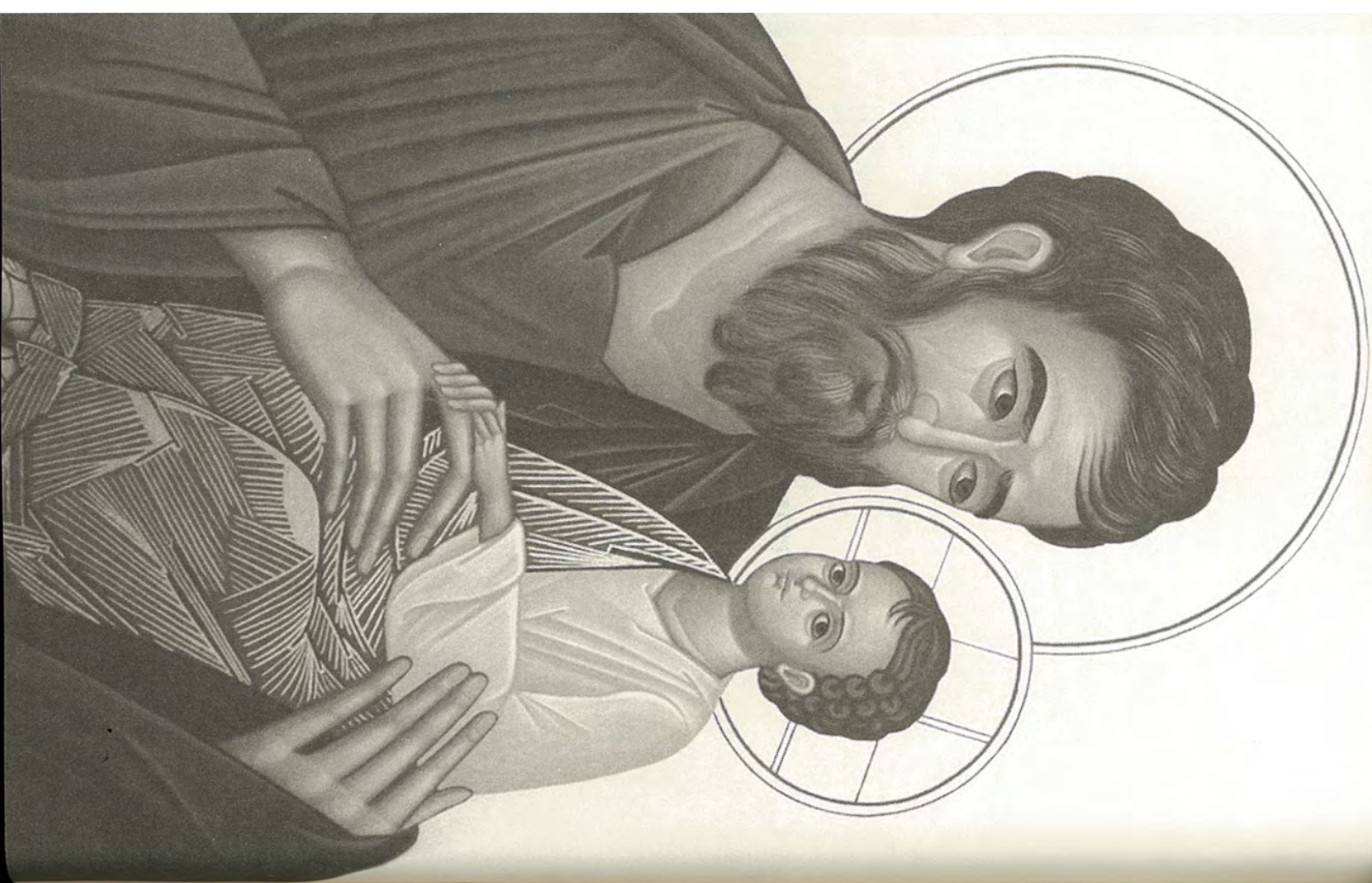
*pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.*

Joseph Most Just,
Joseph Most Chaste,
Joseph Most Prudent,
Joseph Most Courageous,
Joseph Most Obedient,
Joseph Most Faithful,

*pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.*

Mirror of Patience,
Lover of Poverty,
Model of Workmen,
Glory of Domestic Life,
Guardian of Virgins,
Pillar of Families,
Comfort of the Afflicted,
Hope of the Sick,
Patron of the Dying,
Terror of Demons,
Protector of the Holy Church,

*pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.*



Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. He has made him lord of his household,

R. And prince over all his possessions.

Let us pray. *O God, who, in your loving providence, chose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of your most Holy Mother; grant us the favor of having him for our intercessor in heaven whom on earth we venerate as our protector. You, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.*

Litany of St. Joseph (Latin)

Kýrie, eléison.
 Christe, eléison.
 Kýrie, eléison.
 Christe, audi nos.

Pater de caelis, Deus.
 Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus.
 Spiritus Sancte, Deus.
 Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus.

Sancta María.
 Sancte Ioseph.
 Proles David inclýta.
 Lumen Patriarchárum.
 Dei Genetrícis Sponse.
 Custos pudíce Virginis.
 Filii Dei nutrice.
 Christi defensor séctule.
 Almae Famíliae praeses.

Ioseph iustissime.
 Ioseph castissime.

Ioseph prudentissime.
 Ioseph fortissime.
 Ioseph oboedientissime.
 Ioseph fidelissime.

Spéculum paciéntiae.
 Amátor paupertátis.
 Exémpplar opificum.
 Domésticae vitae decus.
 Custos virginum.
 Familiárum cólumen.
 Solátium miserórum.
 Spes aegrotántium.
 Patróné moriéntium.
 Terror daémonum.
 Protéctor sanctae Ecclésiæ.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi. *Parce nobis, Dómine.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi. *Exáudi nobis, Dómine.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi. *Miserére nobis.*

Constituit eum dómínium domus suae. *Et príncipem omnis possessionis suae.*

Orémus: Deus, qui in ineffábili providéntia beatum Ioseph sanctíssimae Genetrícis tuae Sponsum elígere dignátus es, praesta, quaésumus, ut quem protectórem venerámur in terris, intercessórem habére merámur in caelis: Qui vivis et regnas in saécula saeculórum. Amen.

Acts of Consecration to St. Joseph

Act of Consecration to St. Joseph

O Glorious Patriarch and Patron of the Church! O Virgin Spouse of the Virgin Mother of God! O Guardian and Virginal Father of the Word Incarnate! In the presence of Jesus and Mary, I choose you this day to be my father, my guardian, and my protector.

O great St. Joseph, whom God has made the Head of the Holy Family, accept me, I beseech you, though utterly unworthy, to be a member of your "Holy House." Present me to your Immaculate Spouse; ask her also to adopt me as her child. With her, pray that I

protect me from the snares of the enemy, and keep me from sinning. Should I take my last breath today, be by my side, and take me to heaven to be with Jesus and Mary. Amen.

Prayers to St. Joseph

Memorare to St. Joseph

Remember, O Most Chaste Spouse of the Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, my spiritual father, and beg your protection. O Foster Father of the Redeemer, despise not my petitions, but in your goodness hear and answer me. Amen.

Prayer of St. Louis de Montfort

Hail Joseph the just, wisdom is with you; blessed are you among all men and blessed is Jesus, the fruit of Mary, your faithful spouse.

Holy Joseph, worthy foster-father of Jesus Christ, pray for us sinners and obtain divine wisdom for us from God, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Prayer of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

O chaste spouse of the most pure and most holy of creatures, how happy you must be for having found such favor and grace before the Eternal Father, who gave his Son; before the Son who made you the tutor of his sacred humanity; before the Holy Spirit who entrusted his spouse to you so that you could be like the cherubim who guarded the fruit of life in the garden of Eden. How happy and blessed are they whom you love and whom you take under your protection!

O faithful guardian of the Mother of God, keep those who honor you amid the trials and joys of this life. Lovable tutor of Jesus, help your servants in the dangers and difficulties of their exile; may they feel the effects of your love. Obtain for them devotion to your spouse, fidelity to your Son, unfailing respect for the Eternal Father who reigns with the Holy Spirit through endless ages. Amen.

