



therefore, the very image and example for all Christian families.

excerpt from the apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II
on the person of saint Joseph

This Month's Heartfelt Matters

- At the beginning of this year, let us place the children and youth in particular under the protection of st Joseph



At school hundreds of children gather together. The majority are without faith, without morals, without any culture, each one from a different background. The spirit of the world will not stop corrupting them. Times are hard on them making it virtually impossible for them to find their bearings. Let us spiritually take them under our wings.

At the turn of the year I wish everyone GOD's blessing. May your good resolutions be successful. And thanks for being faithful to st Joseph!

With kindest regards and with the blessing of saint Joseph I will surely remain with you in the new year,

Bother Paula



January 2015

Lay Community of St Joseph

The Ministry of Fatherhood

The apostolic writing of Pope John Paul II on the person and mission of st Joseph in the life of CHRIST and of the Church is so good and clear, that I will publish it here in serial form.

As can be deduced from Sacred Scripture, Joseph's marriage to Mary is the juridical basis of his fatherhood. It was to assure fatherly protection for JESUS that GOD chose Joseph to be Mary's spouse. It follows that Joseph's fatherhood – a relationship that places him as close as possible to CHRIST, to whom every election and predestination is ordered (cf. Rom 8,28f) – comes to pass through marriage to Mary, that is, through the family.

While clearly affirming that JESUS was conceived by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, and that virginity remained untouched in that very marriage, the Evangelists refer to Joseph as Mary's husband and to Mary as his wife.

And while it is important for the Church to profess the virginal conception of JESUS, it is no less important to uphold Mary's marriage to Joseph, because judicially

Joseph's fatherhood depends on it. Thus one understands why the generations are listed according to the genealogy of Joseph. ... St Augustine asks: „Was he by any chance not Mary's husband? ... Scripture states, through the authority of an Angel, that he was her husband. ‚Do not be afraid,‘ says the Angel, ‚to take Mary as Your wife, for the Child who is conceived in her is of the HOLY SPIRIT.‘ Joseph was told to name the Child, although not born from his seed. ‚She will bear a Son,‘ the Angel says, ‚and You will call Him JESUS.‘ Scripture recognizes that JESUS is not born of Joseph's seed, since in his concern about the origin of Mary's pregnancy, Joseph is told that it ‚is of the HOLY SPIRIT.‘ Nonetheless, he is not deprived of his fatherly authority from the moment that he is told to name the Child. Finally, even the Virgin Mary, well aware that she has not conceived CHRIST as a result of conjugal union with Joseph, still calls him CHRIST's Father.“

The Son of Mary is also Joseph's Son by virtue of the marriage bond that unites them: „By reason of their faithful marriage both of them deserve to be called CHRIST's parents, not only His Mother, but also His father, who was a parent in the same way that he was the Mother's spouse: in mind, not in the flesh.“ In this marriage none of the requisites of marriage were lacking: „In CHRIST's parents all the goods of marriage were realized: offspring, marital fidelity, sacramentality. The offspring being the LORD JESUS Himself; fidelity, since there was no adultery; sacramentality, since there was no divorce.“

Analysing the nature of marriage, both st Augustine and st Thomas always identify it with an “indivisible union of souls,” a “union of hearts,” with “consent.” These elements are found in an exemplary manner in the marriage of Mary and Joseph. At the culmination of the history of salvation, when GOD reveals His love for humanity through the gift of the Word, it is precisely the marriage of Mary and Joseph that brings to fruition in full “freedom” the “spousal gift of self” in receiving and expressing such a love. In this great undertaking which is the renewal of all things in CHRIST, marriage – it, too, purified and renewed - becomes a new reality, a Sacrament of the New Covenant. And thus we see that at the threshold of the New Testament, as already at the beginning of the Old, there is a married couple. But whereas Adam and Eve were the source of evil which was unleashed on the world, Joseph and Mary are the summit from which holiness spreads all over the earth. The SAVIOUR began the work of salvation by this virginal and holy union, wherein is manifested His all-powerful will to purify and sanctify the family – that sanctuary of love and cradle of life.

How much the family of today can learn from this! “The essence and role of the family are in the final analysis specified by love”. Hence “the family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in GOD's love for humanity and the love of CHRIST the LORD for the Church, His Bride”. This being the case, it is in the Holy Family, this original “domestic Church,” that every Christian family must be reflected. “Through GOD's mysterious purpose, it was in that Family that the SON of GOD spent long years of a hidden life”. It is,

