**33-DAY CONSECRATION TO ST JOSEPH**

**SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

"Why do I need St Joseph as my spiritual father when I already have God - Abba Father”?

"There is but one fatherhood, that of God the Father, the one Creator of the world, of all that is seen and unseen. Yet man, created in the image of God, has been granted a share in this one paternity of God (Ephesians 3:15)

Saint Joseph is a striking case of it, since he is a father, without fatherhood according to the flesh. He is not the biological father of Jesus, whose Father is God alone, and yet he lives his fatherhood fully and completely.

To be a father means above all to be at the service of life and growth. Saint Joseph, in this sense, gave proof of great devotion.” Pope Benedict XVI

Why did God entrust into Joseph’s custody ‘his most precious treasure'?

Particularly when Jesus was a vulnerable young child. One can argue that if God wanted to, he could easily send many legions of angels to protect His Son. Just as He could have done so when Jesus was being tried and crucified. But such is not the plan of God. Such is not His way. No raw display of power nor conquering through fear and intimidation but rather gentle persuasion through freedom of choice and love. And we know that love is a sacrifice.

In Fr Calloway’s book and video, he had explained the dual nature of Jesus - the divine and the human nature. St Joseph was chosen to stand in the place of the Heavenly Father according to the demands of Jesus’ human nature. God the Father doesn’t have a human nature. Every time Jesus saw St Joseph, heard him speak, watched him work, or witnessed his chaste love for Mary, the humanity of Jesus witnessed a perfect reflection of the Heavenly Father. Saint Joseph is the shadow of the Heavenly Father; the earthly image of his Heavenly Father.

Why is consecration to St Joseph applicable / relevant to women as well?

Jesus was the first to entrust himself in the care and guidance of Joseph and Mary where he grew in wisdom and stature before God and men. We come from two-parent families; It is God's design that every child has a right to a father and a mother. Both complement one another.

When God created Man, He said it is not good for Man to be alone. I shall give him a Help-Mate, an ezer – a life partner of equal dignity, for God made Woman not from the Head nor the Foot but from the side near to his heart so Man & Woman as husband and wife – they complete each other. You as your husband’s ezer can help and support him to acquire more of the virtues and attributes of St Joseph.

What can I learn from St Joseph?

On servant leadership - Joseph has the heart of a servant as he lovingly and faithfully served Mary and Jesus. Can we not ask him to teach us to serve in humility and graciousness? St Joseph persevered and endured his trials and challenges stoically; seeking always to fulfil God’s will, even when he does not have the full big picture. He gave himself totally and unreservedly to Mary and Jesus, placing their needs and interests before his; choosing always to be in the background while preparing both Mary and Jesus for the trials that are to come when he can no longer be with them.

On chastity and treating one another with dignity and respect.

Self-mastery over our passions apply to both men and women, young and old, married or otherwise. As spouses and as God's gift to each other, let's support each other in this endeavour to always treat each other with respect, dignity and reverence. Again, that's also how we should be treating our brothers and sisters for the opposite of love is not hate but to view and use the other as an object. Let us seek to look at one another through the interior gaze of peace and with the purest of intentions.

"You don’t have to wait to be old or lifeless to practice the virtue of chastity. Purity comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love. Joseph had a young heart and a young body when he married Mary, when he learned of the mystery of her divine motherhood, when he lived in her company, respecting the integrity God wished to give the world as one more sign that he had come to share the life of his creatures. Anyone who cannot understand a love like that knows very little of true love and is a complete stranger to the Christian meaning of chastity." - St. Josemaria Escriva

St Joseph is a humble carpenter - a craftsman and worker just like us. He is also a brother, a disciple, a husband and a father. What we seek to emulate and learn from Saint Joseph are his virtues - how he is creatively courageous in the face of adversity and strife; how he keeps in tune with God through constant prayer; even as he sleeps; he is obedient - obedience is listening deeply to God. And requires trust. Doesn't Joseph get anxious and does he not fret and worry? Of course, he does. But even in his fears, when he does not have the full big picture, he leans on God and lets God have the final say. He is prudent - always seeking to make the right decisions by God. While he is patient to wait on God for directions, he does not procrastinate - he acts swiftly and decisively. How else would he have protected the Holy Family and took care of them while on the run to a foreign country [Imagine having to be a refugee and migrant overnight!] Being a just man, a man of integrity, having patience, fortitude, as well as having a heart of gold - he places the needs of others before himself - being poor, a refugee, a migrant, having endured great hardships; gave him empathy to the poor, afflicted and those in hardship. In short, St Joseph is relevant to young single men and women as well as to married men and women and parents and grandparents. He is the Protector of the Universal Church.

Are we over-glorifying St Joseph over and above God?

Actually, in this 33-day study, Jesus is the central message; He is our Saviour and Redeemer; only Jesus can bring us home to our Father in Heaven. We can be awed by St Joseph but everything we learn about St Joseph must:

1. Lead us to a closer relationship with Jesus and

2. Help us understand more of the nature of God the Father and his plan for the salvation of the world. [If we look too narrowly in our study of St Joseph, invariably we will get uncomfortable and think we are turning St Joseph into a larger hero than he is; which I can tell you, St Joseph himself will not be comfortable for in everything he has placed Jesus and Mary ahead of himself and like John the Baptist, they must increase while he decreases. Joseph did what he did for the love of Abba Father, Jesus & Mary. When one actor's role is done, he must exit the stage. God is the author and script writer. So, in this consecration journey, we must reflect:

As I learn more about St Joseph, can I discover more what's God's plan for me? How can I be more like St Joseph in order that I may walk closer with Christ Jesus?

To reiterate; the hero in our story is Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah and it is only by his name that we are saved. Take this analogy: For sure when you go visit your BFF Jesus, you'll want to say Hello to his parents as well, Uncle Joseph and Aunty Mary. If you can't find Jesus, then you'll want to ask Uncle Joseph and Aunty Mary where's Jesus? Where did he go? His parents will probably tell you: Don't fret, we'll bring you to him. We lost him once for three days, a long time ago; but not to worry, we won't lose him again. So, if you need to look for Jesus in a hurry, come to us!