Prayer of Pope Leo XIII

(to be prayed after the rosary in October)

To you, O Blessed Joseph, we have recourse in our affliction, and having implored the help of your most holy spouse, we now, with hearts filled with confidence, earnestly beg you to take us under your protection. Through that sacred bond of charity which united you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and by that fatherly love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you to look graciously upon the beloved inheritance which Jesus Christ purchased by his blood, and to aid us in our necessities with your power and strength.

Defend, O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, the chosen children of Jesus Christ. Keep from us, O most loving father, all blight of error and corruption. Aid us from on high, most valiant defender, in this conflict with the powers of darkness. And just as you once saved the Child Jesus from mortal danger, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and strengthened by your help, we may be able to live a virtuous life, die a happy death, and obtain everlasting bliss in heaven. Amen.

Prayer of St. Pope Pius X to St. Joseph the Worker

O glorious St. Joseph, model of all who labor, obtain for me the grace to work in the spirit of penance in expiation for my numberless sins; preferring devotion to duty to my inclinations; to work with joy and gratitude, regarding it as an honor to develop and employ by work the gifts which I have received from God; to work with order, peace, patience, and moderation, without ever recoiling before weariness and difficulties; to work, especially, with a pure intention and detached from myself, ever having death before my eyes and the account which I must give for time lost, for talents unused, for good omitted, and for vain satisfaction in success, so fatal to the work of God. Amen.

Prayer of St. Pope John XXIII

O St. Joseph, guardian of Jesus, chaste spouse of Mary, you who passed your life in the perfect fulfillment of duty, sustaining the Holy Family of Nazareth with the work of your hands, kindly keep those who with total trust now come to you. You know their aspirations, their miseries, and their hopes. They come to you because they know

He arranged, moreover, that a declaration to this effect be promulgated through the present decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on this day sacred to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God [December 8, 1870], the most chaste Joseph's spouse.⁴

Our Spiritual Father

Inspired by the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church from the earliest centuries stressed that just as St. Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated himself to Jesus Christ's upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, that is, the Church.¹

— St. John Paul II

Have you ever thought of St. Joseph in a fatherly way? Has it ever occurred to you that Jesus wants you to have St. Joseph as your loving spiritual father? The Church has always understood Mary's spiritual maternity of the Church, but it hasn't always understood St. Joseph's spiritual fatherhood in relation to the Church. To understand why, we have to take a look at what the Church has understood and taught about St. Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus.

In the first few centuries of Christianity, there were people in the Church, including Fathers of the Church, who were uncertain if St. Joseph could truly be called the father of Jesus. Regardless of the fact that Scripture clearly calls St. Joseph the father of Jesus (see Lk 2:33, 48), many early Christians were of the opinion that St. Joseph could not be called the father of Jesus in any way. They were cautious about such a title because they didn't want people to think that St. Joseph was the biological father of Jesus. Essentially, they didn't want to taint belief in the virginity of Mary in any way. It wasn't until St. Augustine's preaching in the fourth century that St. Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus was clearly explained by the Church. In one of his sermons, St. Augustine states that St. Joseph, though not the biological father of Jesus, is nonetheless a real father to Jesus because he exercised a fatherhood toward Jesus that was authoritative, affectionate, and faithful. After St. Augustine cleared up the matter of St. Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus, it was never questioned again. And because St. Joseph is truly the father of the Head of the Mystical Body of Christ, he is necessarily the father of the rest of the members of the Body of

Christ. This understanding of St. Joseph's patronage and fatherhood over the Church slowly begin to find its way into the writings of saints and mystics.

From Scripture, we know that St. Joseph watched over and protected Jesus as his father. From tradition, we know that St. Joseph watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, as the spiritual father of the Church. But what does this mean for you personally? Well, you are a member of the Church. Doesn't Jesus want St. Joseph to watch over you with the same paternal love, authority, affection, and fidelity that he exercised toward Jesus? The answer is "Yes!"

In the 19th century, Jesus himself explicitly commanded the Servant of God Sr. Mary Martha Chambon to call St. Joseph "father." This holy nun received extraordinary graces from Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph, and is known as the "Mystic of the Holy Wounds." Jesus told Sr. Mary Martha the following:

You must call St. Joseph your father, for I have given him the title and the goodness of a father.²

Through Baptism, you became a child of God and a member of God's family. Jesus is your Lord, Savior, and brother. The Son of God became your brother for a very specific reason: He wants you to share in his filial relationship with the Heavenly Father. This is a fundamental Christian truth. It is also a truth that helps us understand the spiritual fatherhood that St. Joseph exercises toward you.

Here's what I mean.

If Jesus is your brother, his parents become your parents. Not physically, of course, but spiritually. Specifically, Jesus' mother becomes your mother. Jesus' father becomes your father. If Mary is your mother, and Jesus is your brother, St. Joseph has to be your father. Any man married to your mother is your father. Again, the filial relationship you have with St. Joseph is not biological; it wasn't biological for Jesus, either. Yet this does not mean that St. Joseph's fatherhood is not real. Saint Joseph's spiritual fatherhood is very real. We're spiritual fatherhood not real, calling *Jesus* Heavenly Father *your* Heavenly Father would be meaningless.

To gain a deeper appreciation of St. Joseph's spiritual fatherhood, let's turn to St. Josemaría Escrivá, who offers a candid observation:

There is something I do not quite like in that title of foster father which is sometimes given to Joseph, because it might make us

think of the relationship between Joseph and Jesus as something cold and external. Certainly our faith tells us that he was not his father according to the flesh, but this is not the only kind of fatherhood.³

Now, there's nothing wrong with calling St. Joseph the foster father of Jesus. After all, "foster father" is one of the official titles used in the Litany of St. Joseph. Saint Josemaría knew that and accepted it. Nonetheless, St. Josemaría is absolutely correct that biological fatherhood is not the only kind of fatherhood.

With absolute certainty we can assert that the first time the Baby Jesus looked up to St. Joseph and spoke to him, Jesus did not exclaim: "Foster father!" No, the divine Infant would have joyfully cried out (in Aramaic) "Father!" or even "Daddy!" Again, there's nothing wrong with the term foster father, but it must be acknowledged that the New Testament never refers to St. Joseph as the "foster father" of Jesus.

Here's a concrete example: On one occasion, Mary and St. Joseph lost the Child Jesus for three days. Jesus' parents searched for him anxiously and, when they finally found him, his mother said to him, "Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety" (Lk 2:48). Mary did not say to Jesus: "Your foster father and I have been looking for you." Saint Joseph's fatherhood was more than a legal guardianship. His paternal relationship with Jesus was personal, authoritative, affectionate, moral, and loving. This is the kind of fatherhood that St. Joseph wants to have with you, too.

Saint Joseph is the best of fathers. His spiritual fatherhood was planned from all eternity.

There is but one fatherhood, that of God the Father, the one Creator of the world, of all that is seen and unseen. Yet man, created in the image of God, has been granted a share in this one paternity of God (Eph 3:15). Saint Joseph is a striking case of this, since he is a father, without fatherhood according to the flesh. He is not the biological father of Jesus, whose Father is God alone, and yet he lives his fatherhood fully and completely. To be a father means above all to be at the service of life and growth. Saint Joseph, in this sense, gave proof of great devotion.⁴

— Pope Benedict XVI

Perhaps you are wondering, "Why did Jesus need the fatherhood of St. Joseph at all since God is Jesus' Father?" It's a good question. Essentially, Jesus needed St. Joseph as a father because the human

nature of Jesus required it. When the Son of God became incarnate, he placed himself under the anthropological (human) requirements of needing a human father to love, feed, educate, shelter, clothe, and protect him. Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is not a pure spiritual being. He is the God-Man. He has a divine nature and a human nature.

In his human nature, Jesus had physical, emotional, and psychological needs. God the Father doesn't have a body, emotions, or passions because he never became incarnate like his Son. The Heavenly Father can't physically touch, walk with, or embrace his Incarnate Son. Therefore, God the Father entrusts his Son to the watchful, loving care of a human father. Saint Joseph stands in the place of the Heavenly Father. He has been entrusted with taking care of the human nature, growth, and development of Jesus. Through the fatherhood of St. Joseph, Jesus grew into the fullness of his manhood.

