

A MANUAL
OF
PRACTICAL DEVOTION
TO THE GLORIOUS PATRIARCH
S T . J O S E P H .

In loving memory of:
PATRICK J. McMANAMON
*A man truly Catholic
in Faith and practice,
without which it is impossible
to please God.*

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A MANUAL
OF
PRACTICAL DEVOTION
TO THE GLORIOUS PATRIARCH
S T . J O S E P H .

INCLUDING
THE MASSES, NOVENAS, LITANIES, AND OTHER PIOUS
EXERCISES FOR THE FEASTS
OF THE
HOLY SPOUSE OF THE B. V. MARY.

With Notices for those Pious Practices,

DEDUCED FROM
THE EXAMPLES OF OUR BLESSED REDEEMER, THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY, THE HOLY ANGELS, THE MOST
EMINENT SAINTS AND DOCTORS
OF THE CHURCH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF
FATHER PATRIGNANI, S.J.

Revised by a Member of the Society of Jesus.

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PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH.



HOLY ST. JOSEPH! hear thy suppliant's prayer,
And take me to thy own paternal care;
For thou whom God selected on this earth
To watch the infant Jesus at His birth,
And guard the Virgin Mother of the Child—
The ever-blessed Mary, undefiled—
O thou to whom such wondrous charge was given,
Must surely now be powerful in heaven!
Be, then, dear Father to my Jesus, be
A father and protector unto me;
Beseech of Jesus that I may obtain
What none through thee have ever sought in vain—
The love of Jesus, with a heart sincere,
Free from the selfishness of hope or fear;
Thus, for God's glory, that I may adore
Jesus, my Saviour, now and evermore.
And thou, O Mary! ever "Blessed," styled,
The Virgin Mother of the Saviour Child,
With Holy Joseph, take me to thy care,
For, thus protected, God *will* hear my prayer!

Amen.

P R E F A C E .



ANXIOUS to promote the pious intentions of the author of this work—F. ANTONY-JOSEPH PATRIGNANI, S.J.—we venture to present the public with a translation.

His earnest desire, to use his own expression, was to diffuse more widely the “Devotion to St. Joseph,” to re-animate the piety of his devoted children, and, if possible, to induce all hearts to love and venerate him as he deserves.

And does not this great saint, whom God has so eminently distinguished, deserve, in a special manner, the homage of our devotion, respect, and affection? A great many authors and preachers have used their best

exertions to exalt by eloquent panegyrics the prerogatives and virtues of St. Joseph, and they have succeeded in rallying around him a multitude of clients, who invoke him as their advocate and spiritual father, and as the dearest object of their love and confidence, after Jesus and Mary. We, in our humble sphere, are now endeavouring to attain the same end, but by a shorter and more easy method, which was adopted in preference by F. Patrignani.

Example, it is unnecessary to say, has far greater influence over the heart and mind, than the most convincing arguments: the latter only gain our approval of what is right, but the former leads us to put it in practice. The examples to be met with in this work are of two kinds, and naturally divide the subject-matter into two parts. The first part exhibits the many interior and exterior practices of devotion in use among St.

Joseph's clients, supplying so many motives for their devotion to him. The second will present to our view numerous instances of the graces and favours which have been granted to St. Joseph's devoted clients. A third part will contain various practices in his honour, and several ways of spreading this devotion.

Patrignani wrote his book in 1709 ; since his time, the devotion to St. Joseph has undergone many changes in its exterior form. To be content, in a new edition, with presenting the reader with the devotions which were in use then, without giving likewise those which have been adopted since, would be justly to expose ourselves to the reproach of being unpractical. It will easily be understood, then, that some alterations were necessary ; but, in permitting these, we have retained, as far as possible, the original text of our author ;

and we have generally used notes to explain or enlarge what appeared to us incomplete or incorrect. For several years the Feasts of Saint Joseph have been multiplying ; new Pilgrimages and Associations are continually being formed—unequivocal signs of the veneration in which this holy patriarch is held, and, perhaps we may say, of the fruit which this work has produced. We have thought that a short notice of these foundations would not be misplaced ; we have, therefore, placed them at the end of the second book. In the third, to the practices already found there, we have added those peculiar to the new Associations, or to the recently founded Pilgrimages. We have, therefore, united in one work, the motives for honouring St. Joseph, and the numerous ways of doing so. But, since the servants of Joseph are also those of Jesus and Mary, we have added

some prayers and hymns to the Sacred Heart and to the Immaculate Conception, which will help to satisfy their devotion.

It now remains for us to offer this work, with our pious author, to the great Saint who is the object of it, praying him to supply for its defects, and to accept the desire we have to increase his honour, to make him loved by all hearts, and to see him invoked with confidence by all in trouble.

WORK OF ST. JOSEPH.



Object of this Work.

THE object of the Work of St. Joseph, is the honour of this great Saint, the increase of devotion to him, and the imitation of his virtues.

To honour St. Joseph is to glorify God in one of His most excellent works—it is to discharge the debt of gratitude we owe to him for the services he rendered to our Divine Saviour and His holy Mother—it is to imitate them and to conform ourselves to the wishes of our dear Lord and the Blessed Virgin, who cannot but be pleased at the homage rendered to a Saint so devoted to them—it is further to correspond to the will of God, who, by the abundance of graces granted to the intercession of St. Joseph, seems, together with the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Conception, to recommend it to our special devotion and confidence. To honour this great Saint is to provide ourselves with a powerful protector during life and at the hour of death.

To spread devotion to the holy patriarch, and the imitation of his virtues, give us a special claim to his

affection. By this means we contribute to the spiritual welfare of our brethren, by giving them, in the humble and submissive life of the poor artizan, a preservative against the spirit of the age; and in his powerful intercession and the paternal goodness of his heart, a generous and powerful friend.

Means to employ for this Work.

Our aim is clearly defined as to means: the association trusting principally in the zeal of its members, we will confine ourselves to the following remarks:—

To spread devotion to St. Joseph, the associates should, above all things, endeavour to make the holy patriarch known. In the virtues suggested, they should consider the wants of the persons they address. Regarding the honours to pay him, although in private they be free to follow their own devotion, in the public exercises they should choose in preference what is suitable to the associates in general. The association is composed of persons whose education, habits, and necessities may differ very much; to exact a uniformity in the exercises, would often render them useless, or at least lessen the benefit. Among the different members forming an association, we find the following practices: Some bind themselves each day to certain prayers, to certain acts of charity, or any other virtue, in honour of St. Joseph;

others honour in an especial manner the Seven Sorrows and the Seven Joys of the holy patriarch, by exercises which are appropriate to them. There are associations where each member engages himself to pay him particular honour during one day of the week, month, or year, in the name of all the members; often the associates consecrate particularly Wednesday to the devotion of St. Joseph, and perform different exercises in his honour.

All these practices in honouring St. Joseph have reference to our end. Let those persons who have adopted them add some exercises likely to extend the devotion to the holy patriarch, and the imitation of his virtues; they can do so perfectly well: and still forming part of their association, can become members of the Work of St. Joseph. The greater part of these practices having been published in the "Devotions to St. Joseph," we refer to that work. As to the last of these practices, the approbation given and the results promised oblige us to pause to make known the Association of Wednesday, formed among the different reunions which have adopted it.

Association of Wednesday.

This practice consists in offering this day to God for the extension of the devotion to St. Joseph, and for the spiritual good of the members of the Work, who make this offering for the same intention. Thus,

among the associates of Wednesday, a holy intimacy is formed. Already united for the same end—the glory of St. Joseph—they unite themselves again to obtain the most powerful of means, that of the grace which, in sanctifying themselves, renders their labours beneficial. Charity is the soul of this association ; it is the only endowment required from the members. To become a member, the dedication of Wednesday to St. Joseph is necessary ; but that suffices. Persons who can do nothing more can beg for the blessings of heaven upon the association, by the merit of their actions and ordinary employments. Those who have it in their power may employ themselves, or others, for the glory of St. Joseph, and add some spiritual exercises for the same object. These exercises are at the choice of the associates and the discretion of the director of each reunion. This important point understood, the following remarks will serve as a guide in the choice to be made.

Exercises in use in the Reunions of Wednesday.

In Angers, Vetré, and Villedieu, and in all the places where the associates have the free disposal of their time, they assemble on Wednesday to assist at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The priest, before going up to the altar, recommends the intentions which have been addressed to him to the assistants, and recites after Mass the prayer of the association.

At the end of an exhortation, which takes place every fortnight, the associates concert together on the manner of extending and supporting the Work; each one makes known the result of his efforts, and the aid which he can afford to its progress.

In some parishes, although the consecration of the Wednesday is inviolably maintained, the meeting is deferred to the Sunday evening, to accommodate those who are occupied the other days of the week. Young persons find in these Meetings, attended, as they are, by religious and other devout persons, a preservative against the dangers of the world.

In communities or schools where the consecration of the Wednesday is introduced, if it be not general, those who adopt it may confine themselves to the consecration of the day and some works of piety. If it be adopted by the whole house, superiors may give practices in accordance with the circumstances. Generally, hymns are joined to the exercises noted above. And since the members of the Work of St. Joseph are pre-eminently disciples of Jesus, and children of Mary, they love their meetings to combine with the praises of the holy patriarch those of the Sacred Heart and of the Immaculate Conception. The first hymn, at the commencement of the Mass, is generally to St. Joseph; the second, at the elevation, to our Lord; the third, after the communion, to the Blessed Virgin. The same idea, in the selection of the hymns, is carried out in the monthly

meetings of St. Joseph, and when benediction is substituted for the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The members of the association are particularly recommended to offer the first Wednesday in the month for deceased members. Those among the members who assist at the holy Mass on that day, offer it for that intention; those who have not that happiness, make at least an offering of the merits of our Saviour in their favour. (*See the Prayers to the Sacred Heart*).

