

The Festival of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Guardian of our Lord
St. Matthew 1:18-21
March 19th, 2024
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Joseph, Thou Son of David

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name JESUS; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, very little is known about St. Joseph, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Guardian of our Lord. He is only mentioned a few times in the holy Scriptures. The only thing we hear about St. Joseph in the Evangelist St. Luke is that he went from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth to be enrolled in the census that Caesar Augusta had required. He went up to Bethlehem, the city of David, his father, with his betrothed wife, Mary. She, we are told, was great with Child. He is mentioned again when the shepherds come. They found the Baby + Jesus with His parents Sts. Joseph and Mary.

St. Joseph is only alluded to at the Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for St. Luke writes that “they” brought Him to the temple, and that the Child’s “parents” did all that was necessary for the Law. He is also only alluded to by St. Luke when our Lord + Jesus was twelve years old. Again, he is not mentioned by name. He is included with St. Mary in His “parents” and the Blessed Virgin mentions him when the Lord is found in the temple. She says, “Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing.”

In all the other instances of St. Joseph being mentioned, he is connected with the Christ. When the Lord + Jesus is mentioned by others, He is referred to as “the Son of Joseph” or “Joseph’s Son.” This connection is also mentioned in the Genealogies of the Christ. In both St. Luke and in St. Matthew, the connection is made that St. Joseph is both the father of our Lord + Jesus, but also the descendant of King David. This was prophesied in our Epistle reading from the Second Book of Kings, commonly called Second Samuel, the seventh chapter. In that reading King David is promised that His throne would be established forever. St. Joseph is the descendant of King David, as is the Blessed Virgin Mary, and because the right of lineage and inheritance passes from father to son, the Lord + Jesus is

the rightful heir of King David, through the lineage of St. Joseph. This is why St. Luke mentions it in his Gospel.

Today's Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew is only the first of two times that St. Joseph is mentioned in that Gospel. What do we learn of St. Joseph from St. Matthew? We learn that he was betrothed to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He had found out that she was pregnant, and also did not want to publicly shame her, because he was a "righteous man." We learn that he also shares a trait with another Joseph from the Old Testament in that he has dreams in which an angel of the Lord speaks to him. In our Gospel reading, the angel tells him to not be afraid to take the Blessed Virgin Mary as his wife, for she is with a Child from the Holy Ghost, Who will be the Savior of all mankind. St. Joseph is also warned in a dream later in chapter two, to flee King Herod; to go into Egypt with his wife and Child and stay there until it was safe to return. This is why he is referred to as the "Guardian of our Lord" for he protected our Lord + Jesus when He was unable to protect Himself.

This is why we celebrate St. Joseph today. He gives us an example of being a good and faithful father to his Son. He protects Him from danger. He, being a righteous man, brings his Child to Lord God. He has the Lord circumcised. He brings his wife, Mary, to the temple to perform the work of the Law—to be purified after birth. He brings His Son at the same time to be presented as his first-born Son. We also see that he continues to give his Son a thorough upbringing in the Word and worship of the Lord God, for we hear that it was his custom to go yearly to Jerusalem, even as it was required by the Law of Moses. The fact that the Lord + Jesus knew His Scriptures can be at least attributed to St. Joseph in some manner. St. Joseph provides the framework for us on what it means to be a good, Christian father. It means to bring them to Church, to put the Word of God in their hands, and in their hearts, and mouth. In this way St. Joseph also shows that he is a Guardian of our Lord, for not only does he protect Him from external threats, but lays the foundation for protection from spiritual threats.

Our perfect and sinless Lord + Jesus may not have required these things since He was the Son of God, the Son of the heavenly Father. But we certainly need these things. We certainly need earthly fathers who train us in the way we should go. We have been given earthly fathers just for this purpose, to bring us to the Lord God, to lay the framework for the Holy Ghost to work faith and life in us. We who are sons should give thanks for the earthly fathers who have brought us up in the life and admonition of our Lord God; who have brought us to the Church. We who are fathers, should also follow the example of St. Joseph and make every effort to train up our child in the way he should go. We should protect them both from external threats, and spiritual threats.

We have not only been given earthly fathers, but also spiritual fathers. The ministers of our Lord protect us from the Evil Foe by bringing to the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. They train not only us, but also our children. By them we are trained to look to our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ for our salvation.

This is why St. Joseph is not afraid to take the Blessed Virgin Mary as his wife, for the Child which she carried in her womb was the Savior of all mankind. This was the Child—the Messiah—promised long ago to King David. He was promised to Abraham and the other patriarchs. He was promised to Adam and Eve after they fell into sin. All good fathers, like St. Joseph, rejoice in the promise of a Savior. They share the joy of salvation with their children. They protect their children from the arrows of the wily and evil foe. This protection comes in the form of putting the Word of God into their hands. By the Word of God, a child will be trained in the way he would go, so that he may not depart from it later in life.

This is why it is always a father's task to continue to exhort and admonish with the Word of God his children. For the Evil Foe desires to destroy the foundation that has been laid by good Christian fathers. Even as the Evil Foe sought to kill the Christ Child by the hand of King Herod, St. Joseph was

there to protect his Child from that Evil Foe. We do the same for our children, because we do not want them to be taken by the Evil Foe. For he desires their eternal destruction in Hell. Therefore, like St. Joseph, we guard and protect our children from the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, to that they might inherit with us an eternal life in Heaven.

St. Joseph was a righteous man, who was the descendant of King David, and was the father of our Lord + Jesus. He was the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He sets the example for us of being a good Christian father. For he kept his family in the Word of God, so that the Savior of the world might grow up in the Word. Let us also remain steadfast in the Word of God, until our heavenly Father calls us out of this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!