

ST. JOSEPH, PATRON OF THE CHURCH AND THE MEN.

Model of Man—The Protector of God and His Mother—The Holy Family—The Home at Nazareth—Companions.

The following sermon, preached at the Chicago Cathedral by Rev. Joseph Selinger of St. Francis' Seminary, Wis., can not fail to entertain and instruct all who may read it. And it has a peculiar charm for all Catholic parents.

"And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ," with these words St. Matthew concludes his genealogy of the Messiah. They prepare the reader for the subject and its division.

Although the day on which the Church commemorates the patronage of St. Joseph is past, yet it may be well to call to mind the reasons of a peculiar devotion to the Foster-Father of our Lord, all the more since it lends additional help to understand the life of Jesus and Mary.

The third Sunday after Easter is devoted to St. Joseph. In October, however, the Church recites that memorable prayer to him, begging him to protect the Church of Christ as he protected the Holy Family. On that day, therefore, the priest prays in Office and in Mass the merits of God through the merits of St. Joseph: while the month of May and of October alternately bring before us Mary, the Queen of Saints and of the Holy Rosary, which are not fully appreciated unless we remember the head also of the Holy Family.

It is not strange that our Church, the most powerful religious organization of ancient and modern times, should fetch such a Salute out of oblivion and set him up for the respect and imitation of a world, which considers him obscure? Why does she not go into the halls and galleries of great men and famous women? There a grateful nation places the statues and figures which looking on children might admire and take courage. Ours are, we are told, warm examples of heroes of flesh and blood, who have contributed to its material progress. As though it owed nothing to the past! Is not St. Joseph of flesh and blood? Is he a myth? Does he not deserve the highest regard and devotion of the world for having watched over its Redeemer, for having protected the Mother and the Child?

The difficulty is not with the Church, but with the world. The world has grown too material; it has changed its standard of life; it has lost its moorings. Alas! too, many Catholics have lessened their confidence, and in unguarded moments taken hollow phrases of unsympathetic believers seriously. But it is stranger still—while the century was closing and human society stepping down from one pedestal and onto another, all things being in a change and upheaval by central convulsions—that such enlightened Pontiffs as Pius IX. and Leo XIII. should cling so fondly to old traditions, and direct attention to St. Joseph as a great helper of the world, and guardian of the universal Church. "In these trying times," writes Pius IX., "I will pray the mercy of God against all evils by the merits and intercession of St. Joseph." Again, Pope Leo XIII., with the fondness of a child, takes his flock to Nazareth, there to study Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the Holy Family, directing men above all to look on St. Joseph as their model.

Who is St. Joseph that such notice should be taken of him by the universal Church and by mankind? It ought to be unnecessary to tell this age who St. Joseph is. It boasts a knowledge of Jesus Christ that is deeper, and pretends a faith that is more reasonable than the knowledge and faith of past ages. Yet who does not know that now the very beginnings of Christianity are misconstrued, that its substance has been lost in many quarters; that arrogance in matters of faith has taken the place of the simplicity, characteristic of our forefathers!

St. Joseph by the providence of God, was the guardian and protector of the Holy Family. He was honest, he was just, he was faithful and chaste; though he was poor and simple, he was yet of royal blood. He was industrious, bent on his care alone. He was content with his lot, submissive to God's will. An instrument of God, the husband of Mary, the Foster Father of Jesus. His love for Mary was not sullied by any base motive. His espousals with her were a union of soul and of mind. Their marriage, St. Augustine and St. Thomas tell us, was perfect, except in union of body. (Summa P. III. q. 29. a. 11.)

For further information, reflect on the notice taken of him in the early parts of the gospel narrative. The genealogy, given by St. Matthew, assures us that he was of the royal house of David. His soul, being a true child of Abraham, was filled with the expectation of the fulfillment of God's promise. His modesty and single purpose of life never inclined him to believe that the Messiah would ever be given into his care. An angel was sent him from Heaven, to assure him: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for what is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 1, 20.) Thus the love between Joseph and Mary was strengthened. Union of body was not necessary to make their marriage true. "By their example," St. Augustine declares, "the faithful in wedlock are taught how marriage is still true, when, by common consent, continency is observed." Above and beyond carnal affection their hearts throbbled in the sunshine of chastity. Mary in her immaculate, virginal purity clung in supreme confidence to her God-given spouse; Joseph, in the single purpose of his life, God-fearing, rejoiced in the love of Jesus and Mary. Observe how tenderly he cares for them in the cold night at Bethlehem! With what prompt courage he takes the Child and His Mother, and flies into a strange land! The threescore journey, the stay in Egypt, the hate of the enemy for the Child, which should have been hailed with joy, do not daunt his courage, nor foil his faith and hope in Divine Providence. The mysteries of heaven find him docile. No guile betrays the love which carries him over all obstacles.