The practice of consecrating the Wednesday is compatible with every rule and every employment. In conforming to the principal requirement, the exterior form may be modified according to circumstances. The associates, besides, do not *contract any engagements*; they have only, after joining the association, to persevere in the offering of the Wednesday. Furthermore, it is to be remarked, that to be a member of the Work of St. Joseph, it is not even absolutely necessary to make the consecration of the Wednesday. Without doubt, it is very advantageous; those who do it derive great help from it during their life, and after death; but as the aim of the Work of St. Joseph is simply to honour our holy patron, and to spread the devotion to him, any person who, without wishing to bind himself to any particular practice, engages to work for the same end, can be admitted as a member. The persons who direct each reunion, inscribe the name, surname,

and address of the associates in a register. The list, in detail, of each reunion ought to be forwarded to Angers, to P. N. Louis, Director of the Work, where every information concerning the association may be had.

Prayer of the Associates.

This prayer is said on Wednesday, in private or at the reunion. An indulgence of forty days for the dioceses of Angers, Tours, Rennes, Beauvais, Poitiers, and Nantes.

“O Joseph! who by your fidelity to the inspirations of heaven, merited, in the midst of hard labour, the contempt of the world and the trials of this life, to receive from the Holy Ghost the title of Just, and from God the Father the care of Jesus, His Divine Son, and Mary, the Queen of virgins; we implore of you, now that you are all-powerful with God, to remember us, who still languish in this valley of tears, exposed to the snares of cruel enemies. Obtain for us a contempt for the false goods of this world, victory over our passions, an unbounded zeal in the service of God, a tender confidence in Jesus, your adopted Son, and in Mary, your spouse. O Joseph! be our guide, our patron, our defender at the hour of death. We beg this of you, by the love which you bear to Jesus and Mary. We beseech you to ask the same graces for all those who have associated

themselves to us to spread devotion to you. Listen to their prayers, assist their efforts, and obtain, in reward of their zeal, that they may one day be united around your throne at the feet of Jesus and Mary. Amen.

“Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

“Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

“St. Joseph, pray for us.”

At the end of this prayer, a Pater and Ave are added for the different intentions of the associates present at the reunion.

MANUAL OF DEVOTION

to

The Glorious Patriarch

SAINT JOSEPH.

FIRST PART.

MOTIVES FOR THE DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

CHAPTER I.

First Motive for Devotion to St. Joseph—the Example of Jesus Christ.

WHEN from His cross Jesus Christ addressed Himself to the ever-blessed Virgin His mother, and, pointing to St. John, said to her, “Woman, behold thy son,” undoubtedly He intended to put us all under her protection in the person of that beloved disciple, who then represented the entire body of the elect (*St. Bern. S.*). In like manner, it is most natural to suppose that the Eternal Father, in appointing St. Joseph, as head of the Holy Family, to be the guardian of the lives of Jesus and Mary in their flight into Egypt, wished at the same time to place all mankind under his protection, and to inspire them with respect and veneration for a saint, to

whose hands was entrusted the most precious treasure that either Heaven or Earth ever contained, the "Saviour of the world," the "Incarnate Word," the source and centre of the bliss of Paradise. This one motive should in itself be sufficient to inspire us with a particular devotion to St. Joseph; but we have a stronger one still in the example given to us by the Son of the Most High.

The entire life of our Blessed Saviour is a perfect model, or rather we should say a divine model prepared for our imitation. He says Himself: "Behold, I have given you an example, that, as I have done, you also may do" (*John*, xiii.). Let us now see what honour He paid to St. Joseph, that we may imitate Him in that respect. Jesus is the first of all men who honoured St. Joseph; He saw in this holy patriarch the representative of the Eternal Father, who had placed him over Him in this world, so He treated him in every respect as a father; and it would not have been possible for Him to have shown him more filial respect, had he really been His father.

Already, Christian reader, I flatter myself I can read in your heart the pious and eager desire of becoming acquainted with all the particulars of that example of filial piety which Jesus Christ gave us during the life of St. Joseph; but how can you expect to be able to penetrate a mystery concerning which the Holy Ghost has preserved a profound silence? Yes, the Holy Ghost has covered it with an impenetrable veil, since St. Luke, the depository of the secrets of the "Word made flesh," and the privileged historian of the mysteries of His divine childhood, on coming to the recital of the incidents

in the life of the Son of God, from His twelfth until His thirtieth year, embodies them all in these words: "He was subject to them."—"Erat subditus illis." What a mystery! Were eighteen years of the mortal life of the Son of God spent by Him without exhibiting anything great or wonderful, which might serve for our instruction? Such an assertion would be impious. Was the evangelist ignorant of the particulars of the hidden life of our Divine Lord at Nazareth? Rather, was it not (so to speak) in the school of the Blessed Virgin that the sacred penman learned everything that he had to relate? Was it not from Mary herself that he learned even the most minute details of the birth of our Redeemer in a stable, the adoration of the shepherds, the canticle of the angels, and many other particulars relating to the mystery of the "Incarnation," so that St. Luke is called by some writers "the Blessed Virgin's secretary"? If, then, so faithful and accurate an historian as St. Luke has reduced the narrative of the greater part of our Saviour's life to these few words, "He was subject to them," we must conclude, that so perfectly did Jesus Christ devote Himself to the practice of obedience, obedience to Mary and Joseph, that although during that long period He performed an infinite number of heroic acts of piety, humility, patience, zeal, and the most exalted virtues, He seems nevertheless to have had no other occupation than that of doing the will of others; this occupation alone, He would have recorded of Himself in the Gospel as being the most noble, the most glorious, and the most worthy of the Word Incarnate.

But this subjection, this obedience of Jesus Christ, presupposes that the person whose orders He obeyed,

must have been invested with the right of authority ; and hence, in the words of the Sacred Text which we have quoted, do we not find an epitome of the life of the Son of God, and, at the same time, of that of the great St. Joseph? What, therefore, was St. Joseph's occupation during the eighteen years that he lived with Jesus at Nazareth? It was, if we may imitate the brief Gospel phrase, that of "commanding Jesus," a right to which, in the order of a mysterious Providence, he was fully entitled, as being the constituted head and ruler of the "Holy Family." Doubtless, Mary also, as being His mother, had the privilege of commanding Him ; but as a father's authority is considered paramount to all others, Jesus rendered to Joseph, in a special manner, the duty of obedience. These are the sentiments of two celebrated theologians, St. Thomas and Pierre d'Ailly. May I be permitted here to address myself thus to the blessed spirits? How often have you not been penetrated with admiration and astonishment, on beholding Jesus deny Himself the liberty of making the slightest movement, speaking a single word, taking rest or nourishment, but in accordance with the precise directions which He received from St. Joseph! But say, ye blessed spirits, what most excited your astonishment? Was it the humiliation of Jesus in obeying St. Joseph, or was it the exalted dignity of St. Joseph's office in commanding Jesus? The just man Noah, when he saw the Ark resting on the mountains of Armenia, required no aid of science in order to appreciate the prodigious weight of the waters of the Deluge : in like manner, Gerson, that devout servant of St. Joseph, discovers in the profound humiliation of Jesus obeying Joseph, the just

measure of our saint's exaltation—the one ascends in proportion as the other descends; so that, if the subjection of Jesus attests His incomprehensible humility, it no less proves the incomparable dignity of Joseph; and all the acts of submission performed by the Son of God in obeying St. Joseph, are to the latter so many steps of sublime elevation. When we consider all this, how can we ever sufficiently comprehend the sublime dignity of a saint who thus beheld himself obeyed, respected, and served during so many years by his Creator and his God? Joshua excited the admiration of all succeeding generations for having once miraculously delayed the setting of the Sun, which at his command actually remained stationary. But how insignificant was the power of that famous general when compared with that of St. Joseph, who, not once, but a thousand times, could either set in motion or set at rest, as he pleased, God Himself, the Creator of the Sun and of all Nature! Great in Egypt, indeed, was the power of that other Joseph, to whom the king confided the entire government of his empire. Moses could not have been honoured with a more glorious title than that with which the God of armies invested him, when He called him the “God of Pharaoh;” but these titles, these privileges, admirable as they are, vanish altogether before the prerogatives of a saint to whom the King of kings subjected Himself as to His Father and His Lord.

And, doubtless, it is as impossible to find amongst the multitude of saints one greater than St. Joseph, as it is to conceive an authority greater than that which he enjoyed, in virtue of the right which he had of commanding the Son of God. Let us for a moment imagine a personage who has been appointed

king over all the kings of the Earth; suppose, also, that God created ten thousand worlds, that He gives to each its king on condition that all these kings should acknowledge as their sovereign one absolute monarch. Imagine the glory of such a monarch, receiving the homages of ten thousand great princes; the sublimity of that throne elevated above so many thrones; but yet such a monarch would not be so highly honoured in receiving allegiance from this nation of kings, as was St. Joseph by the perfect submission and obedience which was rendered to him by the Son of God. It was mere boasting on the part of Hippocrates, that ancient warrior, in order to flatter his soldiers, and add to his own importance, when he said, that an honour more precious to him than an empire was the privilege of commanding those who were themselves in authority. St. Joseph, on the contrary, could say with truth: To me alone belongs the glory of commanding Almighty God, on whom all creatures depend, to whom all princes must respectfully submit, and before whom the pillars of Heaven tremble (*Job*, ix.).

But if the glory of those who exercise authority over others, consists less in having the power of commanding than in seeing their orders obeyed with zeal and submission, it follows, that what chiefly constituted St. Joseph's glory, was not so much the parental authority with which he was invested, as the perfect obedience of Jesus to his commands. Ye devout clients of St. Joseph, I shall now endeavour to gratify your piety by entering still further into detail, and I shall cite for you a few instances of that obedience which the Son of God practised in the "House of Nazareth," with as much simplicity as

if He were quite incapable of acting for Himself. It is true, as I have already stated, that St. Luke has embodied the events of eighteen years of our Saviour's life in these mysterious words, "He was subject to them;" this, however, may not interfere with a fuller development of the meaning of these words, calling in for this purpose the comments of the Holy Fathers. St. Basil (in the fortieth chapter of his Monastic Constitutions) states, that our Saviour toiled without ceasing in obedience to Mary and Joseph. St. Justin the Martyr (in his Dialogue with Tryphon) assures us that the "Word Incarnate" assisted St. Joseph in his workshop, and laboured at his trade as assiduously as His strength would permit. St. Jerom and St. Bonaventure make a similar statement. But the most irrefragable testimony to this continual exercise of obedience on the part of Jesus to the least wish of St. Joseph, is that which the Blessed Virgin herself gave to St. Bridget, the confidant of her most intimate secrets. These are her words: "So obedient was my Son, that if Joseph said to Him, Do this or that, He instantly did it" (*Rev. of St. Bridget*, b. iv. c. 58).

