

March 19th: Joseph, husband of Mary

Gospel text (Mt 1,16.18-21.24a): Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and from her came Jesus who is called the Christ —the Messiah.

This is how Jesus Christ was born. Mary his mother had been given to Joseph in marriage but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph, her husband, made plans to divorce her in all secrecy. He was an upright man, and in no way did he want to discredit her. While he was pondering over this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, «Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She has conceived by the Holy Spirit, and now she will bear a son. You shall call him “Jesus” for he will save his people from their sins». When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do and he took his wife to his home.

«Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife»

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Today, the Church celebrates the solemnity of Saint Joseph, Mary's husband. It is like a joyful interlude within Lent's austerity. But, the joy of this feast should not be an obstacle to our advancing along the path of our personal conversion, as preceptive in Lenten time.

He who, looking ahead, tries hard to accommodate his life to God's plan for us, is very fortunate. And so is he who, looking around him, tries always to properly interpret others' actions by saving their good reputation. In today's Gospel Saint Joseph is presented to us in both aspects of goodness.

God has over each one of us a love plan, inasmuch as «God is love» (1Jn 4:8). But, at times, the hardships of life difficult our discovering it. And then, logically, we grumble and we reluctantly accept to carry our crosses.

Saint Joseph must have gone through a difficult time when realizing Mary «before they had lived together, was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit» (Mt 1:18). He was planning to divorce her, but «in all secrecy» (Mt 1:19). And, at the same time, when «an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream» (Mt 1:20), saying he had to become the legal father, he accepted it right away «and took his wife to his home» (Mt 1:24).

Lent is a good time to find out what God expects from us and strengthen our wish to carry it out. Let us beg God «through the intercession of Mary's husband», as we shall read in the Collect of the Mass, that we may advance in our path of conversion by imitating Saint Joseph in his acceptance of God's will and in the exercise of charity with our fellow men. At the same time, let us keep in mind that if «all the Church is indebted to the Virgin Mary, as we received Christ through her, after her, Saint Joseph should certainly be who mostly deserves our gratitude and reverence» (Saint Bernardino of Siena).