Nazareth, sweet Nazareth, how thy peace spends itself! What beauty it spreads over human life! How domestic life, now sick with quest after vain things, could be restored to health, if it but followed in the trail of Nazareth! As the declining sun lights up the path to the plain home on the hillside of Nazareth, and Jesus and Joseph return to the embrace of Mary, what joy must have filled their hearts, what thoughts must have arisen in the Mother, what reveries in Joseph, what reflections, like shadows from Calvary, must have hurried over those happy days of Jesus!

St. Luke tells us one incident, the only one on record, which happened when the Child was twelve years old. Jesus remained in the Temple when His parents returned home. Joseph and Mary sought Him during three days; finding Him they rejoiced exceedingly, though His Mother could not help, making questions such tender love, to ask Him: "Son, why didst Thou so to us?" Whereupon He answered, with an appearance of surprise, and with certain assurance of purpose: "Didst thou not know that I had to be about my Father's business?" Though there is no further record of the life in Nazareth in the inspired text, yet Christian tradition and Christian art have embalmed other memories of the Family of Nazareth.

Like all families, the family of Nazareth too had its end. Indeed, it was to be the model by its end as well as by its beginning and progress. The summons of death came to Joseph first. His duty was performed. His death has become the ideal for all who wish to die in the Lord. By his pallid stands Jesus pointing to Heaven. He pours into the heart of His Foster-Father such animation for rest and peace, which the world cannot give, that his parting soul is carried without fear and trembling to the throne of God. There, too, is Mary, the Virgin Mother, lending such solace as fills her grateful heart. Looking into his eyes that are breaking, tenderly touching his hands with her pure lips, she acknowledges his love and commends his fidelity and solicitude to the goodness of the heavenly Father. A widow now, she follows in the footsteps of her divine Son, as He starts on His public life. She remains to share His glory and grief. She will witness the building of His Church, and stand, as it were, at the cradle of His spouse. Thus it is the will of God.

How appropriately, then, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the Holy Family, come out of the shades of Nazareth, to walk ahead of our century, the model and helpers of home and family! Why St. Joseph should be the patron of the universal Church in this age, is not hard to understand. Is the Church of Christ not the family of God? Are we not justified to conclude by the comparisons which St. Paul and St. Peter make, when speaking of those who believe and obey Christ, that there is close analogy between the Holy Family and the Church of Christ, that St. Joseph will have care and love also for the House of God, and preside over it from Heaven? Will he not avail who was appointed to protect the Holy Family on earth? "If, therefore," to use the words of St. Bernardine of Siena, "the entire Church is in debt to the Virgin Mother because she has given us Christ, how should we not next to her, show gratitude and special devotion also to him who cared for both!" "And certainly," he continues, "we cannot doubt but that the familiarity, reverence and great regard which Christ showed him in this mortal life, like a son shows his father, will continue, rather be perfected in Heaven." How justly the Church compares Joseph of Nazareth with Joseph of Egypt is clear by the use she makes of the office of the Egyptian Joseph to explain the patronage of St. Joseph over the entire Church. Set over the people of Egypt, Joseph provided the granaries of the land against famine. The people crying for food were directed to Joseph. In like manner St. Joseph is set over the Church, a helper and protector in trials, not of course, acting as a substitute of God who never leaves His Church, but, by the disposition of God (as appears from the fact of having been set over the Holy Family by God), to help the Church militant by his intercession and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage.

Converts find it difficult to comprehend the use of the sacraments in the Church, and by a strange attraction they readily and enthusiastically take them up. The Catholic World Magazine has a very practical article on the Catholic spirit of devotion. Among other things it says: "And who never leaves His Church, but, by the disposition of God (as appears from the fact of having been set over the Holy Family by God), to help the Church militant by his intercession and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage." Converts find it difficult to comprehend the use of the sacraments in the Church, and by a strange attraction they readily and enthusiastically take them up. The Catholic World Magazine has a very practical article on the Catholic spirit of devotion. Among other things it says: "And who never leaves His Church, but, by the disposition of God (as appears from the fact of having been set over the Holy Family by God), to help the Church militant by his intercession and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage."

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world, a life useless to fellow-men. The life of St. Joseph was none of such. In fact a purpose of his life, if we are allowed to judge by divine disposition is to show forth the true value of labor in the economy of God; and labor is at once the privilege and stumbling-block of man. Culture and ideals are necessary for labor as well as for girl; St. Joseph is God's lesson in both.