Whence I behold Joseph and Jesus, one exercising the parental authority by giving his orders, and the other performing the duties of dependence and filial piety by the perfection of obedience. It was necessary that Joseph, in order to maintain a God reduced to a state of poverty, should apply himself to the trade of a carpenter. I hear him saying to Jesus, his adopted son, in the most respectful terms: "Jesus, come and assist me to saw this plank, to carve this block; Jesus, take the hammer and drive in that nail; come and collect this sawdust, and these

shavings, and arrange the wood in order. . . . Jesus, take fuel to your mother," &c. &c. The "light" was less prompt in issuing forth from nothing at the command of its Creator, than was Jesus in hearing and quickly executing the orders He received. Hence, it is not surprising that the inhabitants of Nazareth should have looked upon Him as the true son of Joseph. What made them fall into this error, at first innocent, was seeing Him so submissive to this poor artizan. "They said: Is not this the carpenter's son?"

And again, contemplate, with Gerson, this King of Glory, this God of Majesty, who receives the profound homage of millions of angels: behold Him now, not only a partner in trade with Joseph, but also acting as a servant to Mary, in His lowly home at Nazareth; see how He lays wood on the fire, goes to fetch water at the neighbouring fountain, prepares the frugal repast, and takes part in the most humble and laborious offices of the house. How is it possible that Joseph, on witnessing such unparalleled humility and obedience, was not overwhelmed beyond the power of endurance with mingled feelings of confusion and rapture? Tobias fell prostrate on the earth, awe-stricken and beside himself, when the angel Raphael, who, under the form of a young man, had served him as a guide, revealed to him the secret of his angelic nature. But had not Joseph, who was so deeply impressed with a sense of the awful majesty and adorable attributes of Jesus, his adopted son, far greater reason to feel profoundly humbled, when he beheld a God made man assume the form of a child, and render to him all those menial services which

only a child, or even the lowest servant, would be expected to perform for him?

Oh! tell us, blessed and happy saint, how often, penetrated with the most lively sentiments of respect and humility, you have said to this amiable child, when you beheld Him exhausted and panting from over-exertion and fatigue: "O Jesus! my son, you know what happiness it would afford me, could I have the privilege of obeying rather than that of commanding you. I humbly reverence your obedience; and my authority over you affords me satisfaction only inasmuch as it has pleased you to give to the world the glorious example of the Creator obeying His creature. If you will permit, O my God! we shall exchange places, and you will command as master of this house." But, in order to console Joseph, Jesus may doubtless have said to him what He afterwards said to St. John the Baptist: "Be resigned, cherished guardian of my childhood; be resigned, and refuse not the honour which I render to you: it is fitting that you fulfil in my regard the duty of a father, and that I be subject to you as an obedient and respectful son: it is thus that we shall give to the world an example of all justice."

And is it not reasonable to suppose that, if in this mysterious subjection of our amiable Redeemer to St. Joseph, Origen points out a beautiful lesson on the respect and obedience which children owe to their parents, we may also add, that our Blessed Saviour, by honouring St. Joseph as His father, intended to leave a signal example to His great family, the Church, of the veneration which, in a special manner, it owes to the head of the "Holy Family." Had Jesus Christ passed only one hour submissive to the

commands of Joseph, that circumstance alone would have been sufficient to render this holy patriarch of the New Law more venerable than all the saints; how much more so, when Jesus has been pleased to live so long under his directions? Educated and provided with all the necessaries of life by St. Joseph, during five-and-twenty or thirty years, is it not natural that Jesus Christ should desire that all Christians might repay him in some degree, by their fervent and respectful homage, for the long and faithful services which this good father rendered to His adorable person?

Jesus Christ one day declared His wishes on this subject to St. Margaret of Cortona, in an apparition, in which, among other things, He recommended her to be specially devoted to St. Joseph, for the sake of the gratitude which He felt towards him, for having provided for His earthly wants with so much zeal and affection.

Those Christians should reproach themselves with unpardonable ingratitude, who neglect paying a tribute of honour and devotion to St. Joseph for the love of a God-Saviour. As for me, O my Jesus! I will follow Thy example; I will serve those whom Thou hast served; I will honour those whom Thou hast honoured; I will love those whom Thou hast loved with the tenderness of a son. O my sweet Jesus! by that profound humility which made Thee obedient to the smallest wish of St. Joseph, I supplicate Thee to grant to me, Thy unworthy servant, grace to devote myself from this moment for ever to the service of this great saint, in order to please Thee, since Thou Thyself hast given the first example of a tender devotion to him.

CHAPTER II.

Second motive for Devotion to St. Joseph—the Example of the Blessed Virgin.

JOSEPH, the patriarch of old, from his childhood was aware of the glorious career which he was destined one day to pursue. God showed him in a dream the two greatest luminaries in the heavens bowing down and paying him homage. In this respect, the first Joseph may be said to be the type or figure of the second; but, in the latter, the dream was more perfectly realised, when Jesus Christ, the true Sun of Justice, and Mary, that mysterious Moon which communicates her light to the Earth, being herself illumined by that glorious Sun, both most respectfully submitted to him as their chief, and were pleased to commit themselves entirely to his care and direction.

And again, a nearly similar apparition occurred to another prophet (*Hab.* iii.)—the sun and moon appearing stationary. Now, where shall we find this wonderful prodigy realised, if not in the “House of Nazareth”? That was truly the orbit of this Sun and Moon; but of themselves they were motionless: it was the voice of St. Joseph alone that put them in action. We have already seen the Sun—viz., the Son of God—obeying the commands of Joseph as His father: we shall now see the Moon—viz., the Mother of God—subjecting herself to St. Joseph, whom she loved and revered, not only as her husband, but also as her father and protector.

The moon bears a closer resemblance to the sun than any of the stars : Mary, in like manner, has been, of all the saints, the most perfect copy of the virtues and the conduct of the Man-God. Now, among other examples that she left us, we find the respect which she paid to St. Joseph. He was her spouse : as such she deferred to and obeyed him in everything, on every occasion. Yes, holy Virgin ! though the conjugal tie had never made you dependant on him, you would, nevertheless, have always rendered him the duties of a most respectful handmaid, were it but to conform to the example of your Divine Son.

It is true that Mary fully appreciated the transcendent gifts which adorned the spouse who had been chosen for her by the Holy Ghost Himself, and this with her was a powerful motive for honouring him ; but when she afterwards witnessed the Son of God respecting him as a father, serving him as His lord, listening to his directions as to a master, who can describe the inconceivable degree of ardour which this new stimulus imparted to the habitual feelings of love, esteem, and veneration which she had always entertained for her dear spouse ? She vied as it were with Jesus in rendering him honour and respect ; but not being able to attain to His humility, it being the humility of a God, she found in her very inability itself a motive for confusion, and this holy confusion she offered to St. Joseph, as some faint expression of the desire she felt to render him what she conceived was due to him from a spouse and a handmaid, in imitation of her Divine Son.

Albert the Great bestows a magnificent title upon St. Joseph : he calls him the protector and patron of Mary (patronus Virginis) ; because this saint was

the defender of her honour and her virginity, when, as yet ignorant of the mystery of the Incarnation, but anxious to preserve her reputation, he resolved to leave her secretly, though with feelings of bitter anguish. And this was certainly the most delicate mode of proceeding, the most advantageous to Mary; but he defended her more strenuously still, when an angel came to inform him of the mysterious conception of the Son of God made man in her chaste womb: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (*Mat.* i. 20). By these words, the angel, or rather God Himself, declared Joseph the protector and guardian of that admirable purity, which, by a divine privilege, united in the same person the flower of virginity and the fruit of maternity: this the Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget (*Rev.* book vi. chap. 59). Thenceforth, and throughout all ages, Joseph had become the irrefragable vindicator of Mary's virginity against the dark calumnies which heresy and the spirit of error were one day to vomit forth, in order to obscure its matchless lustre and integrity. The ever-blessed Virgin, seeing her holy spouse inflamed with a zeal not inferior to that of the cherub who, armed with a fiery sword, guarded the terrestrial Paradise, bestowed upon him herself the title of the glorious defender of her virginity, as she also intimated to St. Bridget. And it was but just that she should; for, although she had conceived by virtue of the Holy Ghost, it was nevertheless necessary that, on the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, she should have the co-operation of St. Joseph, if we may so speak, in the character of a protector,

in order to preserve both her own and her blessed Son's reputation in the eyes of the world. As the heart of Mary is a fountain of grace, and is no less rich in tenderness, who can conceive the depth of her gratitude towards her beloved spouse, and her eagerness to testify it by acts of the most respectful submission and the tenderest affection? Suffice it to say, with St. Bernardin of Sienna, that Mary bestowed on Joseph the most precious gifts that a virgin spouse and a virgin mother could offer him. As a virgin spouse she gave him her own heart, her immaculate heart, the living sanctuary of the Divinity, in order that, being enriched with this treasure, he might thenceforward be entitled to say: "I am the spouse of Mary, and as such, Mary's heart, the most tender and amiable of all hearts, is mine." As a virgin mother, Mary consigns Jesus to the arms of her spouse—Jesus, the tree of life, the fruitful source of every blessing. Oh! with what ardent love did not this Divine Child inflame the heart of Joseph! Oh! who can conceive the rapture of holy joy which transported his whole soul at these delicious moments, during which that God, who constitutes the felicity of the blessed, smiled on His adopted father as He reposed in his arms? Was not Joseph then master of greater treasure than either Heaven or Earth could boast? In these three words, "Jesus, my son!" he said infinitely more than St. Thomas, when he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" more than the seraphic St. Francis, when a thousand times repeating, "My God and my all!"

