



of Graces, could only agree to the joint entreaty of his mother and his wife, and decree that henceforward the feast of st Joseph should be observed as a public holiday throughout the kingdom. Then on 19 March 1661 the king consecrated France to st Joseph, as his father had consecrated it to Mary twenty-three years earlier.

Countless are all the graces gained through the intercession of st Joseph, especially in favour of married couples who, wishing to see their home gladdened by the presence of a child, address themselves to him with confidence and ask him to grant them the grace of fertility.

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### This Month's Heartfelt Matters

- It is hard to bring lukewarm souls nearer to GOD – let us pray for them!
- That parents may talk about the good GOD in their families – let us remember this, too.
- Let us once again try to cope with everyday life taking st Joseph by the hand – despite the many strains and activities – trying to calm down and meet GOD in some quiet moments: in our hearts – in our neighbour – in nature and definitely in the holy Sacraments. From this meeting we will build up strength, peace and quiet.

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With the blessing of st Joseph I say goodbye again and remain united with kindest regards,

*Sister Paula*



March 2011

## Lay Community of St Joseph

### Powerful Prayer

The month of March is always dedicated to st Joseph. He will listen to our intentions in a special way. But let us not only beg – let us also make him happy. We will please him particularly if we pay attention to the intentions of his immaculate Spouse – if we take seriously what she asked for at La Salette, Fatima, Lourdes and at so many other apparition sites. At genuine apparition sites her message was the same everywhere: „Pray the Rosary every day for peace of the world, for the conversion of sinners. Pray for the priests and the religious, do penance.“ – It means: „Repent and change your lives.“

Yes, man must change his life in order to escape judgment. He must change in his heart – live a pure life. Our prayer will hardly be powerful as long as we do not want to belong to GOD like a child, as long as we do not have the courage to apologize provided of course that we recognize our own faults. As long as we are yearning for worldly happiness and at the same time leave little or no room for GOD, we are not His mirror image. Without the firm foundation of faith and without the necessary confidence no one can be heard, no matter how much they will pray.

### The Present Situation in the World

Despite present-day prosperity there is so much distress and misery: physical and mental diseases – shattered nerves – unhappy

people – fear and suspicion torment them – a friend distrusts his friend and a brother does not trust his brother. – In the hearts of many people GOD disappeared a long time ago, even if many do not believe so. That is why there is no rest and no peace. All the unspeakable achievements cannot satisfy man – on the contrary they make him increasingly restless.

People are rushing from one distraction to the next. They throw themselves headlong into pleasure in order not to hear the sighing of the soul any longer and feel the restlessness of the heart. People no longer want to listen to the voice of conscience, and consequently to GOD. Their minds are continuously planning and speculating. Where is all this heading? Let us open our eyes, then it will not be hidden from us! Mary and Joseph wish to help. They want to be our lawyers – however we, human beings, often pretend to be deaf.

St Joseph is for us a tireless helper but also relentlessly urges us to perfection. He pushes us onto the way of love because that is the only way to GOD. He does not allow us to stand still or look back. We should rather always look forward keeping the target in sight. He calls for our great-heartedness – in asking, making sacrifices and forgiving.

## The Miraculous Spring of Mount Bessillon

On 7 June 1660, while Louis XIV, King of France, was at the Spanish border to meet the infant Marie-Therese, the new queen of France, a shepherd – one Gaspard Ricard d'Estienne – in the middle of a scorching day, took refuge with his animals in the shade of the trees of Mount Bessillon in the heart of the department of the Var, in the commune of Cotignac. He was suffering from thirst, as he had long since drained his flask. Suddenly, a man of imposing stature appeared before him and, pointing to a rock, said to him: „I am Joseph. Lift this rock and you shall drink.“ Gaspard estimated from its appearance the weight of the enormous rock, and replied simply: „I won't be

able to; it is far too heavy.“ But the mysterious visitor repeated his order. Then the shepherd approached and, to his great astonishment, overturned the rock at his first try. Another surprise: clear water began to gush out from the spot. Gaspard threw himself on the water as it flowed and drank eagerly. When he raised himself up to express both his astonishment and his gratitude, the man had vanished.

The shepherd ran to give the news to the village, but naturally nobody was willing to believe him. But in the end, some of the people decided to follow him to the place where everybody knew there would be no spring. On their arrival they shouted with joy, for the water was flowing in plenty, and had already been doing so for three hours. Everyone observed that the rock which Gaspard had shifted so easily by himself only moved with the combined efforts of eight men. Then it was that Gaspard became aware of the power given him from Heaven, and cried: „It was st Joseph that was there; it is certainly he who gave me the power to do it.“ All followed his example, threw themselves on their knees, and gave thanks to st Joseph. Afterwards the cures obtained by applying this miraculous water drew crowds to Mount Bessillon. The devotion to st Joseph, hitherto not existent in that region, took on an extraordinary expansion, and very quickly spread beyond Provence.

With the gifts that the pilgrims placed near the spring or sent to the inhabitants of Cotignac, the elders of the village decided, with the approval of the bishop of Frejus, to build over the spring a chapel in honour of st Joseph.

Little time elapsed before these facts became known as far away as Paris, where the name of Cotignac had remained significant since the time of Louis XIII's vow. Then took place the pious deed of Louis XIV on behalf of st Joseph. Probably struck by the mysterious coincidence between his entering France from Spain with her whom he was to marry two days later, and the apparition of st Joseph at Cotignac, the king, who already owed his very existence to Our Lady

