
Devotion to St. Joseph

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First published as booklet #057 by Scepter in 1976.

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The Seven Sundays of St. Joseph

The Seven Sundays of St. Joseph is a devotion to the patron of the universal Church. On the seven Sundays preceding his feast, March 19, the faithful have traditionally contemplated a series of circumstances—seven sorrows and joys—in his life so that they might confront the joys and sorrows of their own lives as he did.

First Sunday

Now the birth of Jesus took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a just man and not wishing to expose her to reproach, resolved to send her away privately.

But while he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying: “Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take Mary your wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus; for he will save his people from their sins.”

Now all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel” (which means “God with us”).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took his wife.

Until the angel appeared, Joseph suffered immensely. His sorrow was as great as his love for the virgin Mary.

The Fathers of the Church comment on this scene in different ways. The interpretation that St. Thomas Aquinas gives to Joseph's perplexity corresponds to the reality of the situation. He explains: "Joseph wanted to leave Mary not because he was suspicious but because, out of humility, he was afraid to live beside such great sanctity. That is why the angel told him, 'Do not be afraid'"

Joseph felt that he was nothing compared to the incomprehensible mystery that surrounded Mary. To his great sorrow, he determined to withdraw discretely. But he received from the angel confirmation that what had happened to her was God's work and that, besides, he too had a part, a mission, in the mystery: "You shall call his name Jesus." In Biblical language this expression meant that he was going to be Jesus' father according to the law. Knowing this, St. Joseph was filled with the joy of his vocation.

Prayer: O chaste spouse of most holy Mary, glorious St. Joseph: the trouble and anguish in your heart were great when you were perplexed over sending away your immaculate spouse; yet your joy was immense when the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to you by the angel.

By this sorrow and this joy we ask you to comfort our souls, now and in the sorrows of our final hour, with the joy of a good life and a holy death like your own in the company of Jesus and Mary.

Second Sunday

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken.... And Joseph also went from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judaea to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem—because he was of the house and lineage of David—to register, with Mary his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The mystery of the Incarnation is veiled in this humble scene. Joseph loves Jesus and suffers seeing him who he knows is the Word, the King of the universe, lying in a manger. He would give him anything and everything, yet he has nothing to give. The difference between what he would like to do and his poverty places his soul in great distress.

But then he grows calm. His sorrow recedes. He renews his dedication to God and carries out the divine command to love him with his whole heart, with his whole soul, and with his whole strength. He gives himself completely to God who lies in his arms.

St. Josemaría has written:

There is great simplicity about his birth. Our Lord comes without fanfare. No one knows about him. On Earth only Mary and Joseph share in the divine adventure. And then the shepherds who received the message from the angels. And later on, the wise men from the East. They were the only witnesses of this transcendental event which unites Heaven and Earth, God and man... The greatness of this Child who is God! His Father is the God who made Heaven and Earth; and there he is, in a manger, “because there was no room at the inn”—there was nowhere else for the Lord of all creation.

Our father and lord St. Joseph...apparently has a very minor role in the Epiphany—as usual. I can imagine him recollected in prayer, lovingly protecting the Son of God made man who has been entrusted to his paternal care. With the marvelous refinement of one who does not live for himself, the holy patriarch spends himself in silent prayer and effective service.... If you want my advice, which I have never tired of repeating these many years, it is to Joseph: “Go to Joseph.” He will show us definite ways, both human and divine, to approach Jesus. And soon you will dare, as he did, “to take up in his arms, kiss, clothe and look after” this child God who has been born to us. As a homage of their veneration, the Magi offered gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus. But Joseph gave his whole youthful and loving heart.

Prayer: Blessed patriarch, glorious St. Joseph, chosen to serve as father of the Word made flesh, the sorrow which you felt when you saw the infant Jesus born into poverty was turned into heavenly joy when you heard the song of the angels and when you saw the glory of that resplendent night.

By this sorrow and this joy, we ask you to obtain for us that, after the course of this life, we hear angelic songs of praise and rejoice in the splendors of heavenly glory.

Third Sunday

“And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, his name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”

Joseph teaches us to deal confidently with the Word made flesh. St. Teresa of Avila reveals her great love for the patriarch. She tells us her personal experience:

I took for my advocate and lord the glorious St. Joseph and commended myself earnestly to him; and I found that this father and lord delivered me both from this trouble and also from other and greater troubles concerning my honor and the loss of my soul, and that he gave me greater blessings than I could ask from him. I do not remember even now that I have ever asked anything from him which he has failed to grant. I am astonished at the great favors which God has bestowed on me through this blessed saint... I beg for the love of God that anyone who does not believe me will put what I say to the test, and he will see by experience what

great advantages come from his commending himself to this glorious patriarch and having devotion to him. Those who practice prayer should have a special affection for him always. I do not know how anyone can think of the queen of the angels, during the time that she suffered so much with the child Jesus, without giving thanks to St. Joseph for the way he helped them. If anyone cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious saint as his master, and he will not go astray.