It is true he was not the father of Jesus according to the flesh, but this did not lessen his authority over Him, nor the right to which he was entitled of

calling Him his "Son," for was he not the spouse of the mother of Jesus? And even independent of all that, did he not prove himself a father, and more than a father, by devoting himself to Him with a love purer and more ardent than ever parent felt for a child. Accordingly, it was by this beautiful, this exalted title, that Mary designated him on all occasions. "Your father and I have sought you." It was not to Jesus only that Joseph proved a tender and anxious parent, for he acted towards Mary herself more like a father than a spouse or master; and hence it was that Mary, admiring the virtues of a spouse so humble, pure, and charitable, considered it at all times her duty to love, honour, and serve him with all the deference of a spouse, or rather with the devoted tenderness of a fond child towards the best of fathers. She knew that the Eternal Father was with her spouse, that He directed him in all his actions, as it is written of the patriarch Joseph. She knew that he had constituted him His vicar or representative, the guide and protector not only of the Man-God, but of His mother also; for this reason did Mary, like an obedient and respectful daughter, resign her entire liberty into the hands of Joseph, that he might dispose of it as he pleased. Accordingly, when the term of Mary's pregnancy was accomplished, she immediately set out on her journey to Bethlehem, in compliance with the wishes of St. Joseph; for the same reason did she accompany him afterwards into Egypt with the new-born Babe, and pursue her wearisome pilgrimage through barren wilds and sandy deserts. Joseph remained at least seven years in that idolatrous land; not even once did Mary inquire into the cause of so long and

painful an exile. Joseph informs her of the order to return to Judea. Mary follows him as a meek lamb would follow its shepherd; she deems him more worthy than herself to receive the commands of Heaven from angels. In short, Mary was ever more prompt and punctual in the execution of her husband's will, than are the stars in performing their appointed revolutions.

In speaking of an empress, in whose praise he was writing, Pliny the Younger said: "A princess, whose husband is a hero such as Trajan, can do nothing more glorious or more honourable to herself than to obey him." You then, O mighty Empress of Heaven! would you unveil to us, as to your beloved daughter St. Bridget, the secrets of your bosom, oh! might we not hear you repeat to the glory of your spouse those short but comprehensive words: "I did not deem it beneath me to prepare and serve up the repast for my holy spouse; I gloried in rendering him the most trifling and humiliating services" (*Rev.* b. vii. c. 35). That is to say, O admirable Virgin! that in the house at Nazareth, you, as well as Jesus, placed all your glory and happiness in obeying Joseph in all things: the slightest intimation of his wishes was a command in your estimation, his will was the rule and guide of all your actions, thoughts, and affections. In short, it was your highest ambition to descend to the lowest and most servile offices, in order to testify to Joseph the extent of that affection so justly due to the best of husbands; to show your respect for so zealous and honourable a protector, and your readiness to obey one whom you might well designate the most tender of fathers.

Such was the homage which the Mother of God

rendered when on Earth to this privileged being, whom the same God had chosen to become His adopted father, by making him her spouse. But Mary's devotion to him did not rest here. From the exalted throne which she now occupies in high Heaven, she condescends so far as to continue her services, by the earnest invitations with which she solicits all Christians to declare themselves the servants of St. Joseph. Who is there not acquainted with the facts, that in the sacred house of Nazareth at Loretto, where during his life she had given him so many testimonies of respect and obedience, she recommended F. Balthazar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, her devout servant, to take St. Joseph for his special friend and patron (*See Life of this Religious*, c. vi.). She it was also who induced another of her servants, of the Order of Premontré, to change his name of Herman into that of Joseph (*Surius*, April 17). It was our Blessed Lady also who commanded a Moorish slave at Naples, about to be baptized, to take the name of Joseph, in memory of her dear spouse (*Segneri*, c. v.). It is also mentioned in St. Teresa's life, that the Queen of Heaven presented her with a precious gem of inestimable value, as a token of gratitude for the honour which she had procured to St. Joseph, by diffusing so widely the devotion to him throughout the entire Church. She also opened the Heavens, and displayed to the admiring gaze of St. Gertrude, the incomparable brilliancy of the throne which her glorious spouse occupied, and also how reverentially the saints in Paradise bowed down before him in homage (*Rev.* v.).

If Mary has left us such striking examples of respect and obedience to St. Joseph; if now she can

no longer serve him in Heaven where he reigns with her in glory, and she so clearly intimates her wishes to her devout servants, that he should be loved and honoured for her sake, and in imitation of her holy example on Earth; what Christian can refuse to cultivate a devotion to him? It is true that all Christians, with more or less fervour, profess that, after Jesus, Mary holds the first place in their heart; but how can they flatter themselves that this is the case, when they are so indifferent towards him whom Jesus and Mary so tenderly loved?

It is to the piety of Anne Kertai that Temore, the place of her birth, is indebted for the introduction of the devotion to St. Joseph. It was at the time remarkable for devotion to the Blessed Virgin. What chiefly contributed to establish the devotion to St. Joseph, was a chapel which Anne erected in his honour in the church of the Jesuits. But remark the consideration that chiefly inflamed her zeal on this occasion. The love and veneration of the inhabitants towards the Blessed Virgin was in her eyes a diamond of inestimable value, but which would require an enchasing in gold in order to heighten its brilliancy; and with this design did she successfully exert all her zeal in order to inspire the pious inhabitants with a devotion to St. Joseph, similar to that which they entertained for the Blessed Virgin. Some may raise objections to this on the grounds of its dividing the affections, since what is given to one is so much taken from the other. Imaginary fear! Experience proves, that uniting the devotion to St. Joseph to that of the Blessed Virgin, far from lessening, will only serve to increase it. We do not deprive Jesus of our hearts by sharing them with Mary,

and in like manner our affection for Mary does not suffer by sharing it with Joseph. The mutual love which united Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, made this holy family as it were but one heart and one soul: “*cor unum et anima una.*” And thus it is that the devotion to all three will be established in our hearts.

St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi says, that St. Joseph takes a particular care of those who combat under Mary’s standard; and another great spiritualist adds, that it is impossible to have a real devotion to St. Joseph, without having the same for Mary, his immaculatespouse; so true it is that these two amiable spouses bear a resemblance to two lyres, which, being tuned in unison, produce the most perfect harmony. Honour St. Joseph, then, dear reader, and fear not to do too much for him, since the respect testified for the husband does honour to the wife in virtue of their mutual affection; and also, according to human laws, there exists between husband and wife a community of goods and of honours.

CHAPTER III.

Third Motive for this Devotion—the Example of the Holy Angels.

WHEN the holy patriarch Jacob became an ocular witness of the glory of his beloved son, he forgot that he was his father, and prostrating himself before Joseph’s sceptre, paid him the most respectful homage (*Heb. xii.*). Oh! what sentiments of respect and veneration must not the father’s example have

awakened in the breasts of his other children towards a brother become so truly great—so worthy of being revered. Perhaps, pious reader, after contemplating the Son of God and the Mother of God at the feet of Joseph, you will deem it superfluous that you should be asked to witness the honours and the services which he also received from the angels. You will naturally say : What wonder is it that the lords and princes of a great court should honour a personage on whom their sovereign had conferred even regal favours? I agree with you perfectly. However, if what I am going to say will add nothing to the praise or merit of our saint, and may so far be judged superfluous, yet surely, as far as your devotion is concerned, it cannot be considered so ; since the example of the holy angels—those faithful servants of Jesus and Mary—will be a further stimulus to your exertions in the service of this great saint.

The blessed spirits were influenced by two powerful motives in the honour which they rendered to St. Joseph : the first, that he equalled them in purity and other virtues ; the second, that he surpassed them in dignity. Our Divine Master, in speaking of virgins, compares them to angels : “ Erunt sicut angeli Dei in cœlo ” (*Mat. xxviii.*). And most true it is that virgins, though enveloped by the corruption of the flesh, are nevertheless happily enabled to preserve, in all its pristine beauty and perfection, a flower which, though a native of Heaven, has become naturalized to our earthly soil, where it flourishes with unfading brilliancy, and wafts its delicious fragrance to the throne of the Most High. Hence it is that an appellation is so often appropriated to virgins, which, properly speaking, belongs only to

the blessed spirits. Thus the title of "Angel" is given to an Aloysius Gonzaga, to a Stanislaus Kostka, to an Alexis, a Casimir, an Eleazar, and many others. But with far greater justice may St. Joseph be compared to the angels, or even styled an angel, he being a saint, the perfection of whose virginal purity as far surpasses that of all the other saints, as does the lily, the king of flowers, surpass the pink, the ranunculus, or the violet.

It is worthy of remark, that the virginity of St. Joseph was considered, at the period in which he lived, as an inconceivable and unheard-of circumstance, since he it was who first made it compatible with the state of marriage. From the union of these two virginal hearts, that super-angelic purity, which constituted the principal merit and glory of Mary and Joseph, received an additional degree of lustre.

Permit me to say it, O ye blessed spirits! yes, forbid me not to say, that the purity of St. Joseph was far superior to yours. The vision of the angel Gabriel in human form, and the words of his salutation, made the Queen of Heaven fearful (says St. Ambrose). Never did the aspect of her holy spouse produce this fear—this agitation; she lived and conversed with him in the most perfect confidence. I hesitate not, then, to say, with St. Francis de Sales, that St. Joseph surpassed in purity the most exalted order of spirits, during the twenty or thirty years that he spent in the society of the Mother of God. Could it be otherwise, when so intimately connected with this virgin mother, who was purity itself?

The eyes of Mary (says Gerson) distilled a sort of virginal dew, which purified the hearts of those on whom it fell: "*Quidem ex oculis virgineus vos spirabat.*"

And as this celestial dew fell abundantly every day on the heart of Joseph, open to all its sweet influence, every day added new lustre to the purity of the holy patriarch. It is not, then, astonishing that Joseph became, so to speak, a pure spirit, and that he merited to be numbered among angels rather than men, as a celebrated interpreter of Holy Scripture says: "Fuit ipse angelus potiùs quam homo" (*Cornel à L. in S. Mat.*).