The growth of Jesus "in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk 2:52) took place within the Holy Family under the eyes of Joseph, who had the important task of "raising" Jesus, that is, feeding, clothing, and educating him in the Law and in a trade, in keeping with the duties of a father.⁵

— St. John Paul II

The divine nature of Jesus did not need anything from St. Joseph, but the human nature of Jesus did require the fatherhood of St. Joseph. When the Son of God humbled himself and took on human nature, he placed himself under the laws of human growth and development. In order to grow into the fullness of his manhood, Jesus required a mother, a father, and time. All children require this.

Venerable Fulton Sheen provides an interesting statistic related to this topic. He states:

Let those who think that the Church pays too much attention to Mary give heed to the fact that Our Blessed Lord himself gave ten times as much of his life to her as he gave to his apostles.⁶

In other words, the apostles spent three years with Jesus, but Mary spent more than 30 years with him! Why is this important? It's important because the human nature of Jesus needed to learn certain things from the maternal love and example of his mother. Our Savior is not a robot or an angel. In his human nature, he needed a mother to teach him about human life. But his mother was not the only one who taught him. As important as a mother is in the human

development of a child, there is only so much a mother can teach a child, especially a boy.

Jesus is a male. As a male, he needed a father to teach him what it is to be a man. Jesus needed the fatherhood of St. Joseph as a model of masculinity for him to imitate. Only a father can do this for a son. How did Jesus learn to sacrifice as a man? He witnessed the daily example of his father. Where did Jesus learn to work as a man? He learned it in his father's carpentry shop. How did Jesus learn to pray and acquire the manners of a gentleman? Jesus learned all these things from his father, St. Joseph.

According to the divine plan, an earthly, human father was absolutely necessary in the life of Jesus. You've no doubt heard the adage, "Like father, like son." Well, it's true. In his preaching, Jesus himself spoke of the exemplary power of a good father. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says: "Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also" (Jn 5:19). Our Lord spoke these words in reference to his Heavenly Father, but they also apply to those aspects of Jesus' human nature that would be strengthened by the example of St. Joseph.

Joseph fulfilled every aspect of his paternal role. He must certainly have taught Jesus to pray, together with Mary. In particular Joseph himself must have taken Jesus to the Synagogue for the rites of the Sabbath, as well as to Jerusalem for the great feasts of the people of Israel. Joseph, in accordance with the Jewish tradition, would have led the prayers at home both every day — in the morning, in the evening, at meals — and on the principal religious feasts. In the rhythm of the days he spent at Nazareth, in the simple home and in Joseph's workshop, Jesus learned to alternate prayer and work, as well as to offer God his labor in earning the bread the family needed.⁷

— Pope Benedict XVI

Jesus spent decades learning the virtues of manhood from his father. Jesus wanted to be like his father, St. Joseph. Jesus thinks so highly of his earthly father that he wants you to be a child of St. Joseph, too. Jesus wants you to resemble St. Joseph.

But why do we need the fatherhood of St. Joseph if we already have a biological father who shares our nature and is supposed to take care of us? Allow me to provide the answer by asking you several other questions:

- Is your biological father the Spouse of the Mother of God and father of Jesus Christ?
- Does your biological father have the superlative of every virtue?
- Is your biological father the Head of the Holy Family, the Patron of the Universal Church, and the Terror of Demons?

Jesus wants you to have the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph because there is no man more capable of modeling true fatherhood for you than St. Joseph. His loving spiritual fatherhood has the power to draw you extremely close to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, increase your virtue, protect you from Satan, and help you reach heaven.

Now, having stated that, I need to also make clear that the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph is not intended to take the place of the paternity of your biological father any more than the spiritual motherhood of Mary is meant to take the place of your biological mother. The spiritual parentage of St. Joseph and Mary is meant to supplement the witness and love of your earthly parents, helping you grow in the spiritual life, especially in virtue and holiness.

Hopefully, your biological parents have done their best at loving, educating, feeding, sheltering, clothing, protecting, and correcting you. If your parents have been virtuous and saintly, you should consider yourself extremely blessed. Today, sadly, many people have not had this experience. We live in a fallen world, and the majority of people have seen and experienced the flaws and imperfections of their parents. However, with St. Joseph and Mary as your spiritual parents, you are blessed with perfect parents and perfect models.

We are undoubtedly children of Mary, and this is our glory and our consolation. But we are also adopted children of St. Joseph and this is no small reason for the confidence that we have in him.⁸

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Jesus wants you to accept St. Joseph as your spiritual father. This is true whether you have had a saintly or a sinful biological father. Saint Joseph is the greatest, most loving, and holiest of all fathers. He is the father of Christians and the perfect model of paternal love.

He [St. Joseph] is the father of Christians, since he is the depository of the seed of grace which begot Christians. Now if St. Joseph is our father, let us imitate his deeds.⁹

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

If the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph is so important, why didn't Jesus make us aware of St. Joseph's spiritual fatherhood 2,000 years ago? The simple answer is because it would have led to confusion. When Jesus spoke of the Father to his disciples, it would have been very confusing to them if he also spoke about the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph. This is most likely the reason why Jesus did not initiate his public ministry until after the death of St. Joseph. Jesus wants his disciples to know about the virtues, wonders, and spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph, but for the sake of his mission, he had to leave the revealing of this mystery to the Holy Spirit and the Church.

That Jesus did not speak to his disciples about St. Joseph should in no way indicate to us that Jesus thought little of his father. On the contrary, the silence of Jesus regarding St. Joseph reveals the extreme holiness of St. Joseph. Jesus understood St. Joseph so well that he knew that his father would be more than willing to step aside so that Jesus could give priority to doing the Heavenly Father's will. For love of Jesus, St. Joseph was more than willing to step out of the picture and appear to be of no importance. Saint Joseph desires only one thing: that Jesus accomplish the mission that he was sent to do by his Heavenly Father. It doesn't matter to St. Joseph if he isn't center stage. Jesus loves this about St. Joseph. The humility of St. Joseph is a witness to his greatness!

Today, however, the time has come when, for the good of mankind, the Holy Spirit desires to fully reveal the virtues, wonders, and spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph to the nations. This great mystery has been reserved for a time when the Church and the world would need it most.

Now is the time of St. Joseph!

In our day, Jesus wants the Church to know, love, honor, and seek refuge in the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph. There has never been a time in history when God's people have needed St. Joseph more. Why? Simply put, the majority of men no longer know or understand what it means to be a gentleman, let alone what it means to be a good father. Children have grown up with poor examples of fatherhood, if they have grown up with a father at all. Contraception, pornography, abortion, gender confusion, moral depravity, empty churches, morally corrupt clergy, and cultural chaos are only a few of the fruits of a society that lacks real men and fathers. Jesus wants to draw our attention to the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph in order to right these wrongs and bring order back to the Church and the world.

What, then, should we expect from the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph? What will he do for us? Saint Joseph loves us and so will joyfully do the exact same things that a biological father does for his children, only on a spiritual level. He will spiritually feed, shelter, clothe, educate, protect, and correct us. This is his role as father. With the exception of correction, St. Joseph did all these things for Jesus, our brother. Of course, St. Joseph also provided for all Jesus' physical needs for many years.

If Joseph was so engaged, heart and soul, in protecting and providing for that little family at Nazareth, don't you think that now in heaven he is the same loving father and guardian of the whole Church, of all its members, as he was of his Head on earth?¹⁰

— Venerable Pope Pius XII

From the same fact that the most holy Virgin is the mother of Jesus Christ is she the mother of all Christians whom she bore on Mount Calvary amid the supreme throes of the Redemption: Jesus Christ is, in a manner, the first-born of Christians, who by the adoption and Redemption are his brothers. And for such reasons the Blessed Patriarch [St. Joseph] looks upon the multitude of Christians who make up the Church as confided especially to his trust.¹¹

— Pope Leo XIII

As the best and most loving of fathers, St. Joseph stands ready to shelter you in the safety of the Sacraments and teachings of the Catholic Church, clothe you with virtue, educate you in the interior life, protect you under his fatherly cloak, and correct you should you go astray.

