

JOSEPH: THE MAN OF FAITH

CUSTOMARILY, we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary during the month of May. In many parishes, oratories and centers, Marian devotions and crowning ceremonies take place, all dedicated to her honor. In this month's newsletter, we will focus our attention on Mary's most chaste spouse, Saint Joseph. Mary has a most unique role in the history of salvation. In Eastern Christianity wherever Jesus is, His mother is always there by His side just as she was there at the beginning; the first to hear the "Good News" at the Annunciation. Many saints were convinced that she would also be given a unique role in the end times when she will crush the head of the serpent. Closely associated with her in this mission is her spouse, St. Joseph.

St. Joseph is often referred to as "the quiet man of the Gospel" because no recorded words of his exist. We know that he experienced death before Our Lord began His public ministry. Because he died in the presence of Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph is the patron of a happy death. Besides that title, Joseph has many other "portfolios." We will concern ourselves with just a few of them: "Patron of the Universal Church," "Protector of Holy Church," "Head of the Holy Family," and "Terror of Demons."

It is commonly agreed that the Church is currently ex-



periencing the most serious crisis of her entire existence. To use a basketball term, Satan has a "full court press" going against the Church. He and his demons have particularly targeted the family. They seek to destroy the image and likeness of God on earth (we are made in the "image and likeness of God") by warring against the family. Satan and his minions have succeeded in getting us to destroy each other (especially through abortion), to regard fellow people as the greatest threat to the earth (the population reduction crowd), and getting us to rebel against our very nature (the LGBT agenda). It will take a great faith

to resist this and we turn to Joseph both as a model of faith and an intercessor.

First it's important to remember that all of us are tested. This essential truth has almost completely disappeared from Catholic teaching over the past 50 years. God created each and every one of us in love. He "created" us, we didn't "evolve." Remember many Church Fathers and Saints believed that we, humans, were created to take the place of the angels who rebelled against God. Hence, the demons hatred for us. As the angels were tested, so are we, because God wants us to choose Him freely. Love cannot be forced. Being pure spirits, the angels had their test in an instant. We, being a composite of body and soul (along with the effects of Original

Sin), have our testing over the course of a lifetime. So salvation is not a “given” or “automatic” because “God is love.” Our Lord began His public ministry by being “tested” by Satan. We are tested and therefore need a strong, robust faith. Let’s look at Joseph’s faith.

Faith especially means believing when there is no reason to believe, when we have to give absolute trust. Joseph had this because he had to believe in perplexing and difficult circumstances: Mary is with child and Joseph is perplexed. So much so that he considers “sending her away.” The angel informs him of the mystery of the Incarnation and Joseph immediately accepts without doubting or objecting. Let us look at his approach as compared to his predecessors in salvation history:

Abraham: He has some doubts when told that he would be the “Father of many nations.” He complains to God: “how can I be a father when Sarah (his wife) and I are well beyond childbearing years.”

Moses: At the burning bush God commands him to go to Egypt to bring out his people. Moses complains and in effect tells God: “Get somebody else.” He has his excuses: “I’m not a good speaker,” “How can I go before Pharaoh?”

Elijah: After calling down fire from heaven he has to hide. The queen wants to kill him. Hiding in the cave he tells God that he’s had enough and prays for death.

Jeremiah: He’s so fed up with his mission that he literally curses the day that he was born and he also wants out.

In contrast, no complaints come from Joseph, even though he is in a serious situation. No complaints, no questions, no arguments. He just does it believing that God would not command the impossible. Joseph did not have everything spelled out for him ahead of time. He believed and acted faithfully. No public acknowledgment came his way. Though out of the limelight, he shone brightly with faithfulness.

It is worth mentioning that the religious brother, in his vocation, faithfully mirrors and exemplifies St. Joseph. The religious brotherhood sometimes does not

get the recognition it should and is often misunderstood. Many a candidate for the brotherhood is often asked, “Why don’t you want to be a priest?” Because of the priest’s sacramental ministry and other duties, the priest often gets much recognition. But the brother faithfully mirrors St. Joseph in his faithfulness to the essential things. Maybe not glamorous in the eyes of the world but so necessary. For example, in the Carthusian Order, they will tell you that without the ministry and work of the brother, the priest would not be able to fulfill his ministry and responsibilities. So be sure to hold the vocation to the religious brotherhood in high esteem. It is St. Joseph in our midst.