If, as it appears, St. Joseph, in virtue of his virginal purity, does not rank inferior to the angels, neither does he for the prerogatives to which his inconceivable sanctity has entitled him. It befits not my feeble pen to transport you to the Heavenly Jerusalem, there to behold Joseph in possession of the power and functions of each of the celestial hierarchies: other pens have undertaken the task, and, penetrating the Heavens, we behold Joseph equal to the angels-guardian of the first order, having no less a charge than an Infant-God; equal to the archangels in communicating to Mary the orders of Heaven; equal to the powers in manifesting to the Egyptians the omnipotence of the Word Incarnate, who overturned their idols; equal to the virtues as ruler of the Holy Family; equal to the principalities and the dominations in commanding the King and Queen of Heaven; equal to the thrones as having himself served as a throne to the child Jesus when he held Him in his arms; equal to the cherubim in penetrating the most profound mysteries of Incarnate Wisdom; equal to the seraphim in elevating himself upon the wings of love to the highest degree of contemplation, in order to repose sweetly in the bosom of this Divine Master, whom the blessed spirits incessantly behold with

ever-increasing rapture : "In quem desiderant angeli prospicere" (*l'et. i.*).

As resemblance is said to produce love, is it, then, surprising that the angels should so highly venerate and esteem one who, though born of Earth, has, by a special privilege of grace, been raised to an equality with them in purity and holiness? Wherefore it was not without a mysterious signification that the angel, in his first apparition to St. Joseph, called upon him by name, "Joseph, Son of David." We see in Holy Writ, that it was not usual with the angels to act thus when announcing the decrees of Heaven to men. "Son of man, stand upon your feet," said the angel to Ezechiel; "Rise quickly," said he to St. Peter; and to St. John the Evangelist, "Write what you see." The angels seem to make no account, or else to be unacquainted with the names of these illustrious personages. But how differently do they act with regard to St. Joseph; they call him by his own name, and greet him as a prince of the royal house of David: "Joseph, Son of David." This magnificent title belonged to him, and was given him by the angels as a mark of distinction justly due to one who, for sanctity alone, stands unrivalled among the children of men. Again, they were proud to claim him as a fellow-citizen, even while he yet dwelt in this land of exile; and it might truly be said that St. Joseph, though dwelling corporeally upon Earth, was in spirit an inhabitant of Heaven, and enjoyed a foretaste of its inconceivable bliss. This is the sentiment of our holy mother the Church, who thus apostrophises St. Joseph: "Admirable destiny!—even in this life equal to the angels—you participate in their happiness—you enjoy the intimate presence of God"

(*Hymn to St. Joseph*). Do we find in the books of the New Testament a man so frequently honoured with the visits of angels as St. Joseph? According to the Gospel he received at least four. Speaking of this, a celebrated interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures proposes the question—why our Lord, who had Himself warned the Magi not to return to Herod, should employ the ministry of an angel in order to apprise Joseph of that wicked prince's evil designs regarding the Divine Infant. In answer to this, he (Sylveira) says that our Divine Lord, though actually living with St. Joseph, was pleased to make known His will to him by angels, in order to afford the latter an opportunity of conversing with a saint for whom they entertained so profound a respect, and who was the object of their sincere affection. It may also appear strange that the angel, in revealing to St. Joseph the cruel projects of Herod, should have merely given him an order to fly into Egypt, without specifying the duration of his sojourn there; and when appearing to him again, after the lapse of seven years, he tells him simply to return to Judea, without directing him to any particular place where he might dwell in security with the Holy Family. Why three visits, when one would have been sufficient? Why abandon Joseph to a state of such painful anxiety? The same interpreter will inform us: "So desirous was the angel to repeat his visits in order to admire the greatness of St. Joseph's faith regarding such profound mysteries, and the perfect tranquillity of his soul amidst such perplexing occurrences, that he preferred the satisfaction of seeing him more frequently to the glory of fully enlightening him in a single apparition."

We may also remark with St. Chrysostom, that the angels always visit St. Joseph in his sleep. And why, he inquires, do they not present themselves before him in public, and while awake, as to Zachary and the shepherds? If they wished to honour Joseph, would it not be more glorious to him, that they should visit him with a pomp and retinue worthy of the celestial court? In the eyes of the world, those visits are always considered the most flattering and honourable, which are attended with the greatest pomp and display. Yet who will believe it? the angels honoured St. Joseph infinitely more by appearing to him and disclosing to him the secrets of God in the obscurity of a dream, than they could have done by the most brilliant and imposing demonstrations of respect; for thus they proved how fully convinced they were of the firm and lively faith of a man who, in order to believe the mysteries which they announced to him, needed not to behold with his corporeal eyes those heavenly ambassadors, all radiant with light and glory. Thus speaks St. John Chrysostom, as also Theophylactus.

The learned and pious Cardinal of Cambray, in ecstatic admiration of St. Joseph's great faith, thus apostrophises him: "O Joseph! O the most just of men! How couldst thou have believed so promptly, so firmly, a mystery so new, so profound, and hitherto unexampled?" But for my part, I am even more astonished at the promptitude with which he executed the orders thus intimated to him, difficult though they were; and I will say to him, with another interpreter: "Be pleased, O glorious saint! to inform me why the angels, who make it a duty to honour your virtues and prerogatives, should not

render you some exterior demonstrations of respect, in the intimation of their orders? Why not give you time to make preparation for your flight and long exile?" "Take the child and its mother;" thus was the command given. "Fly into Egypt;" thus was announced the manner of performing it. "Remain there until you receive further orders;" thus was intimated to him the duration, or rather the uncertainty of the duration, of his exile, which he had no time either to think of or prepare for. Why not give St. Joseph even a few days' notice? While awaiting an answer, behold! St. Joseph is already on his road, as prompt in obeying the angel's order as was the latter in executing the commands of the Almighty.

It may be asked, what respect did the angel here testify for St. Joseph? for is it not more honourable to command than to obey? To this question I reply, that on this occasion the obedience which St. Joseph practised, is more worthy of admiration than the authority with which the angel was invested; and it was with a view to his exaltation that the latter commanded him, for he knew how superior Joseph was to the weaknesses and pride of human nature, and what a brilliant example of angelic obedience he was about to exhibit to the world: for, as the angels obey God with promptitude and decided love, so did St. Joseph; he hears the order, rises up, and departs. Oh! what a subject of joy to the angel, to witness this miracle of obedience! In former days, the angels were constrained to use violence with Lot in order to oblige him to quit Sodom—they were obliged to take him by the arm and put him forcibly outside that sinful city. With Joseph it

was quite the reverse—a word, a mere sign, was sufficient to make him quit his native land: he neither delays nor deliberates, but obeys in silence (*Hom. St. J. Chrys. Octave II. Innocents*).

If the angels so highly honoured St. Joseph, whom they esteemed their equal in purity, fidelity, and obedience, what must not their reverence for him have been when they saw him raised to a dignity far above that of all the celestial hierarchies? Which, I do not say of the angels, but even of the seraphim, have been ever invested by the Almighty with His paternity? To which of them has He ever said, “You are my son” (*Heb. i.*); or what is yet more wonderful, “You are my father”? Joseph alone was deemed more worthy than all the blessed spirits to bear a name which seemed incommunicable. The angels were commanded to adore on Earth the Son of God incarnate. Joseph was the only one entitled to say to the angels, when uniting his adorations of the Divine Infant to theirs: “To you it belongs, ye holy angels, to adore and praise Him; He is your Lord, your Creator, and your God; but I can do more, for it is my happy privilege to caress Him, to kiss Him, to hold Him in my arms, because He is my son” (*St. Cyprian*). Were the angels filled with envy on beholding St. Joseph invested with so sublime a dignity? No, for they are not capable of so base a passion; but their sole ambition was, if possible, to outdo one another in testimonies of esteem, respect, and affection for a *father* so highly favoured by God.

How many saints have there been who were honoured and served by angels, merely because they were considered by them in the light of “servants

of God." Père Segneri informs us that they acted as infirmarians during seven days to a holy hermit in his last sickness; as physicians to Thimatheus; as couriers to Anthony; as labourers to Isidore; as sailors to Basilides; as pilots to the old man whose marvellous history has been transmitted to us by St. Paulinus. What multiplied attentions and services, then, must they not have lavished upon one who was not only the friend of God, but the prince of the friends of God; on one who was not only a saint, but who holds the first rank among the saints; on one whom an Infant-God so often called by the sacred name of "father"! When the angels beheld Joseph wearied and exhausted with manual labour, to which he was obliged to apply himself in order to provide for the wants of a God hidden and despised, humbled and utterly destitute—who had not even whereon to rest His sacred head—did they not esteem it a duty, as well as a personal consolation, to testify their respect for him by descending in multitudes from Heaven, in order to assist him in his workshop in carving the wood, or else to aid him in the performance of his domestic duties in the "House of Nazareth"? They would also attend him on his journeys to serve as guides, or perhaps solely for the pleasure of enjoying his society, and of witnessing his affectionate solicitude for the "Incarnate Word" (*Sylveira*).

A religious who was favoured with revelations on the mysteries of the "Divine Infancy," the venerable sister Margaret of the Most Holy Sacrament, was one day asked by her superior whether she had received any lights relative to St. Joseph? In reply, she mentioned, among other things, that St. Joseph

frequently worked as a journeyman, Providence always providing for him that description of work which was best suited to his peaceful disposition, his spirit of silence and prayer; and that the angels, who everywhere accompanied him, considered it their duty to labour with him; but that his whole attention was too much engrossed by the adorable child Jesus from the moment he first beheld Him, as likewise with His blessed mother, to admit of his taking particular notice of the presence of the angelic band.