The world dislikes humility, and takes to labor because it is the necessary medium to secure even selfish ends. But come in the train of human life, and are unavoidable, but St. Joseph has shown their inestimable value towards securing happiness here and hereafter. That is the freedom wherewith man must be free, free to serve his God while he carries out the will of God, in the labor that arises from his duty. Wealth, honor, ease and pleasure, not to be despised indeed, yet they are nurseries of the unhappy lot of such as set more store in them than in the service of God. A bride to check man in his mad race after temporal good, is given to men by the example of St. Joseph.

Not the smallest part of the doctrine of Christ looks to lifting up marriage and domestic life. The Christian home is to be modeled after the home of Nazareth. It may well be said that our Saviour spent the longest time of His mortal life with Mary and Joseph, in order to confirm His teaching by previous example. The beauty of a household is, faithfully to copy Nazareth.

The objection, then, to the veneration and confidence shown to St. Joseph in our time, in obedience to the repeated exhortation of the Holy Father, does not arise from a distorted view of life. St. Joseph is powerful and loving enough to give assistance; even the very position in which God placed him entitled him to honor from all mankind.

How apply then the aged pontiff and his flock, the Family of Jesus Christ, proceed under the mantle of the head of the family of Nazareth; how appropriate, that St. Joseph is asked, according to the prayer of the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., "assist us from the height of heaven with thy alms, the power of thy grace, and as formerly, thou didst rescue the Child Jesus from the greatest danger to His life, so now defend the Holy Church of God—and cover each one of us with thy lasting protection."

THE GRACE TO PRAY. The grace to pray is the first and the easiest of all graces to obtain. It is almost forced upon us. God wishes all men to be saved "for this is the will of God, your justification," and therefore He gives to all the one great means of securing the graces necessary for justification—the ability to pray. "But if any of you want wisdom let him ask God who giveth to all abundantly and upbraided not; and it shall be given him." We all need wisdom, and the means of obtaining it is prayer. One is not required to be in the state of grace in order to pray. The prayer of a sinner is heard as well as the prayer of the just. Even in the state of sin we may obtain through prayer the wisdom to get out of it—the grace of sincere repentance.

KNEEL UP. Kneeling in church has become quite an art. The method in vogue in dozens of cases is a kind of roll, a spreading of one's self in a ridiculous manner, says a contemporary. There is absolutely no necessity of anyone's seeking support from the seats. There is no need of spreading the elbows out on the back of the seat in front so as to compass as much space as possible. The seats are not there for use while kneeling—a bench is put there for that purpose. There is no necessity for our measuring our elbow reach; there are plenty more suitable places for such gymnastic exercises. A "respectful posture" on benches or knees, which is the attitude for prayer, and indifferent looking stretching. Kneel up straight, resting the hands on the pew in front if necessary. There is no one so weak as to find this posture difficult. We are in church but a very short time during Mass, and the kneeling portion of that time is infinitesimal.

CONVERTS AND THE SACRAMENTALS. Converts find it difficult to comprehend the use of the sacraments in the Church, and by a strange attraction they readily and enthusiastically take them up. The Catholic World Magazine has a very practical article on the Catholic spirit of devotion. Among other things it says: "And who never leaves His Church, but, by the disposition of God (as appears from the fact of having been set over the Holy Family by God), to help the Church militant by his intercession and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage, following her fortunes and patronage."

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in her repeated sanction of innumerable sodalities, and in the offer of immense spiritual favors to those who enroll themselves in her various confraternities. The utility of the sodality is patent and needs no defense; but its proper function, as a bulwark to human weakness, is sometimes forgotten, devotion is degraded into a system of props and stays, and sanctity becomes a flimsy and ill-balanced affair, ready to topple over the moment its multitudinous external supports are removed. It is not always easy to answer a hostile critic who complains that certain devotes should spend more time and energy in erecting a solid edifice of true piety, and less in the invention of ingenious devices for the support of a dozen shaky out-houses, weak from the foundations to the worm-eaten rafters of the roof.

"A CATHOLIC WITHOUT A CODICIL"

Henry Austin Adams Replies to Some Critics Who Distill His Strenuous Catholicity.

Not long ago Henry Austin Adams delivered a lecture in Chicago on "Christianity and Brains," excerpts from which were reproduced in these columns. It aroused a storm of criticism in Chicago, and now that the smoke of the conflict has cleared away, Mr. Adams replies to his various critics in the New World. Despite its local reference, his reply is manfully and aggressively Catholic enough to repeat: "Certainly none of the principles which I then laid down or statements of facts which I made, do I now wish to withdraw or modify," he says. "I am a Catholic without a codicil."