Prayer: Obedient follower of the law of God, glorious St. Joseph, the precious blood which flowed at the circumcision of the infant Jesus caused your heart to be pierced, but the name of Jesus gave new life and filled you with peace.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that by struggling against the slavery of sin we die in joy with the most holy name of Jesus in our hearts and on our lips.

Fourth Sunday

And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.”

And there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came into the temple by inspiration of the Spirit. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God, saying: “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples: a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

And his father and mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother, “Behold: this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And a sword shall pierce your own soul also that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

Simeon tells them that Jesus will be a sign of contradiction, a standard which people will either follow or oppose. And he adds that the Son's sufferings will be intimately connected with his Mother's sorrows.

The sorrows of Jesus and Mary are made known. This revelation enables St. Joseph to glimpse more clearly the mystery of the Son's cross. It is impossible to guess the depth of his suffering. He always wanted to protect the child whom he loved with the greatest of fatherly love, for, as St. Pius X says, he

is "the virgin father of Jesus." Now he understands with new insight all the Old Testament prophecies related to Christ's passion.

St. Joseph's mind and heart have been marked by the cross. As Mary offered her Son on the cross, so did St. Joseph. This offering constitutes the holy patriarch's greatest act of generosity. "It took all the generosity of his love to offer Jesus and Mary to God. It was his supreme sacrifice since he loved them immeasurably more than his own life."

Prayer: O glorious St. Joseph, model of faithful fulfillment of God's plans, the prophecy of Simeon about the future sufferings of Jesus and Mary brought mortal fear to you but at the same time filled you with blessed joy for the salvation and glorious resurrection which he prophesied would follow for numberless souls.

By this sorrow and this by obtain for us that we may be among those who through the merits of Jesus and the intercession of the Virgin Mother are to rise in glory.

Fifth Sunday

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: "Rise, and take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you. For Herod will search for the child to destroy him."

So he rose, and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

St. John Chrysostom comments on this scene:

On hearing this, Joseph was not shocked, nor did he say: "This is strange. You yourself made it known not long ago that he would save his people, and now you are incapable even of saving him—we have to flee, to set out on a long journey and spend a long while in a strange place; that contradicts your promise."

Joseph does not think in this way, for he is a man who trusts God. Nor does he ask when he will return, ever, though the angel left that time vague: "Stay there until I tell you to return." Joseph does not object; he obeys and believes and joyfully accepts all the trials.

St. Joseph faithfully fulfills God's will.

St. Josemaría adds:

The Gospels give us a picture of St. Joseph as a remarkably sound man who was in no way frightened or scared of life. On the contrary, he faced up to problems, dealt with difficult situations and showed responsibility and initiative in whatever he was asked to do.

I don't agree with the traditional picture of St. Joseph as an old man, even though it may have been prompted by a desire to emphasize the perpetual virginity of Mary. I see him as a strong young man, perhaps a few years older than our Lady, but in the prime of his life and work.

You don't have to wait to be old or lifeless to practice the virtue of chastity. Purity comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love. Joseph had a young heart and a young body when he married Mary, when he learned of the mystery of her divine motherhood, when he lived in her company, respecting the integrity God wished to give the world.

Prayer: Watchful guardian of the incarnate Son of God, glorious St. Joseph, you gave your toil in supporting and serving the Son of the Most High, especially when you were forced to flee into Egypt; yet you felt great joy having God himself always with you and seeing the idols of Egypt fall to the ground.

By this sorrow and this joy obtain for us that we keep the infernal tyrant far away from us, especially by flight from occasions of sin, and that every idol of earthly affection fall from our hearts; and being wholly employed in the service of Jesus and Mary let us live and happily die for them alone.

Sixth Sunday

But when Herod died, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, and take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel. For those who sought the child's life are dead."

So he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream, he withdrew into Galilee. And he went and settled in a town called Nazareth.