It may be easily conceived that the humble Joseph was not without some concern on seeing angels ministering to him, and sharing in his labours; he would have preferred conforming himself in all things to the Divine Child, who, though the King of Angels, nevertheless came on Earth, not to be served, but to serve, and to devote Himself to every species of labour and fatigue. However it may be, it is sufficient for the glory of our saint to have shown, that from his resemblance to the angels in his functions and his virtues, he merited their respect and services; but his glorious title of the "Father of Jesus," rendered him still more worthy of them. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name above them" (*Heb. i.*).

Permit me to say, O glorious St. Joseph! that, so convinced am I of your pre-eminence above all the celestial spirits, that, in order to render you due praise, I desire, with one of your devout panegyrists, that all the members of my body were converted into so many tongues. Ah! at least I wish to love and serve you in union with Jesus and Mary, and to render you a tribute of praise and homage with the angels.

CHAPTER IV.

Fourth Motive for the Devotion—the Example of the Church.

THE chaste Joseph, when at Pharaoh's court, had fallen a victim to the perfidy and passion of a base calumniator: he was condemned, and cast into a darksome dungeon, where he passed many tedious years. But at length he was liberated, and attained the highest pinnacle of glory at the palace of the Egyptian monarch; like the sun, which, lost to our vision for a moment by the intervention of a transient cloud, bursts forth again with redoubled splendour.

Somewhat similar was the position in which the glorious spouse of Mary was placed. For the lapse of several ages, his existence seems to have been forgotten and almost unknown to Christianity; but the thick mist in which the efforts of heresy had enveloped him has at length been dissipated, and, like another sun, he has issued forth with a brighter lustre to illuminate the ecclesiastical firmament.

And true it is that our holy mother the Church seems in these latter ages anxious to indemnify him, by the most solemn homages, for those which she has hitherto been compelled to withhold from him. Coincident with her birth was her conviction that St. Joseph was a just man—a perfect man—the true spouse of the Mother of God, and the father of Jesus Christ by his love and solicitude for that blessed Child: but as too brilliant a light is only calculated to dazzle persons of weak sight, so the Church, by a

wise disposition of Providence, judged it expedient, during a certain period, to throw a veil as it were over the illustrious sanctity of the blessed St. Joseph. It was not without deep regret that she witnessed how the heresiarch Cerinthus, having had the temerity to fix his feeble eyes upon this beauteous sun, was so dazzled and blinded by it, as to fall into a mortal error against faith. He took upon him to elevate St. Joseph to such a height as to make him the natural father of Jesus Christ, whilst an infallible revelation attests, that he is only the reputed father. But by this proposition the innovator derogated from the personal dignity of Jesus Christ, as also of His blessed Mother. He deprived the latter of one of the most brilliant gems in her diadem, namely, her immaculate virginity, and her Divine Son of the glory of having been miraculously conceived immaculate by the operation of the Holy Ghost. However, the Church, anxious to eradicate this poison, the effects of which might have proved so fatal to the faith of her children, took the precaution, among others, of not favouring at that particular period the devotion to St. Joseph, fearing it might only increase the evil.

This is the opinion of a learned theologian. A celebrated modern writer—Father Paul Segneri—adds, that it was for this reason that the Church affected to forget St. Joseph, to place him with the crowd, and even apparently to give a preference to several other saints, who assuredly did not equal him in merit. Such was the prudent reserve which the Church found it expedient to adopt, in order to preserve the real dignity of the sacred person of the Man-God from being again impugned.

Another author, who quotes the authority of St. Gregory of Nazianzen, directs our attention to the fact, that, as the early Church refrained from developing fully all the points of its faith concerning the adorable perfections of the Holy Ghost, the invisible spouse of the Blessed Virgin, until the belief in the divinity of our Lord had previously taken deep root in the breasts of the faithful; neither in like manner did she judge it necessary to direct their piety to the devotion to St. Joseph, the visible spouse of Mary, until the virginity of that blessed Mother had been fully acknowledged and revered by the whole universe.

But now, that the darkness of past errors has been dissipated, and that the opposite truths shine out with all their lustre in the broad daylight of Christianity, the holy Church makes it an essential duty, as I have remarked above, to render to St. Joseph the most solemn homages and every possible mark of respect and veneration: thus as it were to indemnify him for those which she withheld from him in the early ages of faith. Not content with erecting altars, oratories, and temples in his name—with forming confraternities and religious orders under his patronage—establishing several feasts in his honour—giving him a Mass and Office, inserting in this Office new hymns, in which his praises are resounded in a strain so sublime, so exalted, that in the absence of aught else, they would of themselves be sufficient to give an adequate idea of the many virtues and privileges which entitle him to a rank far above all the other saints; but remark, moreover, that by appropriating one of the days of Lent for the celebration of his principal festival, she has imposed on innume-

rable preachers the pleasing duty of solemnly setting forth every year the glories and privileges of St. Joseph throughout the Universal Church : so that on this day, and nearly at the same hour, his praises may be heard to resound from every pulpit in Christendom !

Can this be said of any other saint ? No. It is true that the panegyric of any other saint may be heard on the day appointed for keeping his festival ; but only in some particular town, and in a certain particular church. It is not so with the feast of St. Joseph, for it is the feast of every city, town, village, and church ; and wherever a Lent-preacher is to be met with (and remark that in one city alone may be found thirty or forty), will also be heard a panegyric pronounced upon St. Joseph ; so that from the East unto the West, wherever the Redeemer's name has been made known, there will also be celebrated the name of His beloved guardian, thus verifying the words of Ecclesiasticus, " He who watches over the safety of his Lord, shall be glorified."—" Qui custos est Domini sui glorificabitur." The intention of the Church clearly manifests itself by the singular favours she has conferred in our days to those practices calculated to inspire devotion to St. Joseph, and by the encouragement she gives to the associations enrolled under the banner of the glorious patriarch. After the practices whose special end is to honour our Lord and His Holy Mother, we shall find none more powerfully patronised than those which relate to St. Joseph. It is not too much to say, that every class of society, clergy as well as laity, vie with each other in extending devotion to this illustrious saint.

But in the honours which the Church now-a-days renders to this great saint, she is not alone actuated with a view of indemnifying him for having been deprived at an earlier period of those public tributes of veneration which he has since received at her hands; she wishes also to evince her gratitude towards him for the many signal favours for which she feels herself indebted to him.

She well knew that, as St. Bernard says, St. Joseph had co-operated more fully, by the sanctity of his life, in the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, than had all the ancient patriarchs by their sighs, tears, and merits; she knew that, in one sense, his virginity had proved more fruitful, than had the numerous posterity of our Saviour's ancestors; she knew that great saint had been in a certain sense necessary to the accomplishment of the greatest of our mysteries, not only to shield our Divine Lord from dishonour on coming into the world, but likewise (as St. Thomas concludes) in order to establish throughout the Universe the belief in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and in the Virginity of Mary; she felt that if the family of Tobias had reason to be so grateful to the angel Raphael, who had been a guide and protector to that dear son on his journey, the holy family of all Christian nations owes, with much greater reason, a far deeper debt of gratitude to St. Joseph, who had been the guardian of the infancy of the Incarnate God, its father and its saviour. The Church knew that our Joseph had not, like the viceroy of Egypt, amassed provisions of material corn to support the subjects of an idolatrous monarch, but that he had prepared and preserved to the faithful of Christ the wheat of the Elect, the true

bread of children, the living and vivifying bread, the food of immortality, the germ of salvation. She knew that if St. Thomas's incredulity had contributed to establish that fundamental principle of our faith, the resurrection, on a more solid basis than before, so also should St. Joseph's reasonable doubt, on seeing Mary's mysterious maternity, serve to confirm the early Christians in their belief in the mystery of the Incarnation, which is the source and principle of all the other mysteries. Was she not also fully sensible that the functions of guardian and foster-father to the child Jesus, and of protector of both mother and Son, must have cost St. Joseph many an anxious hour, much toil and labour, which he endured with the most devoted love and constancy?

In acknowledgment of so many invaluable services, she feels bound to make a due return of gratitude to so munificent a benefactor, and therefore invites all her children to unite with her in rendering him all those testimonies of honour, veneration, and affection, to which he is so justly entitled. When Pharaoh wished to testify his gratitude to Joseph, the patriarch of old, he not only elevated him above all the lords and nobles of his court, he moreover invested him with supreme authority throughout his dominion. Our holy mother the Church has not acted less nobly towards Joseph, the foster-father of the Redeemer. "O Joseph!" she exclaimed, "behold, I place in your hands my entire family, and the authority with which I have been invested: with what perfect security may it not repose under the guardianship of him, to whom the Eternal Father had confided His well-beloved Son! Jesus, your adopted Son, is my spouse; Mary, your immaculate spouse, is my mother and my

queen; and you, O great saint! will ever be my father and protector. In adopting the Saviour of the world as your Son, you have likewise adopted all His brethren, viz., all the faithful who are my children. All the services which you have rendered to Jesus Christ, you have also rendered to His brethren. Surely no homage that I can present to you will ever be worthy of your merits, and of the great benefits you have conferred on me. I shall proclaim to the whole world that you are the glory of the angels and saints, the invincible shield of Christianity, the glorious conqueror of Hell, the chief negociator of our salvation, the advocate of sinners, the refuge of the afflicted, the help and comforter of the dying; in short, to name all your titles, prerogatives, and praises, in two words, I have only to say, that you are the father of Jesus and the spouse of Mary!

“O blessed father of Jesus! be thou also the father of the Church. Unite with your chaste spouse in protecting my children, and in defending them against the impiety of those Herods who use their utmost efforts to destroy in their souls the faith and love of Jesus. What a subject of exultation is it not to me, to hear your august name, O glorious Joseph! resounding throughout the Universe in unison with those of Jesus and Mary! What an enchanting concert will not the Churches militant and triumphant form, when with united voices they shall celebrate the virtues which have entitled you to the supreme bliss of being the worthy spouse of the ‘Queen of Virgins.’” “Te Joseph, celebrent agmina Cœlitum, Te cuncti resonant Christiadum chori; Qui, clarus meritis, junctus est inclytæ Casto fœdere Virgini” (*Brev. Rom. Feast St. Joseph*).

CHAPTER V.

Fifth Motive—the Devotion to St. Joseph is a Source of Benedictions to the entire Universe.