Joseph’s life reminds us that we will be tested **heroically** in our faith. And that’s the key word, *heroically*. Truth, faith and fidelity to the Gospel will COST us something. The Cross and this type of faith go hand in hand. The faith of Joseph serves as a stark contrast to what many prelates, priests, religious and laity, have adopted: the heresy of Modernism. While a detailed explanation of Modernism lies beyond our scope, briefly, its chief component is that it denies the supernatural. Only reality that we can directly experience through our senses and thereby control and manipulate is real. Hence, no Revelation, no objective truth, no sanctifying grace, and no objective moral law. Everything proceeds from “feelings.” They believe that feelings can understand reality much better than the intellect can. So if a man FEELS that he’s a woman. Then a woman “she” is. Bottom line: We accept NOTHING AS GIVEN. We create everything, even our own gender. We are our own gods and goddesses. Needless to say, the whole concept of being given a vocation by God goes down the tubes with this. Joseph didn’t CREATE his existence, he faithfully obeyed the vocation which God gave him.

An example of this Joseph-type faith today are the faithful of the Underground Church in China. These faithful have the faith that COSTS. As this newsletter is being written, the following has happened in China:

“Faith especially means believing when there is no reason to believe, when we have to give absolute trust.”

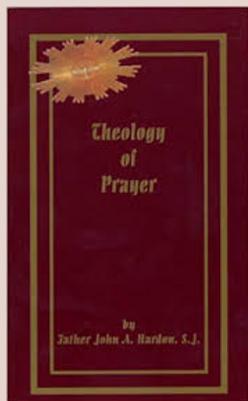
“Chinese Catholics in the Taibai district have surrounded a Marian shrine, hoping to thwart plans by police to demolish the sanctuary. The shrine is located in Fengxiang province, where earlier this month police razed a parish. Government authorities in the province are pressing all Catholics to join the Patriotic Association.” (That’s the headline) Something about an agreement?

Ask yourselves, if the police came to demolish your parish church, would you do as these faithful, Chinese Catholics are doing? Be assured that they will be “noted”

by the Communist authorities and suffer consequences. And don’t think that this couldn’t possibly happen here in the future. With these faithful we see the faith of Joseph. Faithful to the point of sacrifice. May the intercession of St. Joseph assist us in our faithfulness to the Gospel. When things get tough, “Go to Joseph.” ❖

Correction: In our last issue we mentioned St. Padre Pio stammering while saying the words of consecration; it was actually St. Joseph of Cupertino. Sorry for the mix-up!

Book Recommendation



“On all sides we hear it said that the basic problem in the world today is the fact that people are not praying, or not praying enough, and this is true. But it is not enough to say that we should pray and should encourage others to do the same. We had better also know what prayer really means. Otherwise, as has happened to so many, we and they may, I do not say, give up prayer, but not profit as much as we should for what is

by all odds the most profitable enterprise in which any person can engage. There is nothing more profitable in which any human being can engage than to pray.”

-Fr. John Hardon, S.J.

As fallen creatures, made of body and soul, we have many needs, but our greatest need is that we learn more and more how to enter into a living communion with the source of all life, with the only One who can satisfy the deepest desires

of our heart. We enter into this communion with God above all through the life of prayer. The disciples asked our Lord: “Teach us to pray.” Prayer is something that can be taught and learned and we should especially look to those who are experts in prayer in order to learn well. Servant of God, Fr. John Hardon, S.J., in his small book, *The Theology of Prayer*, offers us a very solid and clear teaching on the subject of prayer in language that is accessible to all. He covers various topics ranging from the nature of prayer and its relation to God’s grace to the sufferings of our lives, mental prayer, and how to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. He also includes a chapter on spiritual reading in which he explains how essential good reading is to the nourishment of the soul. This work itself constitutes nourishing food for the soul which greatly fosters our union with God in our life of prayer.

Theology of Prayer by Fr. John Hardon, S.J. Published by Eternal Life. 2000.