After the sorrow of not being allowed to go to Judea, St. Joseph experiences the joy of returning to Nazareth. His joy increases as the days of Christ's hidden life go by. The home life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph resembled that of their neighbors. Time was spent in family life. Sometimes Joseph would contemplate the Child "in the most pure arms of Mary, the blessed Mother. She held God veiled in flesh, and pressed her lips in sweet kisses on the flesh of the One who is true God and true man" (Paulinus of Aquilea). And St. Joseph, as F. de Eximensis so charmingly says, "showed delight and joy in providing for the infant Savior's needs, bathing him, reverently handling the small limbs of his precious body, changing his clothes, and doing other things that little children require."

Contemplating Joseph's life in the company of Jesus and Mary, we can make our own the words of a prayer composed by Pius XII:

St. Joseph, grant that according to your example we keep our eyes fixed on our Mother Mary, your most sweet spouse, who silently used to do her weaving in a corner of your workshop, with a smile on her lips. Grant that we not lose sight of Jesus, who busied himself with you at your carpenter's bench. Thus may we be able to lead a peaceful and holy life on earth, as a prelude to that eternally happy life which awaits us in Heaven for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer: Glorious St. Joseph, you marveled to have the King of Heaven subject to your commands; though your consolation in leading him out of Egypt was troubled by fear of Archelaus, nevertheless, being reassured by the angel, you lived at Nazareth with Jesus and Mary.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that our hearts be freed from harmful fears, and that we have peace of conscience living in security with Jesus and Mary and dying in their company.

Seventh Sunday

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing that he was in the caravan, they went a day's journey before it occurred to them to look for him among their relatives and acquaintances. And when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him.

After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who were listening to him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

We can easily understand Mary's and Joseph's sorrow on realizing that Jesus had disappeared. They were filled with apprehension as they searched for their son. Those sorrowful days were a premonition of the time that would intervene between Calvary and the Resurrection. Suddenly, they hear his dear voice. There he is! They are greatly comforted, and their pent-up emotions overflow with great joy.

In this scene, St. Luke uses the word "parents" a number of times to designate the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. But this word has its deepest meaning when Mary tells her Son: "Behold, your father and I have been seeking you in sorrow."

"Father." That was the word St. Joseph would love to hear most. He would smile and gaze fondly at Jesus when he called him "Father." As St. Josemaría wrote: "Joseph loved Jesus as a father loves his son and showed his love by giving him the best he had. Joseph, caring for the child as he had been commanded, made Jesus a craftsman, transmitting his own professional skill to him. So the neigh-

bors of Nazareth will call Jesus both faber and fabri filius, the craftsman and the son of the craftsman." Jesus worked in Joseph's workshop and by Joseph's side. Grace must have worked through Joseph, so that he was able to fulfill this task of the human upbringing of the Son of God!

"For Jesus must have resembled Joseph: in his way of working, in the features of his character, in his way of speaking. Jesus' realism, his eye for detail, the way he sat at table and broke bread, his preference for using everyday situations to give doctrine—all this reflects his childhood and the influence of Joseph."

Afterwards, the Gospel says that Jesus "went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart."

Prayer: Pattern of holiness, glorious St. Joseph, when you lost the Child Jesus through no fault of your own, with great sorrow you sought him for three days, until you rejoiced exceedingly in finding him in the temple among the doctors.

By this sorrow and this joy, we earnestly ask you to prevent us from ever losing Jesus by mortal sin; but if through supreme misfortune we lose him, grant that we seek him with untiring sorrow, until we find him again and can live in friendship with him. Let us enjoy his presence in Heaven, and there with you to sing his divine mercies.

Litany of St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, one God.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
St. Joseph,
Illustrious son of David,
Splendor of Patriarchs,
Spouse of the Mother of God,
Chaste guardian of the Virgin,
Foster father of the Son of God,
Watchful defender of Christ,
Head of the Holy Family,
Joseph most just,

Joseph most chaste,
Joseph most prudent,
Joseph most courageous,
Joseph most obedient,
Joseph most faithful,
Mirror of patience,
Lover of poverty,
Model of all who work,
Glory of family life,
Guardian of virgins,
Mainstay of families,
Consolation of the afflicted,
Terror of demons,
Protector of holy Church,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Let us pray. O God, who in your ineffable providence deigned to choose blessed Joseph as the spouse of your most holy Mother, grant, we pray, that we have him for our intercessor in Heaven, whom on Earth we venerate as our protector; Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Quamquam Pluries

Encyclical letter of His Holiness Leo XIII on the Holy Rosary and the Patronage of St. Joseph, August 15, 1889.