If anyone cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious saint [Joseph] as his master, and he will not go astray.¹²

— St. Bernadette Soubirous

Placing yourself under the fatherly cloak of St. Joseph is a great blessing in the spiritual life. In the Carmelite tradition, the cloak of St. Joseph is a very prominent theme in artistic depictions of St. Joseph. His cloak is a symbol of safety and fatherly protection. Similar to Mary shielding her children under her maternal mantle, St. Joseph lovingly protects his children under his fatherly cloak. In Catholic devotion, those who love St. Joseph will sometimes pray the Holy

Cloak Novena (see page 245). Novenas are normally nine days long, but the Holy Cloak Novena consists of 30 days of prayer in honor of the 30 years St. Joseph lived with Jesus. The Holy Cloak Novena is considered one of the most efficacious novenas in the treasury of the Church.

Place yourself under the paternal cloak of St. Joseph. Open your heart to the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph and experience the love of the best of fathers.

It is natural and worthy that as the Blessed Joseph ministered to all the needs of the family of Nazareth and girt it about with his protection, he should now cover with the cloak of his heavenly patronage and defend the Church of Jesus Christ.¹³

— Pope Leo XIII

Glorious St. Joseph, spouse of the Virgin Mary, we beseech you through the heart of Jesus Christ, grant to us your fatherly protection.¹⁴

— St. Francis de Sales

Head Joseph!

If you wish to be close to Christ, we again today repeat, "Go to Joseph."¹

— Venerable Pope Pius XII

What is the closest possible union you can have with Jesus in this life? The answer is easy: your reception of Jesus in Holy Communion. There is no greater intimacy with Jesus possible in this life than when you receive the Eucharist at Holy Mass. The Blessed Sacrament is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Did you know that, without St. Joseph's earthly paternity of Jesus, you would not now be able to receive the Bread of Life? Saint Joseph was given the role of maintaining and protecting the sacred bread for you.

Let me explain.

You are probably familiar with the story in the Book of Genesis about the sons of Israel selling one of their brothers into slavery. The brother sold into slavery was named Joseph. Joseph ended up being taken by his owners to Egypt, far away from all his other kin. What

the men did to their brother was horrible and shameful. But God had a plan.

Incredibly, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, adopted Joseph into his own family so that Joseph was regarded as a son of Pharaoh. Joseph was given great authority; Pharaoh placed him in charge of all the granaries in Egypt. At that time, Egypt was considered the bread basket of the world, and Joseph did an incredible job of storing up grain.

Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

— Gen 41:49

Though Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery, God had wonderful plans for Joseph. After Joseph had stored up an immeasurable quantity of grain, a severe famine broke out in Egypt and the surrounding territories. As a result of the shortage of food, Pharaoh instructed everyone in Egypt: "Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you!" (Gen 41:55). The famine became so extreme that Joseph's own brothers, the ones who had sold him into slavery, journeyed to Egypt in search of food.

When the brothers met the man in charge of the granaries in Egypt, so much time had elapsed that they did not realize that they were standing in the presence of their own brother, whom they had sold into slavery years ago. Like everyone else, they, too, considered Joseph to be Egyptian royalty, and they addressed him as their lord. Joseph, however, recognized them.

To make a long story short, Joseph hid his identity, but was filled with kindness and mercy toward his brothers. He provided grain for them, filling their sacks so they could take back plenty to their father, Israel. Eventually, Joseph revealed his identity to them and extended forgiveness to his brothers. Thanks to Joseph and his role as the keeper of the grain, countless lives were saved from famine and death.

The story related in the Old Testament is true and is a prefiguration of a much greater Joseph who would bring his Son, the Bread from Heaven, to safety in Egypt. Saint Joseph safeguarded a food capable of saving the entire world!

Saint Joseph, our spiritual father, is much greater than the Joseph of the Old Testament. Our Joseph was the keeper of the Bread from Heaven! His desire in heaven is that all of his children consume the Bread of Everlasting Life!

The former Joseph [of the Old Testament] was holy, righteous, pious, chaste; but this Joseph so far surpasses him in holiness and perfection as the sun outshines the moon.²

— St. Lawrence of Brindisi

God sent St. Joseph to Egypt so that, out of Egypt, St. Joseph could bring the Bread of Life to the nations. Saint Joseph saved our Bread from Herod; he protected and preserved him in Egypt; and he now desires that we receive the Bread of Life at Holy Mass. Unlike the Joseph of the Old Testament, St. Joseph's Heavenly Bread is more numerous than the sands of the sea. This Heavenly Bread is able to feed all the multitudes and satisfy every soul.

Pharaoh, the mighty king of Egypt, exalted Joseph and made him the highest prince in his kingdom, because he stored up the grain and bread and saved the people of his entire kingdom. So Joseph saved and protected Christ, who is the living bread and gives eternal life to the world.³

— St. Lawrence of Brindisi

He [St. Joseph] most diligently reared him whom the faithful were to receive as the bread that came down from heaven whereby they might obtain eternal life.⁴

— Blessed Pope Pius IX

If you want to form an idea of St. Joseph's greatness, consider that by a divine privilege he merited to bear the title "Father of Jesus." Reflect too that his own name "Joseph" means — an increase. Keeping in mind the great patriarch Joseph, sold by his brothers in Egypt, understand that our saint has inherited not only his name, but even more, his power, his innocence, and his sanctity. As the patriarch Joseph stored the wheat not for himself, but for the people in their time of need, so Joseph has received a heavenly commission to watch over the living Bread not for himself alone, but for the entire world.⁵

— St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Without Joseph, we would not have the Living Bread of the Eucharist. Mary "kneaded the dough" in her sacred womb, St. Joseph lovingly preserved the Bread in Egypt. He continues to guard and preserve the Bread of Life in every tabernacle in the world. Saint Joseph made it possible for all his children to receive the Bread of Everlasting Life.

[Saint] Joseph is still charged with guarding the Living Bread!⁶

— Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Today, there is a worldwide spiritual and moral famine on the earth. Souls are dying because of a lack of spiritual nourishment. Hearts are broken; marriages are ruined; lives are destroyed; children are murdered in the womb; and truth and common sense are in short supply. The spiritual and moral famine in the world is devastating every nation, laying waste to humanity. There is not a single country left that has not been affected by it. What are we to do? To whom can we go to find nourishment for our souls?

Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you!

— Gen 41:55

Saint Joseph, with the love and generosity with which he guarded Jesus, so too will he guard your soul, and as he defended him from Herod, so will he defend your soul from the fiercest Herod: the devil! All the care that the Patriarch St. Joseph has for Jesus, he has for you and will always help you with his patronage. He will free you from the persecution of the wicked and proud Herod, and will not allow your heart to be estranged from Jesus. *Te ad Ioseph!* Go to Joseph with extreme confidence, because I do not remember having asked anything from St. Joseph, without having obtained it readily.¹⁸

— St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Your name, Joseph, is the joy of heaven, the honor of earth, and the comfort of mortals. Your name invigorates the weak, comforts the afflicted, heals the sick, softens hardened hearts, helps us in temptation, frees us from the snares of the devil, obtains every gift, and shares in the power of the holy names of Jesus and Mary.¹⁹

— Blessed Bartolo Longo

Saint Joseph, Terror of Demons, pray for us!

Privileges of Devotion to St. Joseph

Love St. Joseph a lot. Love him with all your soul, because he, together with Jesus, is the person who has most loved our Blessed Lady and been closest to God. He is the person who has most loved God, after our Mother. He deserves your affection, and it will do you good to get to know him, because he is the Master of the interior life, and has great power before the Lord and before the Mother of God.¹

— St. Josemaría Escrivá

Jesus wants you to love St. Joseph. Our Lady wants you to love St. Joseph. They both want this so that your virtue and holiness may increase. No matter what your vocation or state in life may be, you will be blessed if you maintain a fervent devotion to St. Joseph. The privileges of devotion to St. Joseph are tremendous, and they are yours for the taking!

