Five Lessons from Saint Joseph
By Randy Hain

1. Saint Joseph was *obedient*. Joseph was obedient to God's Will throughout his life. Joseph listened to the angel of the Lord explain the virgin birth in a dream and then took Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:20-24). He was obedient when he led his family to Egypt to escape Herod's infanticide in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13-15). Joseph obeyed the angel's later commands to return to Israel (Matthew 2:19-20) and settle in Nazareth with Mary and Jesus (Matthew 2:22-23). How often does our pride and willfulness get in the way of our obedience to God?

1. Saint Joseph was *selfless.* In the limited knowledge we have about Joseph, we see a man who only thought of serving Mary and Jesus, never himself. What many may see as sacrifices on his part, were actually acts of selfless love. His devotion to his family is a model for fathers today who may be allowing disordered attachments to the things of this world distort their focus and hinder their vocations.
2. Saint Joseph led by *example*. None of his words are written in Scripture, but we can clearly see by his actions that he was a just, loving and faithful man. We often think that we primarily influence others by what we say, when so often we are watched for our actions. Every recorded decision and action made by this great saint is the standard for men to follow today.
3. Saint Joseph was a *worker*. He was a simple craftsman who served his neighbors through his handiwork. He taught his foster son Jesus the value of hard work. It is likely that the humility Joseph exhibited in recorded Scripture spilled over into the simple approach he took to his work and providing for the Holy Family. We can all learn a great lesson from Saint Joseph, who is also the patron saint of workers, on the value of our daily work and how it should exist to glorify God, support our families and contribute to society.
4. Saint Joseph was a *leader*. But, not in the way we may view leadership today. He led as a loving husband when he improvised to find a stable for Mary to give birth to Jesus, after being turned away from the Bethlehem inn. He led as a man of faith when he obeyed God in all things, took the pregnant Mary as his wife and later brought the Holy Family safely to Egypt. He led as the family provider by working long hours in his workshop to make sure they had enough to eat and a roof over their heads. He led as a teacher by teaching Jesus his trade and how to live and work as a man.

As Catholic men, we have a responsibility to be strong fathers and husbands, leaders in our parishes, good stewards in the community and humble followers of Christ. Let's look to the inspiring example of Saint Joseph, patron saint of fathers, workers and the Universal Church for his obedience, humility, selflessness, courage and the love he showed to Mary and Jesus. If we

can emulate St. Joseph even a little each day, we will be that much closer to becoming the men we are called to be.

St. Joseph, patron saint of fathers, please pray for us!

Editor's Note: This post is adapted from Randy Hain's fifth book, Journey to Heaven: A Road Map for Catholic Men (Emmaus Road Publishing) is available through Amazon.com, EmmausRoad.org or found in your local Catholic bookstore. Also, Journey to Heaven has been recently been translated into Spanish! The book can be found as Camino al Cielo: Una Guia Práctica Para El Hombre Católico on Amazon. All of Randy Hain's books are available through Amazon.

Mr. Randy Hain is a prolific writer and frequent presenter on a number of topics including faith, family, Catholic men's issues, autism advocacy, fatherhood, faith/work integration, careers, authenticity, leadership and human capital.

His latest work is *Special Children, Blessed Fathers: Encouragement for Fathers of Children with Special Needs* (Foreword by Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia) which was released through Emmaus Road Publishing. His books are available through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and local Catholic bookstores.