

**DIVINE FAVORS  
GRANTED TO ST. JOSEPH**



The Death of Saint Joseph,  
"Patron of a Happy Death"

# DIVINE FAVORS GRANTED TO ST. JOSEPH

by

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Translated by M. C. E. From  
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*"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.  
And she shall bring forth a son: and thou  
shalt call his name JESUS. For he shall  
save his people from their sins."*

—Matt. 1:20-21

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### PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH, PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

**O** MOST powerful patriarch, St. Joseph, patron of that universal Church, which has always invoked thee in anxieties and tribulations; from the lofty seat of thy glory, lovingly regard the Catholic world. Let it move thy paternal heart to see the mystical spouse of Christ and His vicar weakened by sorrow and persecuted by powerful enemies. We beseech thee, by the most bitter suffering thou didst experience on earth, to wipe away in mercy the tears of the revered pontiff, to defend and liberate him, and to intercede with the Giver of peace and charity, that every hostile power being overcome and every error being destroyed, the whole Church may serve the God of all blessings in perfect liberty. Amen.

# DIVINE FAVOURS GRANTED TO ST. JOSEPH.



## CHAPTER I.

WHO IS ST. JOSEPH, AND WHY DOES HE DESERVE  
SO MUCH HONOUR ?

THE Holy Ghost has willed to make the genealogy of the glorious St. Joseph known to us so exactly, that we need only read the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke to be acquainted with all his ancestors. By birth he is a prince of the royal house of David; his ancestors are the patriarchs, the kings of Juda, the great captains of the people of God, the most illustrious among the sons of men. Yet this descendant of David was reduced to obscurity, and lived a poor and humble life.

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The Evangelists would appear to give Joseph two fathers; but the contradiction is only apparent. St. Luke says he was the son of Heli, who, however, died childless; while St. Matthew calls him the son of Jacob, because, according to several commentators, Jacob, brother of Heli, espoused his sister-in-law Esta as the law of Moses commanded, by whom he had Joseph, who was thus the son of Jacob by nature, and the son of Heli according to the law.

The poverty of the family and the custom of the country obliged Joseph to learn a trade. We do not know positively if he worked in wood or in iron, since the holy Fathers are divided on this point. The more general opinion is, however, that he was a carpenter. St. Justin, in his dialogue with Triphon, adds that the Child Jesus acted as His adopted father's little apprentice, assisting him to make yokes and ploughs.

It is a pious belief of some authors that St. Joseph was sanctified in his mother's womb.\*

\* Gerson, *Serm. de Nativ. glorios. V.M. et de Commendatione virginis Sponsi ejus Joseph*, Considerat. ii.—Isidor. Isolan., *Summ. de donis S. Joseph*, p. 1, c. ix.



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Suarez does not go so far. Still we must allow that the partisans of this opinion support it by solid reasons, which have a great appearance of truth.

There can be no doubt that this great Saint was a virgin. Cardinal St. Peter Damian affirms it so positively that he seems to make it an article of faith.\* Some learned authors even hold that by a special inspiration of God he made the vow of virginity. Such is the belief of the great chancellor Gerson, of St. Bernardin of Siena, of Suarez, and of several others.† In any case we cannot doubt that he had lived a pure angelical life when he united himself by chaste bonds to the Virgin Mary, his one and only spouse.

A secret inspiration from heaven caused both Mary and Joseph to contract this alliance, while adoring in their hearts the impenetrable counsel of the great God. Mary was in

\* 'Et ne hoc sufficere videatur ut tantummodo virgo sit mater, Ecclesiæ fides est ut virgo fuerit et is, qui simulatus est pater' (S. Petr. Damian., *Epist. 1 ad Nicol. Rom. Pontif.*, c. iii, quæ et opuscul. xvii.).

† Gerson, *Serm. cit.*, Considerat. iii.—Isidor. Isolan., *Summ.*, p. 1, c. xiii.—Suarez, *De Incarnat.*, p. 2, disp. 8, sect. 2.—S. Bernardin., *Serm. de S. Joseph*, art. 2, c. i.—S. Thom., p. iii, q. 28, a. 4 ad 3.

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her fifteenth year ; the age of Joseph is not known so exactly, tradition being silent on the subject. The opinion that he was about eighty years old is without reasonable grounds, and is not held by theologians, the most esteemed of whom think that he was neither an old man nor a youth, but in the prime of life, between thirty and forty. There are many reasons in support of this opinion, which is now generally held.

Shortly after this virginal marriage had been celebrated with due solemnity, it pleased God to send the Archangel Gabriel to Mary, that he might announce to her the Mystery of the Incarnation, and explain to her that in becoming mother of her Creator, she should not cease to be a virgin: As the mystery was not at once revealed to St. Joseph, he was in sore perplexity, until the Angel of God appearing in a dream, reassured him, by explaining that the fruit of Mary was the work of the Holy Ghost.

The life of the two spouses in this angelic marriage resembled two stars, mutually enlightening each other by their gold and silver rays, without ever coming in contact.

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Later, I shall speak of the happiness of this holy life, and with what plenitude of celestial favours God enriched this divine household. For the moment, I shall content myself with showing how the dream of the first Joseph was verified in the second.

The former Joseph saw himself, in a dream, adored by the sun, the moon, and eleven stars. Only later on in Egypt did he understand this vision, when his father, his mother,\* and his brethren, prostrate at his feet, adored him as the saviour of the land. The son of the patriarch Jacob was, however, only a type, destined to enhance the splendour of that other Joseph, whom God delighted to make so great, whom Jesus Christ the true Sun of Justice honours as His father, whom Our Lady, called in the Canticles beautiful as the moon, reveres as her lord and spouse, whom the Angels and Saints, who are the stars of heaven, venerate as foster-father and guide of that Infant God, Whose servants they esteem themselves happy to be.

The date of St. Joseph's death is uncertain;

\* Not Rachel, who died at the birth of Benjamin, but Bala, Rachel's servant, who was Joseph's nurse, and was like a mother to him (Liran., Tostat. apud Tirin.).

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we know only that it took place before the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.\* What an entrancing sight to behold him expire, one hand in that of Jesus, the other in that of Our Lady; breathing forth his blessed spirit on the bosom of the Saviour God! To die thus is not to lose life but to overcome death.

Some authors believe, and with reason, that Joseph was among those Saints who, on Ascension Day mounted up to heaven, body and soul, with Jesus Christ. Who indeed deserved more to accompany Jesus in His triumph, than he who accompanied Him so lovingly in His exile in Egypt, and during the laborious pilgrimage of His holy life? We may therefore piously believe that as Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived united upon earth, bearing the same sufferings, so they now are reunited, body and soul, partaking the same glory. Such is the belief of the devout St. Bernardin of Siena, and even of Suarez, whose usual reserve gives great weight to his

\* Gerson, *cit. Serm.*, Considerat. iii.—Isidor. Isolan., *Summ. S. Joseph*, p. 4, c. i.—Suarez, *De Incarnat.*, p. 2, disp. 3, sect. 2.

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opinion in this case.\* It is true that faith teaches us nothing on this point ; but devotion speaks loudly, and has on its side weighty reasons, and great authorities.

\* S. Bernardin., *Serm. de S. Joseph*, art. 3.—Suarez, *De Incarnat.*, p. 2, disp. 8, sect. 2.