



FR. DANIEL'S CORNER

WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS ABOUT ST. JOSEPH (St. Joseph in Magisterium)

Some documents of the church have reflected and written extensively about St. Joseph. Here are summaries for a few of them:

Quemadmodum Deus (December 8, 1870) is a decree by Pope Pius IX that declared St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church, and which also raised St. Joseph's feast of March 19th to the rank of double of the first class. This decree underlined God's mighty work through Joseph, the son of Jacob in the Old Testament, to God's salvation plan in choosing another Joseph, making him the lord and chief of His household and possessions, the guardian of His choicest treasures. It also recognizes the sublime dignity that God conferred on St. Joseph, which makes the Church honor and implore his intercession in times of trouble.

Quamquam Pluries (on Devotion to St. Joseph, August 15, 1889) is an encyclical on St. Joseph by Pope Leo XIII, a man who is considered the 'father' of modern Catholic Social Teaching. Reflecting on Industrial Capitalism and the treatment of workers, Pope Leo pointed out the example of St. Joseph as one who regularly, by his work, earned what was necessary in the daily solicitude of his family. Pope Leo saw the family as the foundation of Christianity and society, therefore, a wage sufficient to support the family was essential. The Pope notes that the Holy Family provides an example of the dignity of Labor. He also prescribed that during October, a prayer to St. Joseph be added to the Rosary, noting that Joseph would safeguard the church in the same way that he protected the Holy Family. This was the origin of the beautiful prayer, "To thee, O Blessed Joseph."

Bonum Sane (July 25, 1920) is a motu proprio by Pope Benedict XV which commemorates the 50th anniversary of Pope Pius IX's *Quemadmodum Deus*. Benedict makes a note of the economic hardship and moral laxity occasioned by the recent World War. He cautions about "the advent of a universal republic, which is based on the absolute equality of men and the communion of goods, and in which there is no longer any distinction of nationality, does not recognize the authority of the father upon the children, nor the public authorities and citizens, nor of God on the men in civilian consortium." This would lead to terrible social convulsions.

He proposed that instead of being drawn to socialism, working men should follow St. Joseph as their guide and special patron. He emphasized that the family is the "core and basis" of human society and encouraged families to be guided by the example of the Holy Family. He affirmed that strengthening the domestic society with purity, harmony and fidelity, would not only affect an improvement in private morals, but also in the life of the community.

Redemptoris Custos (August 15, 1989, *Guardian of the Redeemer*) is an apostolic exhortation by Pope John Paul II on the person and mission of St. Joseph in the life of Christ and of the Church. It was delivered on the centenary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Quamquam Pluries*. It discusses the importance of St. Joseph in the Holy Family and presents the Pope's view of St. Joseph's role in the plan of redemption. The Pope positions St. Joseph as breaking the old vice of paternal familial domination and suggests him as the model of a loving father. The exhortation has six main parts: The Gospel Portrait, The Guardian of the Mystery of God, A Just Man, A Husband, Work as an Expression of Love, The Primacy of the Interior Life, and Patron of the Church in Our Day.

Paternas Vices (May 1, 2013) is on liturgical matters by Pope Francis. In this important document, he decrees that the name of St. Joseph should be inserted into Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV, as they appear in the third typical edition of the Roman Missal, after the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary, effective immediately. He reiterated that the faithful in the Catholic Church have shown continuous devotion to St. Joseph and have solemnly and constantly honored his memory as the most chaste spouse of the Mother of God and as the heavenly Patron of the universal Church. For this reason, Pope St. John XXIII, in the days of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, decreed that St. Joseph's name be added to the ancient Roman Canon. In response to petitions received from places throughout the world, the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI deemed them worthy of implementation and graciously approved them. The Supreme Pontiff Francis likewise has recently confirmed them. In this the Pontiffs had before their eyes the full communion of the Saints who, once pilgrims in this world, now lead us to Christ and unite us with him.

We shall spend the next entries studying and reflecting on the recent document on St. Joseph, *Patris Corde* (with a Father's Heart) by Pope Francis with which he declared the Year of St. Joseph.