

Patrons of Parishes

SAINT JOSEPH

TO form an idea of the holiness of this glorious patriarch it suffices to know that he was chosen by God to perform the duties of a father to Jesus-Christ. St. Paul says of himself that God had made him capable of being a worthy minister of the new alliance. From this, according to St. Thomas, we learn that when God destines any one to an office, He grants him the necessary graces to fill it worthily. Thus as God destined Joseph to fill the office of father to the person of the Verb incarnate, we may be sure that He conferred upon him all the gifts of wisdom and holiness required for such an office. We must not doubt therefore that the Lord enriched him with all the graces and all the privileges granted to other Saints. Gerson says that St. Joseph received three special privileges among others: the first of being sanctified in his mother's womb as were Jeremiah and St. John the Baptist; the second of being at the same time confirmed in grace and the third of being ever exempt from the influence of concupiscence, a grace in which, through the merits of his purity, he makes his devout servants participate by delivering them from carnal desires.

The Gospel proclaims Joseph a just man. What is a just man?

St. Peter Chrysologus, replies that it is a perfect man possessing all the virtues. Joseph was already holy before his marriage; but his holiness increased greatly when he became united to the Mother of God. The examples alone of his holy spouse were sufficient to sanctify him. But if Mary is, as St. Bernardino of Sienna says, the dispenser of all the graces that God confers on men, with what profusion must we not believe that she gives them to her spouse whom she so greatly loved and by whom she was so greatly beloved.

And then how much greater did not Joseph's holiness be-