Although we have already ordered on several occasions that special prayers be offered throughout the world and that Catholic interests be recommended to God in a more earnest manner, let it not seem surprising to anyone if at this time we judge that this duty again be called to mind. In difficult times, particularly when it seems that the powers of darkness are able to make daring attempts to ruin Christianity, the Church has always been accustomed to call humbly on God, her founder and champion, with greater earnestness and perseverance. In such times she also has sought help from the saints who dwell in Heaven, and principally from the august virgin Mother of God, by whose patronage she knows that support in her trials chiefly will be afforded: for the fruit of such pious prayers and of hope in divine bounty will sooner or later become manifest.

Now, venerable brethren, you have learned to understand the present age, hardly less calamitous to the Christian commonwealth than the very worst the world has hitherto experienced. Around us we behold faith, the foundation of all Christian virtues, perishing almost everywhere; charity growing cold; youth growing up corrupted in morals and in doctrine; the Church of Jesus Christ attacked on every side with violence and rage; and a vicious war waged against the papacy. We behold, in fact, the very groundwork of religion overthrown by assaults that increase in violence from day to day. As for the depths of this catastrophe of our age and the ulterior schemes of agitators, you yourselves know more than it behooves us to put into words.

Amid such difficult and lamentable conditions, the evils of our day have grown too great for human remedies. The only course left is to seek a cure through divine power.

The rosary in the month of October

Because of this, therefore, we consider it advisable to call on the piety of the faithful that they implore the help of Almighty God with greater earnestness and perseverance. But particularly, with the month of October now approaching—which elsewhere we have decreed should be dedicated to the virgin Mary of the rosary—we urgently exhort that during the present year the entire month be spent in the greatest possible devotion and piety. We know that a refuge is ever ready for us in the maternal bounty of the Virgin; and with no less certainty we know that our hopes in her are not in vain. Since she has come a hundred times to help the Christian commonwealth in times of need, why should we doubt that she will give new examples of her power and favor provided that humble and continued public prayers be offered? Assuredly, we believe that she will help us all the more wonderfully the longer the period is during which she desires us to implore her.

Special recourse to St. Joseph

But still another proposal remains to be made, venerable brethren, well aware as we are that you will diligently cooperate with us here as you have always done in the past. In order, then, that God show himself more willing to grant our petitions and that he help his Church more promptly and bountifully in proportion as more numerous voices are raised to him, we have deemed it highly expedient that the faithful become accustomed to implore with special piety and trust the help of the virgin Mother of God, associating with this devotion their supplication for the help of Blessed Joseph, her most chaste spouse. Indubitable evidence exists for us to conclude that such an approach will be desirable and pleasing to the Virgin herself.

Devotion to St. Joseph

In this connection, concerning which we are about to make our first public pronouncement, we are aware that the piety of the people is not only favorably inclined but is advancing, as it were, along a course already entered on. For in times past, the endeavor of Roman Pontiffs has been to extend the veneration of Joseph gradually further and further, and to propagate it widely. In these latter days,

moreover, we have seen that same veneration taking on everywhere unquestionably new stature, particularly after our predecessor, Pius IX of happy memory, in conformity with the requests of numerous bishops, had declared this holy patriarch the patron of the universal Church. But precisely because it is highly advantageous that veneration for him be deeply rooted in Catholic morals and practices, we desire that the faithful be moved thereto no less by our own voice and authority.

Reasons for his patronage

There are special reasons why Blessed Joseph should be explicitly named the patron of the Church and why the Church in turn should expect much from his patronage and guardianship. For he, indeed, was the husband of Mary and the father, as was supposed, of Jesus Christ. >From this arises all his dignity, grace, holiness, and glory.

The dignity of the Mother of God is certainly so sublime that nothing can surpass it; but nonetheless, since the bond of marriage existed between Joseph and the Blessed Virgin, there can be no doubt that more than any other person he approached that supereminent dignity by which the Mother of God is raised far above all created natures.

For marriage is the closest possible union and relationship, whereby each spouse mutually participates in the goods of the other. Consequently, since God gave Joseph as a spouse to the Virgin, he assuredly gave him not only as a companion in life, a witness of her virginity, and the guardian of her honor, but also as a sharer in her exalted dignity by reason of the conjugal tie itself.

Likewise, Joseph alone stands out in august dignity because he was the guardian of the Son of God by divine appointment, and in the opinion of men was his father. As a consequence, the Word of God was modestly obedient to Joseph, was attentive to his commands, and paid to him every honor that children should render their parents.