Devotion to St. Joseph is powerful because he gives his protection, his example, and his blessing.²

— St. George Preca

Blessed Maria Teresa of St. Joseph loved St. Joseph and received extraordinary graces from heaven because of her reliance on his intercession. Anna Maria Tauscher van den Bosch (her name before she entered religious life) was born in Germany in 1855. She was raised in a staunchly Protestant family, and her father was a Lutheran minister. Over time, Anna Maria fell in love with the teachings of Catholicism and made it known to her father that she wanted to become a Catholic. Her father was not happy with her decision at all, telling her that he was ashamed of her for abandoning her Protestant upbringing. He didn't even want her living in his house anymore.

On one occasion, when she was living on her own but before she was yet a Catholic, her father visited her in an attempt to dissuade her from joining the Catholic Church. On that visit, he discovered a book on St. Joseph in her room. After a quick look at the book, he put it down, and later that night at dinner, he ridiculed and mocked St. Joseph in front of his daughter. In her autobiography, Anna Maria recounts the event. She writes:

During the dinner my father said: "How can anyone pray to such an outlandish man?" This expression, "outlandish" or "foreign" made a deep impression on me. I thought more and more of St. Joseph, and I conceived such a great, tender devotion to dear Father St. Joseph, as I called him, that I thought I ought to make reparation for the coldness of all unbelievers toward him.³

After converting to Catholicism, Anna Maria's supervisor at work, a Lutheran, fired her because she had become a Catholic. He was so mean that after he had fired her, he continued to speak ill of her to others so that she was unable to find work anywhere. As a result, Anna Maria had no money and no place to live. Her great love for St. Joseph was not diminished, though. She daily sought comfort in the love of her Father St. Joseph. Eventually, she was given permission to move into an Augustinian convent and do menial tasks as a way of paying for her room and meals. She wrote:

The recollection of my father asking how anyone could pray to such an "outlandish" person sank deep into my heart, and out of it came a great love for him [St. Joseph] and also a great trust in him. I entrusted myself more and more to his paternal care, and many times did St. Joseph prove his solicitude for me.⁴

Anna Maria eventually became a nun, taking the name Sr. Maria Teresa of St. Joseph. In time, she would found a new religious

community, the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus. She would also establish charitable institutes around the world. For the remainder of her life, she always referred to St. Joseph as "Father St. Joseph." She attributed everything she was able to accomplish to the intercession of St. Joseph, her spiritual father. Pope Benedict XVI beatified her in 2006.

In the 17th century, Venerable Mary of Ágreda wrote about the extraordinary graces God gives to those who are devoted to St. Joseph. Venerable Mary of Ágreda was a mystic and the acclaimed author of a work detailing the life of the Virgin Mary, titled *The Mystical City of God*. Her work is truly a devotional masterpiece. In the book, she wrote extensively about St. Joseph and was given many insights into the blessings that await those who are devoted to St. Joseph. She wrote:

I have been informed concerning certain privileges conferred upon St. Joseph by the Most High on account of his great holiness, which are especially important to those who ask his intercession in a proper manner. In virtue of these special privileges the intercession of St. Joseph is most powerful:

First, for attaining the virtue of purity and overcoming the sensual inclinations of the flesh;

Second, for procuring powerful help to escape sin and return to the friendship of God;

Third, for increasing the love and devotion to most holy Mary;

Fourth, for securing the grace of a happy death and protection against the demons in that hour;

Fifth, for filling the demons with terror at the mere mention of his name by his clients;

Sixth, for gaining health of body and assistance in all kinds of difficulties;

Seventh, for securing issue of children in families.

These and many other favors God confers upon those who properly and with good disposition seek the intercession of the spouse of our Queen, St. Joseph. I beseech all the faithful children of the Church to be very devoted to him and they will experience these favors in reality, if they dispose themselves as they should in order to receive and merit them.⁵

The seven privileges of devotion to St. Joseph are stupendous! Venerable Mary of Ágreda heard Our Lady herself speak about them, saying:

My daughter, although thou hast described my spouse, St. Joseph, as the most noble among the princes and saints of the heavenly Jerusalem; yet neither canst thou properly manifest his eminent sanctity, nor can any of the mortals know it fully before they arrive at the vision of the Divinity. Then all of them will be filled with wonder and praise as the Lord will make them capable of understanding. On the last day, when all men shall be judged, the damned will bitterly bewail their sins, which prevented them from appreciating this powerful means of their salvation, and availing themselves, as they easily could have, of this intercessor to gain the friendship of the just Judge. The whole human race has much undervalued the privileges and prerogatives conceded to my blessed spouse and they know not what his intercession with God is able to do.

That which my spouse asks of the Lord in heaven is granted upon the earth and on his intercession depend many and extraordinary favors for men, if they do not make themselves unworthy of receiving them. All these privileges were to be a reward for the amiable perfection of this wonderful saint and for his great virtues, for divine clemency is favorably drawn forth by them and looks upon St. Joseph with generous liberality, ready to shower down its marvelous mercies upon all those who avail themselves of his intercession.⁶

In the 20th century, Blessed Concepción Cabrera de Armida, a famed mystic from Mexico, wrote meditations for the purpose of instructing and inspiring the faithful. In one meditation, Blessed Concepción offered a perspective on the importance of devotion to St. Joseph, placing the following words on the lips of Our Lady:

Love him [St. Joseph], my child, and make him much loved. If you seek to please me, you cannot do anything that makes me happier than to have a filial devotion to him, to give him honor in your home, and to imitate his virtues. Take him as the patron of your interior and spiritual life, and you will advance greatly towards perfection.⁷

father of Jesus Christ, the Terror of Demons, and our spiritual father. Saint Joseph resped an unparalleled type of spiritual fatherhood, and his children will be as numerous as the stars of the sky! God made him the spiritual father of a new creation. God made him the Increaser!

The saints, theologians, and mystics who have taught over the centuries that St. Joseph exhibited perfect love, justice, and reverential piety toward God and Mary give us a profound interpretation of Matthew 1:18-24 that is today being affirmed in what the Church teaches about St. Joseph. He is the greatest of all the saints, the "Pillar of Families" and the "Glory of Domestic Life." After Jesus Christ, St. Joseph is the "Most Just," loving, and reverent of all men!

Through his complete self-sacrifice, Joseph expressed his generous love for the Mother of God, and gave her a husband's "gift of self." Even though he decided to draw back so as not to interfere in the plan of God which was coming to pass in Mary, Joseph obeyed the explicit command of the angel and took Mary into his home, while respecting the fact that she belonged exclusively to God.¹³

— St. John Paul II

Saint Joseph, our spiritual father, is not a man of doubt who sought to divorce our spiritual mother. After his Son, St. Joseph is *the* model of supernatural love, faith, justice, reverence, and humility. He is a virtuous gentleman whose faith is constant and pure.

As regards his [St. Joseph's] constancy, did he not display it wonderfully when, seeing Our Lady with child, and not knowing how that could be, his mind was tossed with distress, perplexity, and trouble? Yet, in spite of all, he never complained, he was never harsh or ungracious towards his holy spouse, but remained just as gentle and respectful in his demeanor as he had ever been.¹⁴

— St. Francis de Sales

Saint Joseph's response to Mary's pregnancy is a model for us. Our spiritual father teaches us how to be just and reverent in the face of all sorts of events. He teaches us to give God his due even if it requires us to be willing to sacrifice everything we love. Our spiritual father teaches us that we should not act hastily or harshly when we encounter perplexing situations. We are to take everything to prayer, and wait on the Lord for guidance and light. If we are loving, faithful, reverent, and just, God will reveal everything to us and, make us abundantly fruitful.

