

THE REVELATION TO ST. JOSEPH **(SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH 2006)**

On Sunday, December 17th, we commemorate the Revelation to Joseph. It is interesting to note that there are twelve Josephs in the pages of Holy Bible. And all of them are good examples. Here Joseph in today's text is a person who was born in Bethlehem and worked as a carpenter and was a Davidic descend. He became engaged to Mary, a much younger woman, in order to serve as her protector. During his life, he was given the great responsibility of caring for and protecting St. Mary and her son Jesus Christ. He was chosen by the Eternal Father to be the faithful foster-parent and guardian of our Lord Jesus Christ. He carried out this task very faithfully.

Joseph truly is the silent figure of the New Testament; for instance, the Gospel does not record one spoken verse for Joseph. While St. Luke's Gospel focuses on the annunciation to Mary, today's Gospel of St. Matthew focuses on Revelation to Joseph. Here, Joseph was engaged to Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant. Remember that in Jewish society, when a couple became formally engaged by declaring their intent to wed before two witnesses, they were considered married as husband and wife. After one year, the groom goes to the home of the bride with great ceremony and brings her to his own home where they consummated the marriage and lived together as husband and wife. (This tradition is the basis for the parable of the five foolish bridesmaids).

We can see it in the Bible that the Angel of the Lord visited Joseph four times in dreams. The first time the Angel appeared to him in sleep, revealing to him that Mary had conceived a Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, and commanded that he take Mary as his wife and Jesus as his own son. After Jesus was born, an Angel again appeared to him in dreams and said: take the child and mother and go to Egypt in order to escape from Herod. After spending time in Egypt, an angel appeared twice more to Joseph in sleep and said: Arise, and take the child and the mother, and go into the land of Israel. Joseph obeyed the angel and traveled to Israel. However, he was afraid to continue the trip when he heard from an angel in another dream that their lives would be in danger under Archelaus, the ruler of Judea. They ended up living in a town called Nazareth. Thus, Jesus Christ was called a Nazarene. Tradition tells us that Joseph had the great honor to have died in the presence of St. Mary and our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Joseph's Day is a popular feast for Italians because in the Middle Ages, through his intercessions, he saved the Sicilians from a very serious drought. Therefore, in his honor, the custom is for all to wear red, in the same way that green is worn on St. Patrick's Day.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for the Sunday **(The Revelation to Joseph)**

Before Holy Qurbana

Genesis - **13: 1-11**
Isaiah - **1: 2-9**

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles: **I Peter** - **2: 11-17**
Epistles of St. Paul: **Galatians** - **1: 11-24**
Holy Gospel: **St. Matthew** - **1: 18-25**

With prayers,
Thomas Alex