St. Joseph's duties

From this double dignity, moreover (of husband and father), such duties arose as are prescribed by nature for the head of a household, so that Joseph was at once the legitimate and the natural guardian, preserver, and defender of the divine household over which he presided. These duties he fulfilled as long as he lived. Zealously he watched over his spouse and her divine offspring with the most ardent love and constant solicitude. By his labor he regularly provided for both of them such necessities of life as food and clothing. In seeking a place of refuge he warded off the danger to their lives which had been engendered by the jealousy of a king. Amid the inconveniences of the journey and the bitterness of exile he continually showed himself the companion, the helper, the consoler of the Virgin and of Jesus.

Moreover, the divine household, which Joseph governed as with paternal authority, contained the beginnings of the new Church. The Virgin most holy is the mother of all Christians since she is the

mother of Jesus and since she gave birth to them on the mount of Calvary amid the unspeakable sufferings of the redeemer. Jesus is, as it were, the firstborn of all Christians, who are his brothers by adoption and redemption. >From these considerations we conclude that the blessed patriarch must regard all the multitude of Christians who constitute the Church as confided to his care in a certain special manner.

This is his numberless family, scattered throughout all lands, over which he rules with a sort of paternal authority because he is the husband of Mary and the father of Jesus Christ. Thus it is conformable to reason and in every way becoming to Blessed Joseph that, as once it was his sacred trust to guard with watchful care the family of Nazareth no matter what befell, so now by virtue of his heavenly patronage he is in turn to protect and defend the Church of Christ.

The ancient Joseph and the new

The statements made here, as you will readily perceive, are confirmed by what we shall further set forth. Conformably, namely, with the Church's sacred liturgy, the opinion has been held by not a few Fathers of the Church that the ancient Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, foreshadowed both in person and in office our own St. Joseph.

By his glory he was a prototype of the grandeur of the future guardian of the Holy Family. In addition to the circumstances that both men bore the same name—a name by no means devoid of significance—it is well known to you that they resembled each other closely in other ways. Notable in this regard are the facts that the earlier Joseph received special favor and benevolence from his lord and that, when placed by him as ruler over his household, fortune and prosperity accrued abundantly to the master's house because of Joseph.

There was even a more evident similarity when by the king's order he was given supreme power over the entire kingdom. When calamity brought a deficient harvest and a scarcity of grain, he exercised such excellent foresight in behalf of the Egyptians and their neighbors that the king decreed he should be styled "savior of the world." Thus in that ancient patriarch we may recognize the distinct image of St. Joseph. As the one was prosperous and successful in the domestic concerns of his lord and in an exceptional manner was set over the whole kingdom, so the other, destined to guard the name of Christ, could well be chosen to defend and protect the Church, which is truly the house of God and the kingdom of God on Earth.

St. Joseph, our model

This is the reason (namely, Joseph's position as head of the Holy Family) why all the faithful of all places and ranks commend and confide themselves to the guardianship of Blessed Joseph. In Joseph fathers of families have an eminent model of paternal care and providence. Married couples find in him the perfect image of love, harmony, and conjugal loyalty. Virgins can look to him for their pattern and as the guardian of virginal integrity. With the picture of Joseph set before them, those of noble

lineage can learn to preserve their dignity even under adverse circumstances. Let the wealthy understand what goods they should chiefly seek and earnestly amass, while with no less special right the needy, the laborers, and all possessed of modest means should fly to his protection and learn to imitate him. Joseph was of royal blood; he was espoused to the greatest and the holiest of all women; he was the father, as was supposed, of the Son of God. Nevertheless he devoted his life to labor, and by his hands and skill produced whatever was necessary for those dependent on him.

Therefore, if truth be sought, the condition of those reduced to slender means is not disgraceful. The labor of craftsmen, far from being dishonorable, can by virtue be greatly ennobled. Joseph, content with what was his own, bore with calm and dignified spirit the circumstances necessarily connected with his means of livelihood. This was conformable to the example of his son who, having accepted the form of a servant while being Lord of all, willingly subjected himself to the utmost indigence and poverty.

Considerations such as these will serve to encourage and give peace of mind to the poor and all those who live by the labor of their hands. Nevertheless, although it is permitted them to rise from a condition of want to one of well-being, provided violation of justice is excluded, yet both justice and reason forbid the destruction of that order which divine providence has ordained. On the contrary, it is foolish to have recourse to violence, and to seek to better existing conditions by sedition and revolt. In most cases these produce only greater evils than those which they were meant to cure. If the poor wish to act wisely, let them not believe the promises of seditious men, but let them trust in the example and patronage of St. Joseph, and in the maternal care of the Church, which is most solicitous for their welfare.