Who was holier than Joseph? Who was purer than the Most Holy Virgin? And yet he [St. Joseph] wanted to leave her secretly. But how prudently and righteously he wanted to do it! He did not want to separate from her openly, lest she be defamed, but clandestinely, that she may preserve her good name. You ought to learn from this holy and just man: although the deeds of others may seem evil to you and are said to be imperfect, you should judge them secretly, not openly, and judge in such a way that neither your conscience nor their good name be hurt. If you do so, you will not be lacking the light, so that you may judge rightly, as the righteous husband of the Most Holy Virgin did not lack light for comprehending the truth about how she had conceived.¹⁵

— St. Stanislaus Papczyński

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There is a general rule concerning all special graces granted to any human being. Whenever the divine favor chooses someone to receive a special grace, or to accept a lofty vocation, God adorns the person chosen with all the gifts of the Spirit needed to fulfill the task at hand. This general rule is especially verified in the case of St. Joseph.¹

— St. Bernardine of Siena

Saint Joseph had the loftiest of vocations, the greatest of missions. He was called to be the spouse of the Virgin Mary and the father of Jesus Christ. His mission required all seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord, and wisdom).

Consider that the Holy Spirit chose only Joseph to be the protector of the Blessed Virgin, to be her true husband and consequently, no created being can equal the glory of this great saint.²

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Saint Joseph was not only chosen to be the protector of Mary, but also the protector of Jesus — and you! Jesus and Mary are in heaven, but you are not. This means that St. Joseph's mission is ongoing. From heaven, he watches over those entrusted to his loving care and asks the Holy Spirit to pour out gifts on his children.

You have a mission: to become holy, loving God truly and your neighbor mercifully. You need the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life. They will help you resemble your spiritual father and reach heaven.

What specifically do the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit do for us though? Well, the Holy Spirit Fathers provide the answer for us. The Holy Spirit Fathers (also called Spiritans) are the religious community responsible for promulgating throughout the world a very powerful novena to the Holy Spirit that contains an excellent summary of what the gifts are and what they do for us. Reprinted with the permission of the Holy Spirit Fathers, listed below are the descriptions of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit from the novena, as well as a beautiful prayer:

The Gift of Knowledge enables the soul to evaluate created things at their worth — in their relation to God. Knowledge unmasks the pretense of creatures, reveals their emptiness, and points out their only true purpose as instruments in the service of God. It shows us the loving care of God even in adversity, and directs us to glorify him in every circumstance of life. Guided by its light, we put first things first, and prize the friendship of God beyond all else.

The Gift of Understanding helps us to grasp the meaning of the truths of our holy religion. By faith we know them, but by understanding we learn to appreciate and relish them. It enables us to penetrate the inner meaning of revealed truths and, through them, to be quickened to newness of life. Our faith ceases to be sterile and inactive, but inspires a mode of life that bears eloquent testimony to the faith that is in us.

The Gift of Counsel endows the soul with supernatural prudence, enabling it to judge promptly and rightly what must be done, especially in difficult circumstances. Counsel applies the principles furnished by knowledge and understanding to the innumerable concrete cases that confront us in the course of our daily duty as parents, teachers, public servants, and Christian citizens. Counsel is supernatural common sense, a priceless treasure in the quest of salvation.

The Gift of Fortitude strengthens the soul against natural fear and supports us in the performance of duty. Fortitude imparts to the will an impulse and energy which move it to undertake without hesitancy the most arduous tasks, to face dangers, to trample underfoot human respect, and to endure without complaint the slow martyrdom of even lifelong tribulation.

The Gift of Piety begets in our hearts a filial affection for God as our most loving Father. It inspires us to love and respect for his sake persons and things consecrated to him, as well as those who are vested with his authority, his mother, St. Joseph, the saints, the Church and its visible head, our parents and superiors, our country and its rulers. He who is filled with the Gift of Piety finds the practice of his religion, not a burdensome duty, but a delightful service.

The Gift of Fear fills us with a sovereign respect for God, and makes us dread nothing so much as to offend him by sin. It is a fear that arises, not from the thought of hell, but from sentiments of reverence and filial submission to our heavenly Father. It is the fear that is the beginning of wisdom, detaching us from worldly pleasures that could in any way separate us from God.

The Gift of Wisdom embodies all the other gifts, as charity embraces all the other virtues. Wisdom is the most perfect of the gifts. Of wisdom it is written "all good things came to me with her, and innumerable riches through her hands." It is the Gift of Wisdom that strengthens our faith, fortifies hope, perfects charity, and promotes the practice of virtue in the highest degree. Wisdom enlightens the mind to discern and relish things divine, in the appreciation of which earthly joys lose their savor, while the Cross of Christ yields a divine sweetness.

Prayer for the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, before ascending into heaven, did promise to send the Holy Spirit to finish your work in the souls of your apostles and disciples, deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me that he may perfect in my soul, the work of your grace and your love. Grant me the Spirit of Wisdom that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the Spirit of Understanding to enlighten my mind with the light of your divine truth; the Spirit of Counsel that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining heaven; the Spirit of Fortitude that I may bear my cross with you and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation; the Spirit of Knowledge that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the saints; the Spirit of Piety that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable; and the Spirit of Fear that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and may dread in any way to displease him. Mark me, dear Lord, with the sign of your true disciples and animate me in all things with your Spirit. Amen.

WONDER 1

DELIGHT OF SAINTS

I saw heaven opened and St. Joseph sitting upon a magnificent throne. I felt myself wonderfully affected when, each time his name was mentioned, all the saints made a profound inclination toward him, showing by the serenity and sweetness of their looks that they rejoiced with him on account of his exalted dignity.

— St. Gertrude the Great

Saint Joseph's Oratory

I have only my great devotion to St. Joseph. This it is that guides me and gives me full confidence.¹

