



a Priest. All wavering had disappeared, nay it had been forgotten, so far it was from my virginal heart. I had in fact understood that there was no reason whatsoever for hesitation or fear with regard to Joseph. My virginity entrusted to Joseph was as safe as a child in his mother's arms. But now, how could I tell him that I had become a Mother? I endeavoured to find suitable words to give him the news. A difficult task! ... In no way could I justify my maternity without saying: 'The LORD has loved me amongst all women and He has raised me, His Servant, to be His Bride.' ...

And while I was praying, the HOLY SPIRIT of whom I was full, spoke to me: 'Be silent! Entrust Me with the task of justifying you with your spouse!' (Cp. 'The Poem of the Man-GOD', chapter 18)

### This Month's Heartfelt Matters

- May st Joseph watch over our families, because they are full of restlessness and fuss. They are overburdened with duties, worries and noise – everything is a great strain to them. May he draw them to his heart and invoke the necessary strength for them.



With the blessing of saint Joseph, and with most heartfelt regards, ever obliged,

*Sister Paula*



July 2015

## Lay Community of St Joseph

### Joseph's Wonderful Fatherhood

In the Liturgy, Mary is celebrated as "united to Joseph, the just man, by a bond of marital and virginal love." There are really two kinds of love here, both of which together represent the mystery of the Church – virgin and spouse – as symbolised in the marriage of Mary and Joseph. "Virginity or celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of GOD not only does not contradict the dignity of marriage but presupposes and confirms it. Marriage and virginity are two ways of expressing and living the one mystery of the Covenant of GOD with his people." The Covenant which is a communion of love between GOD and human beings.

Through his complete self-sacrifice, Joseph expresses his high-minded love for the Mother of GOD by entering into matrimony with her. Even though he decided to draw back so as not to interfere in the plan of GOD which was coming to pass in Mary, Joseph obeys the explicit command of the Angel and takes Mary into his home, while respecting the fact that she belongs exclusively to GOD.

On the other hand, it is from his marriage to Mary that Joseph derives his singular dignity and his rights in regard

to JESUS. “It is certain that the dignity of the Mother of GOD is so exalted that nothing can be more sublime; yet because the Blessed Virgin was united to Joseph by the bond of marriage, there can be no doubt but that Joseph approaches as no other person ever could that eminent dignity whereby the Mother of GOD towers above all creatures. Since marriage is the highest degree of association and friendship involving by its very nature a communion of goods, it follows that GOD, by giving Joseph to the Virgin, did not give him to her only as a companion for life, a witness of her virginity and protector of her honour: He also gave Joseph to Mary in order that he might share, through the marriage pact, in her own sublime greatness.”

This bond of charity was the core of the Holy Family’s life, first in the poverty of Bethlehem, then in their exile in Egypt, and later in the house of Nazareth. The Church deeply venerates this Family, and proposes it as the model of all families. Inserted directly in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Family of Nazareth has its own special mystery. And in this mystery – as in the Incarnation – one finds a true fatherhood: the human form of the family of the Son of GOD – a true human family formed by the divine mystery. In this family, Joseph is the father: his fatherhood is not one that derives from begetting offspring; but neither is it an “apparent” or merely “substitute” fatherhood. Rather, it is one that fully shares in authentic human fatherhood and the mission of a father in the family. This is a consequence of the hypostatic union: humanity taken up into the

unity of the Divine Person of the Word-SON, JESUS CHRIST. Together with human nature, all that is human is also taken up in CHRIST, especially the family as the first dimension of His existence in the world. Within this context, Joseph’s human fatherhood is also “taken up.”

On the basis of this principle, the words which Mary spoke to the twelve-year-old JESUS in the Temple take on their full significance: “Your father and I ... have been looking for you.” This is no conventional phrase. The words of JESUS’ Mother show the whole reality of the Incarnation present in the mystery of the Family of Nazareth. From the beginning, Joseph accepted with the “obedience of faith” his human fatherhood over JESUS. By following the light of the HOLY SPIRIT, given to man through faith, he certainly came to discover ever more fully the indescribable gift that was his human fatherhood.

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

### **GOD Justified Mary’s Motherhood**

Mary says: „...When I came back to the reality of earthly life after the ecstasy that had filled Me with inexpressible joy, my first thought was for Joseph. A thought as sharp as a rose thorn, that pierced my heart ... By this time I loved my holy and provident guardian. Since the time when by the will of GOD, manifested to me by the word of the Priest, I had become married to Joseph, I had come to know and appreciate the holiness of that Just man. When I became united to him, my dismay at being an orphan disappeared and I no longer regretted the lost retreat of the Temple. He was as sweet as my deceased father. With him I felt as safe as with