It is a remark of St. Bernard, that no sooner had the real greatness and the many admirable qualities of the patriarch Joseph rivetted the attention of the Egyptians, than all, as if by a stroke of magic, hastened to him, as to a friend and father. The second Joseph, whose goodness so far exceeds that of the former, has obtained even greater influence with, and is paid infinitely more respect by, the subjects of the King of Heaven, especially in these latter ages, when at length the lustre of his virtues shines forth so brilliantly, and his extraordinary merits and prerogatives receive their due tribute of admiration and praise; there is no heart now, not even the most savage, which does not acknowledge his empire. The devotion to St. Joseph is not merely confined to Europe, which is the centre of religion; it has also been diffused throughout Asia, Africa, and America. In Turkey, we find that the Latins and Greek Catholics have signalized themselves by their devotion to St. Joseph. If we penetrate into the deepest recesses of the forests of North America, we shall hear the first among the Iroquois who there received baptism, proclaiming joyfully, that he has the honour of being called by the name of Joseph. Let us cross the seas, and enter upon the burning sands of Paraguay: we shall there meet a multitude of newly-made Chris-

tians, who have all assumed the name of the spouse of the Mother of God ; and we shall be filled with admiration on beholding the devotion to this great saint wafted so prosperously by the breath of the Holy Spirit over the ocean, and even passing beyond those boundaries almost inaccessible to the bravest conquerors, in order to take possession of the hearts of this hitherto barbarous people. Following the Apostolical Missionaries into Tonquin, we may fearlessly enter its harbours, for they are all under the protection of St. Joseph ; his name was taken by the first of the Tonquinese who received baptism. But let us still proceed farther, and even to the most remote parts of India, and everywhere, in the East as in the West, our hearts will exult with joy, because everywhere we shall hear the name of Joseph.

Should we now wish to ascertain why the devotion to this great saint should have made so many conquests in so short a space of time, in those countries where idolatry before reigned, we may easily do so, by the reflection, that as our Lord would in infancy be conducted into Egypt by St. Joseph, so it would also appear that St. Joseph's powerful intercession was requisite in order to introduce the faith of the Redeemer into all infidel nations, and as the "child Jesus," while travelling under St. Joseph's protection, once overturned the Egyptian idols, He still continues, in our days, to employ the arm of His beloved father in order to achieve their destruction.

And may it not have been in order to reward St. Joseph for all the privations and hardships which he had to suffer in a barbarous country, that God has rendered his name so glorious amongst idolatrous nations ? And was it not also for the purpose of

manifesting to the world this saint's ardent zeal for the salvation of the Egyptians, who once offered an asylum to Mary and her Son, that the Eternal Father has placed in his hands the conversion of several infidel nations? In St. Joseph's journey from Judea into Egypt, with the Infant-God in his arms, St. Hilary sees a type of the zeal and fervour of the holy apostles, who, for the instruction and regeneration of mankind, have carried into all parts of the Universe the Divine Gospel and the precious blood of their Divine Master. St. Anselm likewise observes, that St. Joseph, whose heart burned with holy zeal to see the entire Universe subjugated to the amiable yoke of our Blessed Saviour, represented those preachers who, like valiant captains, cease not to recruit and enlist new soldiers in the service of Jesus Christ. God was pleased then, it appears, to do greater things for our saint than the king of Egypt had done for the ancient patriarch: the reward of his zeal and of his labours was, first, the conversion of a great number of idolatrous nations, such as the Egyptians, effected by his special intercession, and finally, their perseverance in following the light of faith, owing chiefly to the efficacy of his powerful protection.

It is, however, a subject of great joy to the Church, to see the success of her project, which was, to diffuse the devotion to St. Joseph throughout the Universe, in order that in him she might find a patron filled with zeal for the propagation of the faith. It is natural to suppose that none should be more zealous for the preservation of the laws than those who make them: if, then, our holy religion, while yet in its infancy, in the person of our Lord, was entrusted to

the care and guardianship of St. Joseph, is it not reasonable to believe, that according to the different states in which it has been since found, Divine Providence specially designs that it should rise, increase, continue, and flourish, in virtue of the merits of the saint who, according to St. Bernardin of Sienna, had the keys in his hands to open the doors of the New Law, and to close those of the Mosaic ?

There is nothing of which the Church is so jealous as her faith : she considers it as the bulwark or fortress which sustains the kingdom of her Divine Spouse. It is not that she fears that the powers of Earth or Hell shall ever prevail against her, supported as she is by the infallible promises of Jesus Christ ; but she fears the snares which are laid for her beloved children, and wishes to make use of all her energies, in order to shield them from the enemies by whom they are surrounded. For this reason it is that she has recourse to the patronage of those saints who have most successfully defended or propagated her faith, such as the princes of the apostles, Saints Peter and Paul. According to Gerson, the devotion to St. Joseph chiefly dates its rise from a period in which the afflicted Church beheld with painful solicitude an awful schism forming in the West, which, like a furious tempest, shook and tore it to pieces from all quarters. A council was held at Constance, for the purpose of counteracting its baneful influence.* In a discourse pronounced by Gerson, in

* The Council of Constance, convoked by John XXIII., was opened on the 5th of November, 1414 : it lasted till the month of April, 1418. The schism, caused by several pretenders to the Papacy, had already desolated the Church for a long time. It was on the 8th of September, 1416, that Gerson, deputy and

presence of that august assembly, among other means calculated to calm the tempest, and effect a total reformation of morals, he proposed that of a special invocation of St. Joseph, and of promoting as much as possible the practice of devotion to him, hoping that this new devotion might prove a beacon-light to guide all hearts to peace and holiness. He proceeded to state that this great saint, having been the guardian and instructor of Jesus Christ, acts in the same capacity towards all Christians: he then dilated with much zeal upon the glorious prerogatives of St. Joseph. His discourse was heard with the deepest interest, and applauded by the entire Council. But, had it not also the sanction of the Holy Ghost Himself? It was Gerson who inspired the people of the

Chancellor of the University of Paris, as well as envoy-extraordinary to the Council of the King of France, pronounced the discourse of which mention has been made. He took for his text this passage of St. Matthew: "Jacob genuit Joseph virum Mariæ; de quâ natus est Jesus, qui vocatur Christus." To the praises of Mary he joined those of St. Joseph, and exhorted the Fathers of the Council to have recourse to them both, in order to obtain, by their intercession, the peace of the whole Church. "Ita Mariæ meritis et intercessione tanti tamque potentis imperiosi Josephi et si fas est dicere; quodam jure jubentis; Ecclesia reddatur unico viro et certo summo Pontifici; Spouso suo vice Christi." Gerson, in the same discourse, puts forth a remarkable opinion about the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. Although he acknowledges that the Immaculate Conception of Mary is not formally declared in the Scriptures, nevertheless he proposes to the Council to examine whether this privilege ought not to be made an article of faith. Then extolling the prerogatives and dignity of St. Joseph, he speaks of his sanctification from the womb of his mother, of his perpetual virginity, of his assumption into heaven, of the place he there occupies above the other saints, though below Mary. He even goes so far as to propose the

West with the desire of honouring St. Joseph by a particular devotion, and with a firm conviction that his prayers and merits would avert all the evils with which the Catholic faith was threatened, and would likewise draw down a multitude of graces and favours upon the faithful. Thus speaks Isidore de Lille, a pious and learned Dominican.

Since the Church has had so many remarkable instances of the efficacy of St. Joseph's protection, especially in what regards faith, which holds the first place among her best treasures, she uses all her influence to extend and establish the devotion to this great saint, as being a powerful instrument either to prosecute the propagation of that faith, or to maintain it in all its purity. In this she is also actuated

institution of a feast in honour of his immaculate Birth. We do not venture to pronounce upon the doctrine of Gerson; we will only say, that it certainly merits consideration from the circumstances under which he spoke. The legates of the Holy See, more than twenty cardinals, two hundred bishops, and an immense number of doctors, were there present; far from contradicting this learned theologian, they listened to him with respectful attention, and applauded the proposition he made of invoking the aid of St. Joseph. A year had hardly elapsed before peace was restored to the Church; the whole Catholic body were reunited under Martin V., who was elected in the place of Gregory XII., Benedict XIII., and John XXIII., at the forty-first session, November 8th, 1417. The celebrated Cardinal Peter d'Ailly, Archbishop of Cambray, assisted at this Council. He, as is well known, vied with Gerson, his former disciple, in devotion to St. Joseph. He had been Chancellor of the University of Paris, and became later legate to Martin V. If it be true what several authors affirm, that the progress of the devotion to St. Joseph dates from this Council, we shall recognise with pleasure the part these two illustrious children of France took in a cause so gloriously maintained afterwards by such a number of celebrated personages.

by another motive not less noble, viz., the particular advantage it is so well calculated to afford each of the faithful individually. Accordingly, she seems to look upon St. Joseph as the universal protector of all Christians, and entitled as such to the confidence and imitation of all, without exception, whatever be their age or condition.

It is no wonder, then, that Isidore should style him the "Patron of the Church militant." But this subject deserves to be treated of separately and more at length in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Sixth Motive—St. Joseph is a Powerful and Beneficent Patron to all Christians.

THE Angelical Doctor teaches, that God has been pleased to give some saints a special power to protect under certain peculiar necessities, and others he has endowed with gifts of various kinds; but to St. Joseph He has been more generous—He has made Him as it were His plenipotentiary, His treasurer-general, that he may have it in his power to assist and relieve every description of person, whatever may be his necessity. Thus it is that St. Theresa speaks, and her testimony is worth a thousand others, because it is founded upon her daily experience of the power of this glorious saint. This is likewise the sentiment of the Church, since she asks through his intercession what she cannot of herself obtain—

“That what we cannot obtain may be granted to us through his intercession,” &c.