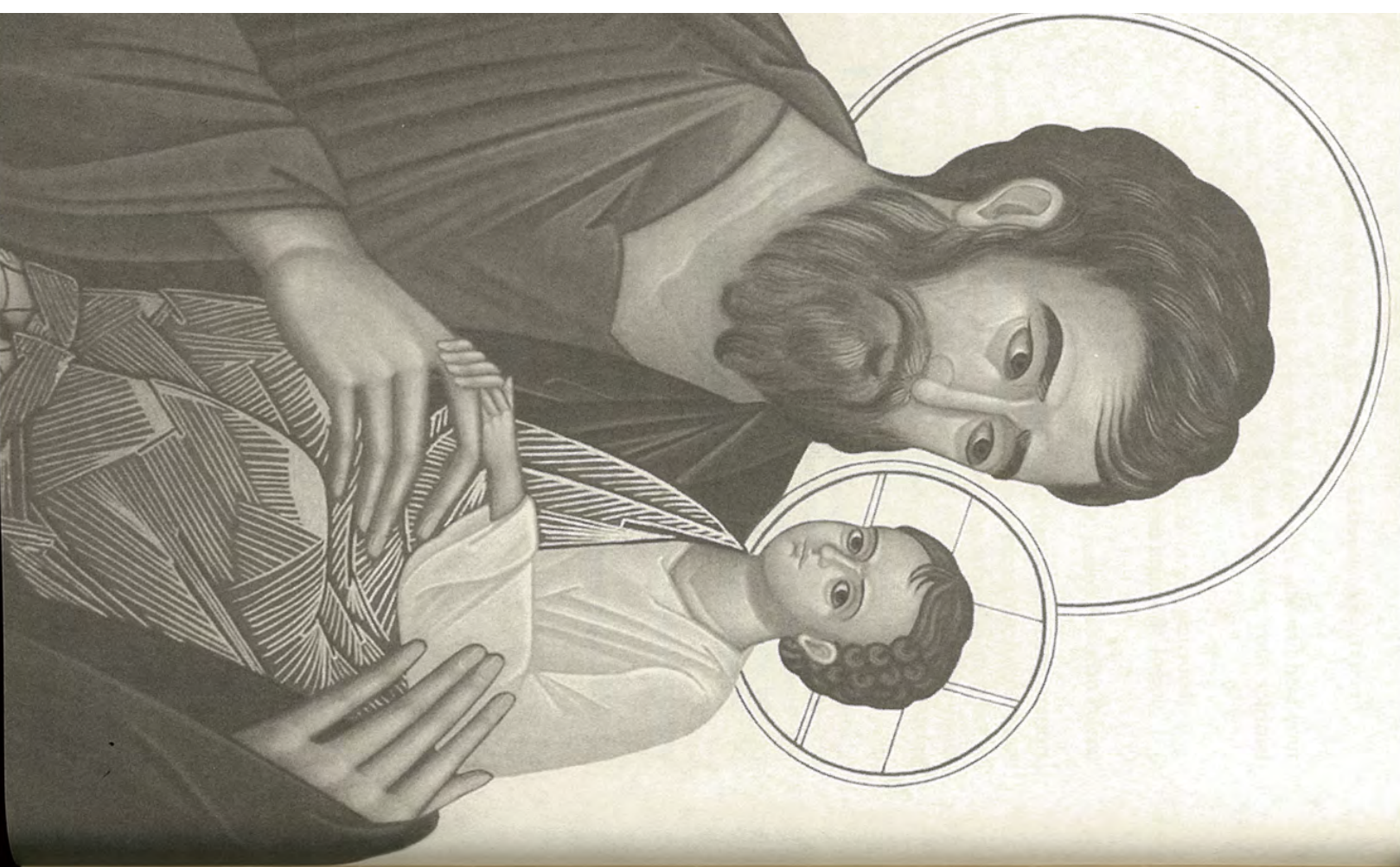
— St. André Bessette

Saints are heroes. Every hero deserves a place of honor. This is especially true of St. Joseph. He is the greatest saint, the greatest hero. He deserves a basilica in his honor!

The reality is that there are many shrines around the world dedicated to St. Joseph (see page 283 for a brief list). There is one, however, that stands out above all the rest: St. Joseph's Oratory in Montréal, Canada. Saint Joseph's Oratory is a basilica and is widely acclaimed as the preeminent international center of devotion to St. Joseph.

Saint Joseph's Oratory was founded by St. André Bessette. This incredible saint was born near Montréal in 1845. His birth name was Alfred, and his parents were devout Catholics; he was number eight of 12 children. Years later, when he entered religious life, he took the name André.

Alfred's father was a lumberjack by trade. Tragically, his father died after a tree fell on him when little Alfred was only 9 years old. Two years later, Alfred's mother died from tuberculosis, so Alfred became an orphan at age 12. Losing both his father and mother at such an early age, Alfred developed a strong devotion to St. Joseph and entrusted his life entirely to him. Alfred never had good health and never received much of an education either. As a young man, he moved to the United States for work and spent time in Connecticut working in several textile mills.



After a period of time, Alfred entered the Congregation of the Holy Cross and became a lay brother; he never became a priest. Due to his lack of education, Brother André was given the menial task of porter (doorman) of a college run by his religious community in Québec. He remained in that role for more than 40 years. He was such a humble man that he often referred to himself as "St. Joseph's little dog." God had big plans for him though.

Though a humble doorkeeper, Brother André quickly became known all throughout Canada as a very holy and pious man. He spent countless hours praying with the people who came to the door to see him. He offered everyone devotional oil that he collected from the lamp beside a statue of St. Joseph and recommended that they take all their needs to St. Joseph. Countless miracles were worked through Brother André's intercession, but he always attributed the miracles to the loving intercession of St. Joseph.

Brother André was frequently mocked and ridiculed for his simple love of St. Joseph, piety, and devotion. Sadly, even members of the Church expressed their dislike of him, especially the attention he gave to every sick person who came to see him. Many members of the Church became jealous of Brother André because many people considered him a saint. On average, Brother André received more than 80,000 letters a year from people asking him for prayers. The letters were so numerous that he required four helpers to assist him with all the mail. The wisdom contained in his correspondence was always simple and straightforward: Go to Joseph!

When you invoke St. Joseph, you don't have to speak much. You know your Father in heaven knows what you need; well, so does his friend St. Joseph. Tell him, "If you were in my place, St. Joseph, what would you do?"²

— St. André Bessette

In thanksgiving for all the wonders taking place through the intercession of St. Joseph, Brother André desired to establish a shrine in honor of St. Joseph. He was given permission by his religious superiors for the project and, with the help of others, a small chapel dedicated to St. Joseph was erected in 1904. In 1924, construction of a basilica began on the site where he had built his small chapel in 1904. The basilica would be completed in 1967 and come to be known throughout the world as St. Joseph's Oratory, the largest shrine in the world dedicated to St. Joseph.

Unfortunately, St. André did not live to see the completion of the basilica. He died in 1937 at the age of 91. However, for his efforts to spread devotion to St. Joseph, he is known throughout the world as the greatest "Apostle of St. Joseph" of the 20th century. He was so loved and respected that more than 1 million people passed by his open coffin before his funeral Mass took place. He was beatified by St. John Paul II in 1982 and canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. On the universal liturgical calendar, St. André's feast day is celebrated on January 6, the day he died. In Canada, his feast is celebrated on January 7 because the Solemnity of the Epiphany is always celebrated on January 6, and solemnities take precedence.

Today, more than 2 million people visit St. Joseph's Oratory annually. People travel on pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory from all over the world, asking for special graces through the intercession of St. Joseph and St. André Bessette. Whether they pray for health, assistance with difficult marriages, the conversion of wayward children, or other matters that weigh on the human heart, all who visit the basilica find peace, hope, and consolation in St. Joseph.

The earthly remains of St. André are reserved in the basilica, and a special reliquary contains his heart. In 1984, St. John Paul II journeyed to St. Joseph's Oratory as a pilgrim while on a papal visit to Canada. Before the tomb of St. André, the saintly pope poured out his heart to St. André and St. Joseph. Below is a section from St. John Paul II's beautiful prayer offered on that occasion:

Blessed [Saint] Brother André Bessette, porter of the college, and custodian of the Oratory of St. Joseph, give hope to all those who continue to seek your help. Teach them confidence in the virtue of prayer, and with it, the path of conversion and the Sacraments. Through you, and through St. Joseph, may God continue to pour out his blessings. Amen.³

Delight of Saints

With the exception of our loving Mother, St. Joseph stands above all the saints.¹

— St. Maximilian Kolbe

Saint Joseph is a unique saint. He is honored and loved as the man closest to Christ. His virtues and holiness are extraordinary.

Lord filled it (Ex. 40:32). Saint Joseph's marriage is a sacred veil which covers the mystery of the Incarnation. Everyone sees that Mary is a mother, but only Joseph knows that she is a virgin.⁶

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

As a young husband and father, St. Joseph modeled manhood for his Son, Jesus. Every boy should be able to look to his father to understand what it means to be a man. If St. Joseph had been an elderly man, would Jesus have observed in his father any physical strength or true love put into practice through heroic chastity, hard work, and bodily gestures of piety — kneeling, for example? If St. Joseph were two or three times the age of his wife, what would Jesus have observed in his father: afternoon naps and forgetfulness? Again, there's nothing wrong with old age. Growing old is part of human life. Saint Joseph himself aged as life went on, as happens to all men. But would God the Father entrust the upbringing and education of his Son — the Lion of Judah and King of Kings — to an elderly and fragile man? Probably not.

What the Church and the world can learn from a younger depiction of St. Joseph — especially in theology, preaching, literature, and art — is that young men can be chaste, heroic, and holy. Indeed, the Church has countless examples of young men who kept themselves chaste and pure for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. And St. Joseph was the greatest of them all. Saint Josemaría Escrivá tells us:

You don't have to wait to be old or lifeless to practice the virtue of chastity. Purity comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love. Joseph had a young heart and a young body when he married Mary, when he learned of the mystery of her divine motherhood, when he lived in her company, respecting the integrity God wished to give the world as one more sign that he had come to share the life of his creatures. Anyone who cannot understand a love like that knows very little of true love and is a complete stranger to the Christian meaning of chastity.⁷

In my opinion, St. Joseph was a young husband, tender and loving toward his wife, but always chaste, modest, and pure. Mary loved her Joseph. His manly love for her was strong and always controlled by reason and faith. His virile powers, always held in restraint and service to God's will, made him the most virtuous husband and father ever to walk this earth. No woman ever had a greater man than St. Joseph.

