

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent – Feb. 27/28, 2021 – Year of St. Joseph – I Have a Dream – Joseph, Son of Israel, Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams in Egypt

150 years ago, St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus, was named Patron and Protector of the Universal Church. St. Joseph, who received much of his insight into the will of Almighty God for him through dreams, was named after another ancient dreamer of the bible.

One of the sons, the youngest of Jacob/Israel, the Patriarch who wrestled with human and heavenly forces was Joseph who himself became Patriarch and Protector of God's Chosen People, Israel. He saved the lives of his kinsmen in the time of famine, giving them grain for bread from the storehouses of Egypt in the time when the Pharaohs ruled that great civilization.

When Joseph was a boy, as the child of his father's old age, he was doted on by Jacob/Israel. His father presented none of his other children with gifts as he did to his youngest favorite son. He wrapped him in a coat of many colors which Joseph proceeded to strut around in like a proud peacock, much to the chagrin of his older brothers. The boy was spoiled by his father and resented by his hard-working older brothers as they saw that Joseph hardly worked at all. What's more, the little brother, who wouldn't lift a finger to work for the good of the family, often had dreams of grandeur that lifted him above his

brothers. He had one that he shared with them that he dreamt he was a sheaf of wheat surrounded by the sheaves his brothers had gathered from the field. All at once, Joseph's sheaf rose above the others which bowed down to his. As you can imagine, Joseph's brothers didn't take too kindly to the coddled boy's laziness and arrogance. They decided to rid themselves of the brat and they sold him to passing traders for thirty pieces of silver who took him and sold him again in Egypt as a slave. The brothers told their distraught father that Joseph had been mauled and killed by wild lions and all that was left of him was his torn bloodied coat.

In Egypt, after many adventures and misadventures, Joseph finds himself in prison. There he gains a reputation for being able to accurately interpret dreams. It happens that the Pharaoh, ruler of all Egypt, is disturbed by dreams that he has been having. He hears of the Hebrew in prison, Joseph, who can wisely see the meanings in dreams. Pharaoh sends for the young prisoner. Joseph gives the meaning of Pharaoh's dream of seven fat cows eaten by seven skinny cows who, nonetheless remain skinny, as foretelling that Egypt will have seven years of plenty and bountiful harvests. But these years will be followed by seven years of drought and famine in the region. Pharaoh is so grateful that he appoints Joseph to manage Egypt's planting and harvest and grainaries and storehouses, where he saves from the abundance to get through the lean years.

When drought and famine strike the whole region, Joseph's family are also affected. His brothers and elderly father now come to Egypt seeking bread. Joseph reunites with his family, forgives his treacherous brothers, and gives them the bread they crave thus saving their lives.

St. Joseph, the dreamer, protected the First Church, the Holy Family. When a jealous king of the Jews wanted to kill the Child, the newborn King of the Jews, Joseph, warned in a dream, fled with his family to Egypt. Called back home to Israel after the family's hardship and exile, Joseph taught and raised his foster Son and was the first to give the Bread of Life to a world starving for hope and redemption.

Joseph, the ancient Patriarch of Israel, was faithful to his dreams, yet he also remained faithful to the house of God of his family.

In our walk with God, there will be times of blessing and bounty, times when God's presence is clear and near to us. But there will also be times of want and exile, and though we hunger for some sign, some reassurance that God is with us, that God cares for us, that God even is, there will only be the nightmare of darkness and confusion and doubt and stony silence.

Through it all, in the good times and the bad, we are called to remain faithful ... just as St. Joseph was.

"Then the Lord answered me and said, 'Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a messenger may read it. For there is still a dream for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.'"

From the Prophet Habakkuk