King Pharaoh, on being presented with the petitions of his subjects, referred them to Joseph of old, whom he hath invested with absolute authority over his court and kingdom. “Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.” (*Gen. xli.*). The King of Heaven has invested St. Joseph with an authority no less unbounded. The other saints, it is true, have great power, but only to a certain extent. They intercede and supplicate as dependants, but they do not rule as masters; whereas St. Joseph, to whom at Nazareth Jesus and Mary had lived submissive, as being the father of one and husband to the other, now that he dwells in the House of God, where his titles, far from being obscured, shine out with incomparable brilliancy, may doubtless obtain all he desires from the King his Son and the Queen his spouse. His influence with both is unbounded, and as Gerson says, “he rather commands than supplicates.” Hence it may be seen, how powerful is the intercession of St. Joseph!

But can anything contribute more powerfully to render St. Joseph’s intercession infallible, than the goodness of his own heart, and the paternal love and interest which he feels for all those who ask his prayers? Jesus Christ Himself, in becoming his Son, filled his heart with a love infinitely more tender than that of any ordinary parent, and in doing so, His views were not confined to Himself alone, but it was also His design that this love should be extended to all mankind, who are the adopted children of St. Joseph. It is also in allusion to this truly paternal love, that the venerable Mother St. Joseph,

the first French Carmelite, says, that God, in appointing our glorious saint to be a father to His only Son, desired that he should also be a father to His adopted brethren, to the mystical members of the Divine Child; and that with this intent He communicated to him, as a special favour, an extraordinary degree of tenderness in their regard, which engages him to watch over their interests with more devotion and solicitude than an affectionate parent over the interests of his own children (*See her life*). And surely is not St. Joseph's family a numerous one? yes, even as great as that of Jesus Christ Himself, for it comprehends all the children of the Catholic Church. Yes, my divine Jesus! You who have so often reposed upon Joseph's bosom, therein to enkindle a furnace of love proportioned to his paternal obligations, have you not also given him a heart far greater and more capacious, than was that which you gave to Solomon, the wisest of kings? For this reason, then, let all the children of the Holy Church hasten to have recourse to the paternal heart of St. Joseph; they may depend on finding it large enough for the reception of all, and sufficiently tender to impart to each an abundant share of its choicest favours. As the wide vault of the Heavens encompasses all parts of the Earth, so is the beneficent influence of St. Joseph's heart felt by all without exception, for it is generous enough to embrace the whole world in its affections.

But now, previous to inviting the faithful individually to place themselves under the protection of a patron, at once so powerful and so benign, I will have recourse to yourself, blessed St. Joseph! father full of goodness! Deign to purify my tongue and my

heart, give me not a mere scholastic eloquence, but impart to my words a grace and an unction that will persuade, even by their very simplicity, persons of every age, rank, and condition, to choose you as a father and protector.

CHAPTER VII.

Seventh Motive—the Interest Virgins, Interior Souls, Religious, Artizans, Married Persons, those engaged in the Instruction of Youth, Priests, and even Sinners, have in taking St. Joseph for their Patron.

IF, according to St. Cyprian, virgins be the most honourable, as well as the favourite portion of the family of Jesus Christ, it follows that this tender parent watches over them with a peculiar love and attention to their minutest interest. You then, Christian virgins, are those whom I would, in the first place, exhort to make choice of the glorious St. Joseph as your father and protector, for to his care was entrusted the divine innocence of the Infant Saviour, and the integrity of the Queen of Virgins. The latter, as above-mentioned, found in St. Joseph a zealous defender of her virginity against the poisonous blast of heresy, which strove to tarnish it. “He is my most zealous champion against those who question my virginity,” said she to St. Bridget (*Rev.*). St. Francis de Sales assures us, that St. Joseph’s purity surpassed that of the angels of the first hierarchy; for, as he says, if the material Sun

can perfect the dazzling whiteness of the lily in a few days, who can conceive the admirable degree of perfection to which St. Joseph's purity was raised, when it was exposed, not for a few days only, but for the space of thirty years, to the rays of the Sun of Justice and of the mystical Moon, which derived from that Sun all her splendour? Does not all this, ye Christian virgins, teach you to appreciate the power of the great patron, to whom I now recommend you? Imitate those young virgins of the town of N., who make an annual offering of a bouquet, composed of those flowers which are considered to be the emblems of purity, to St. Joseph, in order to obtain through his prayers the grace of preservation from whatever might in the least endanger that precious treasure.

And all you who are anxious to lead an interior life, do you seek a prudent guide, an enlightened spiritual father? Place yourselves with perfect confidence under the direction of a saint who, even during his mortal life, enjoyed, like the angels themselves, the most intimate communication with God in holy prayer and contemplation, according to the Church Office (*Hymn to St. Joseph*). For this reason it is, that retreat-houses are usually placed under the protection of St. Joseph; and likewise St. Theresa assures us, that never was there known a person truly devoted to St. Joseph, who did not make great progress in the spiritual life. It is a well-known fact, that the venerable father Claudius de la Colombiere, and Louis Lallemand (Society of Jesus), who were specially devoted to St. Joseph, and had chosen him as their model and patron, attained a high degree of prayer and union with God. With the

help of so powerful and zealous a friend, who may not hope to advance, and make new progress daily in the paths of perfection?

The world may be compared to a vast ocean, agitated by a tempest, and the most dangerous rock within its bosom is the marriage state, for scarcely a day passes on which we do not therein witness some new wreck; whence it follows, that those who are exposed to such a danger, would require a good pilot to conduct them safely into port; and where meet a more experienced one than our glorious saint, who, in accordance with the designs of God, embraced that state, and is a model for those who desire to render it conducive both to their temporal and eternal welfare? Scripture informs us that the patriarch Joseph brought down the benediction of Heaven not only on Potiphar's household, but also on Pharaoh's court and the entire kingdom. This prosperity continued as long as the king followed the advice of Joseph, his prime-minister; but when, on the accession of a new sovereign, Joseph was dismissed from office, how changed was the scene! "A new king over Egypt that knew not Joseph," (*Exod. i.*).

Does not this metaphor clearly indicate to all Christian families, that God will give a special blessing to those who duly honour the second Joseph, who is as superior to the former, as the substance is to the shadow? You then, heads of families, if you wish your children to be well brought up, if you wish to ensure peace in your married state, fidelity in your servants, patience in tribulations, in a word, if you desire that your household should be well regulated, and live in peace and tranquillity, place it

under the protection of him whom God has constituted head of the Holy Family: "Quem constituit Dominus super familiam suam." Let Joseph be your counsellor, your steward, your example; God Himself has appointed him such for those who are engaged in the married state.

The motives which should induce religious families to choose St. Joseph for their patron, are not less urgent than those which oblige seculars to do so. And, in truth, where do we meet the founder of any religious order, whose example stands forth with greater lustre than that of St. Joseph, as an adept in all the virtues to which religious persons are bound by vow, and as an excellent master of holy poverty, chastity, and obedience. The humble homestead of Nazareth furnishes a complete model of the monastic or common life, and a living rule of the active and contemplative. Many religious houses, as we can prove by authentic facts, have experienced the efficacy of St. Joseph's protection, either when in want of subjects, or in time of scarcity. Religious houses will be always dear to a saint who sees in them a lively representation of the life which Jesus led during thirty years at Nazareth, in obscurity, and under the yoke of obedience.

St. Joseph exercised the trade of a carpenter, according to the opinion of the Holy Fathers: he is, therefore, considered not only as the patron of all the members of that profession, but likewise of artizans in general, who should take him as a model of all the virtues which should adorn their state of life. Whom will they find more holy than him, whom the Son of God was pleased to call by the endearing name of father? Let them reflect for a moment on the

manner in which he sanctified his laborious occupations. He lived a life of faith, and therefore the love of riches and a thirst for gain held no sway in his heart ; he deemed his labour sufficiently repaid, when they procured him the means of providing for his family. What admirable honesty and integrity he displays in all his dealings ! How indefatigably assiduous at his work, but yet without for an instant losing sight of Jesus, his divine pupil ; like the angels, who, while watching over us with the tenderest vigilance, cease not to contemplate that infinite and adorable Being, in whom all their beatitude consists ! Ah ! if they, whose avocations resemble those to which St. Joseph devoted his time when on earth, would only learn from him the precious art of uniting prayer with labour, they would make a twofold acquisition ; for a blessing would accompany their exertions, even in this life, and a happy eternity would be their reward, exceeding great, in a better world. All artizans, then, have a particular claim on his protection, which they should daily invoke, and insure for themselves and families, by a faithful imitation of the virtues which are suitable to their state, and of which he has given them so illustrious an example.

Those who are charged with the instruction and education of youth, are particularly called upon to choose St. Joseph as their guide and patron in an employment so useful to religion ; since having been the master and guardian of the Most High, he has received from Him peculiar graces and favours for the protection of youth. The young Tobias had an angel as his guardian, but Jesus would have no other guardian than St. Joseph. Hence, the brothers of the Christian schools, and many other societies, have

placed their schools, especially those for young children, under the special protection of St. Joseph. The interpreters of Scripture and ecclesiastical writers, have given him various names, as those of father, foster-father, guardian, guide of Jesus Christ. All these functions which he fulfilled towards an Infant-God, he still continues to exercise in favour of those colleges and seminaries which are entrusted to his paternal vigilance. Superiors and masters may learn of him the charity, prudence, vigilance, and the other virtues, requisite for governing well. On their side, likewise, the pupils may receive from the Child Jesus the most perfect examples of docility, respect, and love, towards their masters and superiors.

Our saint may also be considered the model and patron of prelates, and of all ecclesiastics in general. And we, priests of the Most High God, we, who so often, though unworthy, touch the body of Jesus Christ! should we not singularly love and venerate the privileged being, who, as representative of the entire human race in general, and of the ministers of the altar more particularly, was the first who received the Redeemer into his arms, and who offered up to the Eternal Father, at the circumcision of the Divine Infant, the first effusions of that most precious blood which was afterwards so profusely shed on Calvary, to wash away the sins of the world, and which is daily offered by the hands of God's sacred ministers for the living and the dead? The real presence of Jesus upon our altars, should inspire us with the same sentiments with which St. Joseph was animated on beholding Him, a helpless little babe, lying on straw in the manger. On these occasions, when it becomes our awful duty to convey to the house of mourning the