God would not have given the most holy Virgin to Joseph as his wife unless he had been holy and righteous. What right-minded father would ever give his most beloved daughter in marriage to a man who was not moral and beyond reproach according to his rank and state in life?⁸

— St. Lawrence of Brindisi

So what are you to gain from this wonder of St. Joseph? Are you required to believe that St. Joseph was young? No, you are not. But do you understand, at least based on the physical demands his mission would have inevitably placed on him, why it makes more sense that St. Joseph was young rather than old when he married Our Lady? Regardless of which depiction of St. Joseph you prefer, know that St. Joseph is your loving, strong, and fearless spiritual father. Thank him for all that he did out of selfless love for Jesus and your spiritual mother, Mary. Thank him for all that he does for love of you.

I thank you, O holy patriarch Joseph, because we who are incapable of even knowing how to love Jesus and our Immaculate Mother, know and rejoice that you at least loved her as she deserved to be loved, the worthy and true Mother of Jesus.⁹

— Blessed Gabriele Allegra

The Consecrated Knight

Saint Joseph sweetly and continuously stimulates us to love, serve, and imitate the Queen of his heart, the Immaculate Mother of Jesus.¹

— Blessed Gabriele Allegra

Saint Joseph is the most Marian of all saints. His love for Mary is greater than that of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Louis de Montfort, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and St. John Paul II combined. There has never been a greater Marian saint than St. Joseph, and there never will be.

Saint Joseph is the model for total consecration to Mary. Long before Calvary, when Jesus commanded all of his disciples to take Mary into their hearts and homes (see Jn 19:26-27), St. Joseph had already taken Mary into his heart and into his home. She is his heart; she is his home. Everything he did was done for Jesus and Mary. He lived and died for Jesus and Mary.

Like Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary into your home.²

— Pope Benedict XVI

Saint Joseph is the first human person to have been totally consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. If you were to ask Our Lady who is the one human person in all of Christianity who has loved her most, been the most devoted to her, and served her most faithfully, she would undoubtedly point to St. Joseph. He is the prototype, blueprint, and model for how to live a life of total consecration to Mary.

The various forms of Marian consecration promoted by saints down through the centuries — for example, those of St. Louis de Montfort, Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Servant of God Joseph Kentenich, and others — all find their fulfillment and perfection in the person of St. Joseph.

Saint Louis de Montfort's program of Marian consecration teaches people to be slaves of Jesus and Mary; Blessed William Joseph Chaminade teaches people to act as the heel of Mary, crushing the head of Satan; the Servant of God Joseph Kentenich instructs people to become an "apparition" of Mary; and St. Maximilian Kolbe's method of Marian consecration instructs people to be the property of Mary. All of these forms are wonderful ways of describing the one fundamental dimension of all Marian consecration: *Be another Joseph for Mary*.

All the great Marian movements (the Militia Immaculatae, Schoenstatt, the Legion of Mary, the former Blue Army [now called the World Apostolate of Fatima], and so many others), have Marian chivalry at their core. To be chivalrous toward Mary is to be on the path of sainthood. A person who is chivalrous is noble, well-mannered, courageous in battle, and a refuge for the weak. Saint Joseph is the most chivalrous of all Christians, and he teaches us that everyone, including women and children, can be spiritual knights of the Queen of Heaven. He is, in fact, the first consecrated knight of the Holy Queen.

For centuries, Christians have referred to the Virgin Mary as "Our Lady." It's a term that acknowledges the great love, respect, honor, and reverence that is owed to Mary. It is a term that bespeaks chivalry. It should come as no surprise, then, that St. Joseph is the first man to speak of Mary as his lady. Mary is St. Joseph's woman. Before her feminine wonder and beauty, he bows in loving reverence. His mission is to have all hearts bow before her in love. For this reason, St. Joseph is the greatest knight of Our Lady.

During the Middle Ages, there were many stories and legends of knights traveling far and wide on heroic quests in search of the Holy Grail, the chalice that held the Blood of Jesus at the Last Supper. During the age of chivalry, no one but the priest drank the Blood of Jesus from the chalice at Mass. For this reason, as well as many others, the stories tell us that knights set out on quests in search of the lost Holy Grail, believing that if they drank from the chalice, they would be given eternal life. Their heroic quests were noble and well-intentioned, but unnecessary. All Catholics in a state of grace who receive the Body of Christ at Mass are assured everlasting life, even if they don't drink from the chalice; they must, however, remain in a state of grace, observe the 10 Commandments, and obey the teachings of the Church. The storied quests of the medieval knights were unnecessary for another reason as well. All they had to do in order to find the true chalice of our Lord's Precious Blood was to look to St. Joseph, the first and greatest knight of Our Lady! He knows where to find the living chalice containing the life-giving blood of Jesus Christ. The Holy Grail that St. Joseph possesses has not been lost. Saint Joseph stands ready to give this chalice to all his spiritual children.

What St. Joseph teaches his children is that the Virgin Mary is the Holy Grail! She is what every Christian knight seeks. Unlike the chalice used at the Last Supper, this vessel has not been lost. Mary, the Holy Grail, is easily found. Those who find her find Jesus because those who find her find Catholicism and its greatest treasure, Jesus in Holy Communion. Mary desires to lead all souls to Holy Mass where they can receive the Lamb of God and attain eternal life. All who imitate St. Joseph will discover Mary and the saving mystery of Holy Mass.

Mary, my mother, Joseph, my father, give me your eyes to contemplate Jesus; give me your hearts and spirits to understand him, and to be impassioned for him.³

— Venerable Francis Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận

From heaven, St. Joseph continues his quest to lead all souls to Jesus through Mary. From heaven, he looks for souls who are willing to be knights of the Holy Queen. He desires to raise up loving defenders and heroic champions of Jesus, Mary, and the Catholic faith. He wants men, women, children, priests, and nuns who will serve Mary and lead others to the Kingdom of Heaven. Valiant souls are needed today, Joseph-like souls, who zealously strive to lead others to the fountain of everlasting life.

To Jesus through Mary and St. Joseph!

He [St. Joseph] always favors with especial protection those souls who are enrolled beneath the standard of Mary!⁴

— St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi

When the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph intercede together it is very powerful!⁵

— St. André Bessette

Grant that according to your example [St. Joseph] we may keep our eyes fixed on our mother Mary, your most sweet spouse.⁶

— Venerable Pope Pius XII

WONDER 4

VIRGINAL FATHER OF JESUS

Since there is nothing on record that he [St. Joseph] ever had any other spouse than the Virgin Mary, it is also certain that he remained a virgin all his life.

— St. Jerome

Feast of the Holy Spouses

No husband and wife ever loved one another so much as Joseph and Mary.¹

— Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Did you know there is a liturgical feast that celebrates the marriage of Mary and Joseph? It's called the "Feast of the Holy Spouses" (sometimes also referred to as the "Feast of the Espousals of Mary and Joseph").

The Feast of the Holy Spouses has a long history going all the way back to the 15th century. The day traditionally designated for the feast is January 23. In a few countries, the feast is celebrated on January 22 or November 26, but those dates tend to be exceptions. Nobody is exactly sure why January 23 was chosen as the day for the feast, but we are given a fascinating insight into the date in the mystical visions of Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824).

In the accounts we have of her visions, Blessed Anne Catherine claims to have been transported to the marriage of Mary and Joseph and witnessed the ceremony. Blessed Anne Catherine offers details about the wedding and explicitly mentions the date of the marriage. She writes:

The espousals took place, I think, upon our 23rd of January. They were celebrated in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, in a house used for such feasts.²

Another mystic, Venerable Mary of Ágreda (1602-1665), also claims to have had visions about the lives of Mary and Joseph. She wrote extensively about her mystical experiences and claims to also have been present at the wedding of Mary and St. Joseph. Her

After a period of time, Alfred entered the Congregation of the Holy Cross and became a lay brother; he never became a priest. Due to his lack of education, Brother André was given the menial task of porter (doorman) of a college run by his religious community in Quebec. He remained in that role for more than 40 years. He was such a humble man that he often referred to himself as “St. Joseph’s little dog.” God had big plans for him though.

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