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J.M.J.

QUEMADMODUM DEUS ENCYCLICAL OF POPE Pius IX ON DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH

*To Our Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs,
Primates, Archbishops, and other Ordinaries,
in Peace and Union with Holy See.*



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*On December 8, 1870, The Sacred
Congregation of Rites promulgated the
following decree, which communicated
the decision of Pope Pius IX to declare
St. Joseph Patron of the Universal
Church, and which also raised St.
Joseph's feast of March 19 to the rank of
double of the first class.*

As almighty God appointed Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, over all the land of Egypt to save grain for the people, so when the fullness of time had come and He was about to send to earth His only-begotten Son, the Savior of the world, He chose another Joseph, of whom the first had been the type, and He made him the lord and chief of His household and possessions, the guardian of His choicest treasures.

Indeed, he had as his spouse the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom was born by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord, who deigned to be reputed in the sight of men as the son of Joseph, and was subject to him.

Him whom countless kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw but conversed with, and embraced in paternal affection, and kissed. He most diligently reared Him whom the faithful were to receive as the bread that came down from heaven whereby they might obtain eternal life.

Because of this sublime dignity which God conferred on his most faithful servant, the Church has always most highly honored and praised blessed Joseph next to his spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble.

And now therefore, when in these most troublesome times the Church is beset by enemies on every side, and is weighed down by calamities so heavy that ungodly men assert that the gates of hell have at length prevailed against her, the venerable prelates of the whole Catholic world have presented to the Sovereign Pontiff their own petitions and those of the faithful committed to their

charge, praying that he would deign to constitute St. Joseph Patron of the Church. And this time their prayer and desire was renewed by them even more earnestly at the Sacred Ecumenical Council of the Vatican.

Accordingly, it has now pleased our Most Holy Sovereign, Pope Pius IX, in order to entrust himself and all the faithful to the Patriarch St. Joseph's most powerful patronage, has chosen to comply with the prelates' desire and has solemnly declared him Patron of the Catholic Church.

He has also ordered that his feast on March 19th by henceforth celebrated as a double of the first class, without any Octave, however, because of Lent. He arranged, moreover, that a declaration to this effect be promulgated through the present decree of The Sacred Congregation of Rites on this day sacred to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, the most chaste Joseph's Spouse. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

A faithful foster-parent and guardian

"This is the general rule that applies to all individual graces given to a rational creature. Whenever divine grace selects someone to receive a particular grace, or some especially favoured position, all the gifts for his state are given to that person, and enrich him abundantly.

This is especially true of that holy man Joseph, the supposed father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and true husband of the queen of the world and of the angels. He was chosen by the eternal Father to be the faithful foster-parent and guardian of the most precious treasures of God, his Son and his spouse. This was the task which he so faithfully carried out. For this, the Lord said to him, 'Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.'

A comparison can be made between Joseph and the whole Church of Christ. Joseph was the specially chosen man through whom and under whom Christ entered the world fittingly and in an appropriate way. So, if the whole Church is in the debt of the Virgin Mary, since, through her, it was able to receive the Christ, surely after her, it also owes to Joseph special thanks and veneration.

For he it is who marks the closing of the old testament. In him the dignity of the prophets and patriarchs achieves its promised fulfilment. Moreover; he alone possessed in the flesh what God in his goodness promised to them over and again.

It is beyond doubt that Christ did not deny to Joseph in heaven that intimacy, respect, and high honour which he showed to him as to a father during his own human life, but rather completed and perfected it. Justifiably the words of the Lord should be applied to him, 'Enter into the joy of your Lord.' Although it is the joy of eternal happiness that comes into the heart of man, the Lord prefers to say to him 'enter into joy'. The mystical implication is that this joy is not just inside man, but surrounds him everywhere and absorbs him, as if he were plunged in an infinite abyss.

Therefore be mindful of us, blessed Joseph, and intercede for us with him whom men thought to be your son. Win for us the favour of the most Blessed Virgin your spouse, the mother of him who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit through ages unending. Amen."

A reading from the sermons of St Bernardine of Siena (Sermon 2, On St Joseph)