



has commended to Joseph all of her cares, including those dangers which threaten the whole human family.

Even today we have many reasons to pray in a similar way: "Most beloved father Joseph, dispel the evil of falsehood and sin ..., graciously assist us from Heaven in our struggle with the powers of darkness ...; and just as once you saved the Child JESUS from mortal danger, so now defend GOD's holy Church from the snares of her enemies and from all adversity!" Today we still have good reason to commend everyone to St. Joseph.

It is my heartfelt wish that these present reflections on the person of St. Joseph will renew in us the prayerful devotion which my Predecessor called for a century ago. Our prayers and the very person of Joseph have renewed significance for the Church in our day in light of the new Christian Millennium.

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

This Month's Heartfelt Matters

- Let us ask St. Joseph to help us! Because if in marriage people stop talking heart-to-heart, love will die. With GOD it is the exactly same!



United with kind regards and the
blessing of Saint Joseph,

Paula



October 2015

Lay Community of St Joseph

Patron of the Church

At a difficult time in the Church's history, Pope Pius IX, wishing to place her under the powerful patronage of the holy Patriarch Joseph, declared him "Patron of the Catholic Church." For the Pope this was no idle gesture, since by virtue of the sublime dignity which GOD has granted to this most faithful servant, "the Church, after the Blessed Virgin, his spouse, has always held him in great honour and showered him with praise, having recourse to him preferably amid her tribulations."

What are the reasons for such great confidence? Leo XIII explains it in this way: „The reasons why St. Joseph must be considered the special Patron of the Church, and the Church in turn draws exceeding hope from his care and patronage, chiefly arise from his having been the husband of Mary and the foster and nursing father of JESUS ... Joseph was in his day the lawful and natural guardian, head and defender of the Holy Family. It is thus fitting and most worthy of Joseph's dignity that, in the same way that he once kept unceasing holy watch over the family of Nazareth, so now does he protect and defend with his heavenly patronage the Church of CHRIST.“

This patronage must be invoked as ever necessary for the Church, not only as a defence against all looming dangers, but also, and indeed primarily, as an impetus for her renewed commitment to evangelisation in the world and to re-evangelisation in those “lands and nations where – as I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation ‘Christifideles Laici’ – religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing ... and are now put to a hard test.” In order to bring the first proclamation of CHRIST, or to bring it anew wherever it has been neglected or fallen into oblivion, the Church has need of special “power from on High” (cf. Lk 24,49; Acts 1,8): no doubt a gift of the SPIRIT of the LORD, a gift which is not unrelated to the intercession and example of His Saints.

Besides trusting in St. Joseph’s sure protection, the Church also trusts in his outstanding example, which transcends all individual states of life and serves as a model for the entire Church, whatever the condition and duties of each of her members may be.

As the Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council has said, the basic attitude of the entire Church must be that of “hearing the word of GOD with reverence,” that is, an absolute readiness to serve faithfully GOD’s saving will revealed in JESUS. Already at the beginning of human redemption, after Mary, we find the model of obedience made incarnate in Joseph, the man known for having faithfully carried out GOD’s commands.

Pope Paul VI invited us to invoke Joseph’s patronage “as the Church has been wont to do in

these recent times, for herself in the first place, with a spontaneous theological reflection on the marriage of divine and human action in the great economy of the Redemption, in which economy the first – the divine one – is wholly sufficient unto itself, while the second – the human action which is ours – though capable of nothing (cf. Jn 15,5), is never dispensed from a humble but conditional and ennobling collaboration. The Church also calls upon the Protector because of a profound and ever present desire to reinvigorate her ancient life with true evangelical virtues, such as shine forth in St. Joseph.”

The Church transforms these needs into prayer. Recalling that GOD wished to entrust the “beginnings of our redemption to the faithful care of St. Joseph,” she asks GOD to grant that she may faithfully cooperate in the work of salvation; that she may receive the same faithfulness and purity of heart that inspired Joseph in serving the Incarnate Word; and that she may walk before GOD in the ways of holiness and justice, following Joseph’s example and through his intercession.

As early as one hundred years ago, Pope Leo XIII had already exhorted the Catholic world to pray for the protection of St. Joseph, Patron of the whole Church. The Encyclical Epistle “Quamquam Pluries” appealed to Joseph’s “fatherly love” for the “Child JESUS” and commended to him, as “the provident guardian of the divine Family,” “the beloved inheritance which JESUS CHRIST purchased by His Blood.” Since that time – as I recalled at the beginning of this exhortation – the Church has implored the protection of St. Joseph on the basis of “that sacred bond of charity which united him to the Immaculate Virgin and Mother of GOD,” and the Church