"My thesis was: 'Catholicity is not only compatible with intellectual life, but, being the truth, culture is not complete nor secure which excludes Catholicity.' My historical argument, I presume gave no offense even to those, like friend Tetard, who did hear it. It was when I tackled the supercilious 'educational' faddists of our own times that I was thought to have been 'un-American,' 'un-Catholic,' and 'ungentlemanly.' 'Let us see: Had I assailed the right of anybody to entertain his own religious views, I might have been guilty of denying our glorious American principle of religious toleration. But this I certainly did not do. On the contrary, I merely defended our Catholic rights by attacking the spirit of too many of our sophisticated educationalists who sneer at all broad views as incompatible with religion and advanced scientific knowledge. I showed that in every field of investigation and in every degree of attainment the names of illustrious Catholics and other devout men were not only prominent, but proving the shallowness and bigotry of such 'liberals' as Andrew D. White and other Moguls who assume a monopoly of light and leading. There are State universities, libraries, institutions, maintained by general taxation, which harbor this sneering contempt for faith; and, as a good American, I am doing what I can to denounce the outrage. We have just compelled the great Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences to make public apology to Catholics for a series of anti-Catholic lectures. The Board of Directors has published resolutions (unanimously passed) expressing regret and pledging us immunity from all future bigotry. And yet when I wrote demanding this I was sneered at. I can stand a good deal of sneering to get such results. If it be 'un-American' to defend religious liberty and 'un-Catholic' to defend the faith, I plead guilty to both counts in Mr. Tetard's indictment. 'Now as to my alleged ungentlemanliness. This is a serious charge. I think, myself, that I sometimes forget how sharp my words are. The fact is, a man is liable to forget himself when defending the honor of his mother against the scandalous lies of her detractors. Cardinal Newman's majestic definition of a gentleman begins with the statement that 'he is one who never inflicts pain.' (Idea of University, page 208.) This is eminently true; but the gentle Cardinal assuredly did not mean that one must refrain from speaking and living the truth, at whatever cost of pain to others. Probably no man ever lived who inflicted 'pain' upon so many good and loving men as did John Henry Newman. His conversion to the Church and subsequent glorious defence of truth fairly broke the hearts of those dearest to him, and dealt, as has been said, a blow to Protestantism from which it staggers still. I thank my critics for cautioning me against all needless vehemence, but I dare not hope to escape the charge of giving

pain while I remain a man of conscience and conviction. "Even great men are charged by the timid and apologetic. For example take that valiant defender of the faith, Bishop England. He writes: 'Some persons are of opinion that I treat my opponents with too much severity.' "Am I, and my religion, and my country, and my country to be held up to execration, without redress? "Are Roman Catholics to be libelled with impunity? "Would to God they (the bigots) had been silent! I should never have disturbed their literary somnolence had they not contrived to grope us out and seize upon us for destruction. They left us no alternative. We should either, before all the citizens of the Union, acquiesce in the truth of their horrible charges, and thus acknowledge ourselves too base and too wicked to be admitted into these republics, or we should prove their intentional falsehood or their total ignorance. They left us no choice. I differ, therefore, with their apologists, and must proceed." (Works, vol. II., page 168.)

"As between this outrageous prelate and my philanthropic little critics, I choose the former—and must proceed! "By the way of benediction on this controversy let me invoke the spirit of the following words of the Cardinal my own: 'What can I desire and pray for but this—that what I have said well may be best to those who have heard it, and what I might have said better, may be best to me by increasing my dissatisfaction with myself; that I may cheerfully resign myself to much trouble or anxiety as necessarily befalls any one who has spoken boldly on an unpopular subject in a difficult time, with the confidence that no trouble or anxiety will bring some real good with it in this event, to those who have acted in sincerity, and by no unworthy methods, and with no selfish aim.' (Present Position of Catholics, page 403.)

THE WISE ORIENTALS. "The Chinese physician," says Modern Medicine, "receives a salary from his patients as long as they are well, but as soon as they get ill his pay stops. Some American families, not disdainful to learn something from the other side of the world, have partially adopted the same plan; that is, they pay the salary whether they are sick or well; and it is, of course, to the interest of the doctor to keep them well as far as he can, to save himself the trouble of attending them. When the Chinese method, or the American modification of it, comes into the interest of the physician who has charge of a family to study each member of it physically, mentally, spiritually; to prescribe for them correct environment, proper diet and healthful habits; and to labor with the view of inducing them to touch with all these."

A CONTRAST.

Only faith makes old age interesting, as its mellowing influence gives experience the character of wisdom. The old man of faith is never lonely, even though he stands among the ruins of a fortune, for he walks with God truly as did Adam in the garden of Eden. The rosary beads falling from his fingers count, every one, a hope in heaven and with their modest music dispel the gloom of life's evening. In what strange contrast to all this is the wretchedly lonely, because utterly hopeless, closing of the life of an old infidel! Bent to the earth, he has forgotten the skies for which his soul was destined and is doomed to think only of that earth which will be his grave, as it was the cheerless subject of his every thought. The world for him has proved false, and alas! heaven cannot prove true. Every wrinkle spells despair.

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