



**I**T IS MARCH and the nineteenth of this month is the feast of St. Joseph.

I have a brother named Joseph. I never met him. He died at birth, a few months premature. Maybe with current medical technology he might have lived. I was born some years later and given the middle name Joseph at Baptism. This connects me to my older brother who is with God and to the great St. Joseph whose name we share.

My father, although he does not bear the name Joseph, is for me another connection to St. Joseph. Witnessing down the years how he has lived out his God-given vocation in total dedication to his spouse and children, I have an idea of what St. Joseph must have been like. Certainly, my father helped make St. Joseph real in my life. And not only real, but someone worth striving to imitate.

So what about St. Joseph? This man whom God had

entrusted with so great a mission, to be the Guardian of the Redeemer and the Virgin Spouse of the Virgin Mother of God! What are some things that are worthy of our meditation?

Let us begin with his silence. St. Joseph was a silent man. Our Maronite Liturgy says of St. Joseph that his silence is more eloquent than all the sermons of the

**“OUR MARONITE LITURGY SAYS OF ST. JOSEPH THAT HIS SILENCE IS MORE ELOQUENT THAN ALL THE SERMONS OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.”**

Fathers of the Church. This is a beautiful image that means that his silence has much to teach us.

St. Joseph was not silent just to be silent; he was silent to listen to the word of God, to hear God’s voice, to learn God’s will in his life. Confronted with the

great Mystery of Mary with child before his eyes, Joseph was silent, and his silence made him open to receive God’s revelation to him in a dream and, once knowing God’s will for him, to act immediately and carry out what God asked of him.

In this way, St. Joseph was a great man of prayer and

a true contemplative. Think of how often he must have silently gazed upon the wonder of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and Jesus, God made man.

And yet St. Joseph was busy; busy with the things of God, busy with serving Jesus and Mary. But he did not make the mistake that Martha later would make; Martha, who did not keep silent but complained and, in her many acts of service, forgot the one thing necessary, the very One Whom she was serving.

Erasmus Leiva-Merikakis, in his beautiful book, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, says:

*“It is Joseph, consequently, who does the worrying, the deciding, the dreaming, the naming, the renouncing, all for the sake of nurturing the divine Child his wife bears. He spends himself in creating around his wife and the mystery she bears—the mystery she is—at least a tiny spot on earth, nicely warmed and nicely cushioned, where the love of the incarnate God can feel in return something like the grateful love of his creatures. As for her, the Theotokos, the Bearer of Life, she is all silent splendor, the living Ark of the New Covenant containing the Eucharistic manna of God in the flesh. And Joseph, like his ancestor King David, cannot halt his dance of delighted wonder around Mary, the virginal point, the point of God’s repose on earth.” (p. 64)*

St. Joseph was faithful to his vocation of taking care of Jesus and Mary and he did this with great love and devotion. He kept his eyes fixed on Jesus and Mary, all the while serving them.

Now that he is in heaven, St. Joseph takes care of us as well. We are the brothers and sisters of Jesus and the children of Mary; Joseph serves as our guardian.

Our Founder, Abbot William, understood this very well and experienced it in his own life. In his book, *A*

*Calling: An Autobiography and the Founding of the Maronite Monks of Adoration*, he writes:

*“One fulfilling event while living in Montreal was the opportunity to visit that especially holy place called the Oratory of Saint Joseph. A special grace granted me all during these years, along with the grace to desire adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, has been my abiding devotion to Saint Joseph. Dear Saint Joseph has always been there for me and always seems to be with me. I have this connection despite*



Abbot William Driscoll, MMA (1932-2021)

*a very real characteristic of Saint Joseph, which is that he sees to it that one has all that one needs but not all that one wants. I have never found this is a difficulty in my love for, devotion for, and dependence on him. Nonetheless, it is important to understand this aspect of Saint Joseph, lest one become discouraged. I accept this aspect of my relationship with him and have long realized that while he is taking the best care of me, he does not interfere with the crosses that Heaven wishes to send. I was once sharing my devotion to Saint Joseph with some teaching Sisters of Saint*

*Joseph. ‘Oh,’ they said almost in unison, ‘he’s always so slow.’ My surprise left me without comment.” (pp. 113-4)*

Abbot William continues:

*“Until I came to Saint Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal, I do not remember ever having been graced with any special ‘experiences’ of the spiritual or mystical life, that is, any special religious endeavors, outpourings, or phenomena of any kind. While frequently visiting the glorious shrine of Saint Joseph’s Basilica, I would go alone, walk about the whole area, viewing everything pertaining to wonderful Saint Brother Andre. I would then kneel before the altar of Saint Joseph to pour out my heart. It was there as nowhere else that I*

*was given an overwhelming conviction that, first, all would turn out well; and, second, that he, Saint Joseph, would be there for me. It is now over fifty years since this grace. It seems as only yesterday. The proof of this experience is its fulfillment through these many years.” (p. 114)*

Abbot William taught us, his spiritual sons, to have this same devotion to St. Joseph and we do find that St. Joseph is indeed there for us. As a true guardian, he sees to it that we have all that we need but not all that we want. He helps us to be convinced that, yes, all will turn out well. Did not all turn out well for him? Our part is to keep silent, trust God, wait on the Lord and listen for Him to reveal His will that we do not yet know, and promptly act on His will that we do know.



Oratory of St. Joseph, Montreal, Canada

The Church instructs us to “Go to Joseph.” This is an allusion to Joseph of the Old Testament, who prefigured St. Joseph of the New Testament. In Genesis we read that Pharaoh had a dream and Joseph interpreted that dream for him, saying that God was warning Pharaoh that there would be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine in the land. Joseph then advised Pharaoh on what to do. Pharaoh discerned that Joseph’s wisdom was from God, so he put him in charge of all the storehouses that were to be filled during the years of plenty and, when the years of famine struck, he told the people to “Go to Joseph” (Genesis 42:55). As Joseph took care of the people of his time, so St. Joseph will take care of us, obtaining graces for us from Jesus and showing us how to live humbly in the presence of God. ❖

## Book Review: Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told



In the Acts of the Apostles when the Deacon Philip is led to the Ethiopian reading the book of Isaiah in his chariot, he asks him: “Do you understand what you are reading?” The Ethiopian responded, “How can I, unless some one guides me?” (Acts 8:30-31) While the Church has always encouraged the faithful to seek to encounter the Lord and find spiritual nourishment in the Scriptures, she has also encouraged them to make use of guides to help them discover the riches that are found in God’s word.

Brant Pitre is a trustworthy and reliable guide for those who wish to explore the Scriptures more

deeply. In this work he takes up this one image of the Bridegroom which God has made use of to reveal something of His nature and His relationship to us. By drawing on traditional interpretations of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church as well as on our knowledge of Jewish traditions of the first century, he sheds a new and penetrating light on very familiar passages of Scripture. The wedding feast of Cana, Our Lord’s meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well, the Last Supper and Crucifixion take on a new depth of meaning and manifest how the Lord is the Bridegroom seeking and preparing His bride for the great wedding feast at the end of time. The book itself is a little foretaste of the feast that God is preparing for us and in it one will find nourishment, both satisfying and delightful.

Brant Pitre, *Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told*. 2014. Image. 208 pages.