

St Joseph is the protector of childhood and youth because he was the faithful guardian and devoted protector of the Child Jesus whom he fed, clad, carried in his arms, reared, preserved from death, taught his trade, enabled him to earn his livelihood, acknowledged as his son and caused him to be entered as such in the public registers and in those of the temple. Oh ! how this good father of Jesus loves to see children, adolescents and young men kneel to him to ask him either for the necessities of life or, above all, for the preservation of their innocence ! How wise are mothers who teach their children to recite a short prayer in his honor, to ask his blessing as Jesus did every day.

St Joseph is the guardian and father of virgins, as said in a prayer approved and indulgenced by the Church, because to his faithful guardianship were confided Christ Jesus, innocence itself and Mary, the Virgin of virgins. Hence all virgin souls should pray to him daily to keep them free from all stains, so that with spotless mind, with a pure heart and a chaste body they may constantly and holily serve Jesus and Mary.

St Joseph is the patron of fathers of families because he has been their most perfect model. He has known the joys and sorrows of paternity as no other has ; he has fulfilled better than any other its sacred duties and this towards a Son like whom there will never be another. Christian fathers be devout to Joseph, pray him to help you in fulfilling your obligations towards your children, invoke him amidst the trouble their education causes you and have no doubt that he will powerfully aid you.

St Joseph is the patron of mothers of families because he was the protector and support of Mary, the mother *par excellence*: the Mother of Jesus and of mankind redeemed. We may say with regard to Mary what we have said with regard to Jesus : to St Joseph she owed the preservation of her precious honor and her daily bread ; moreover in him she had a consoler, a helper whose services were very necessary during her flight and sojourn in Egypt. Mothers of families are a class of persons who are in great need of consolation and support, especially when they lose the companion God has given them and still more when that companion afflicts them through