

Annual St. Joseph Novena

March 10-18



Holy Spouses Province
Oblates of St. Joseph

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All stand and begin with the Sign of the Cross. Italicized text is read by the leader alone.

March 10: The Annunciation to Joseph

Introductory Prayer

O chaste spouse of Mary, great was the trouble and anguish of your heart when you were considering quietly sending away your in-violate spouse; yet your joy was unspeakable, when the surpassing mystery of the Incarna-tion was made known to you by the angel.

By this sorrow and this joy, we be-seech you to comfort our souls, both now and in the sorrows of our final hour, with the joy of a good life and a holy death after the pattern of your own life and death in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit.

Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. It is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."

Let us pray. O blessed St. Joseph, tender-hearted father, faithful guardian of Jesus, chaste spouse of the Mother of God, I pray and beseech you to offer to God the Father my praise to him through his divine Son, who died on the cross and rose again to give us sinners new life. Through the holy name of Jesus, pray with us that we may obtain from the eternal Father, the favor we ask...**(Pause)**... *We have been unfaithful* to the unfailing love of God the Father; beg of Jesus mercy for us. Amid the splendors of God's loving presence, do not forget the sorrows of those who suffer, those who pray, those who weep. By your prayers and those of your most holy spouse, our Blessed Lady, may the love of Jesus answer our call of confident hope. Amen.

Invocation to St. Joseph by St. Joseph Marelllo

O Glorious Saint Joseph, after the Blessed Virgin, you were the first to hold in your arms the Redeemer. Be our exemplar in our ministry, which like your own, is a ministry of intimate relationship with the Divine Word. May you teach us; may you assist us; may you make us worthy members of the Holy Family.

Pray for us, holy Joseph.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O God, who in your inexpressible providence were pleased to choose Saint Joseph as spouse of the most holy Mother of your Son, grant, we pray, that we, who revere him as our protector on earth, may be worthy of his heavenly intercession. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

After the final prayer, a blessing may be imparted. If appropriate, the traditional concluding invocations may be recited.

*Holy Trinity, one God,
 Holy Mary,
 Holy Joseph,
 Illustrious Son of David,
 Light of Patriarchs,
 Spouse of the Mother of God,
 Pure Guardian of the Virgin,
 Nurturer of the Son of God,
 Zealous Defender of Christ,
 Head of the Holy Family,
 Joseph most just,
 Joseph most chaste,
 Joseph most prudent,
 Joseph most brave,
 Joseph most obedient,
 Joseph most faithful,
 Mirror of patience,
 Lover of poverty,
 Model for workers,
 Glory of family life,
 Guardian of virgins,
 Safeguard of families,
 Comfort of the sorrowing,
 Hope of the sick,
 Patron of the dying,
 Terror of demons,
 Protector of Holy Church,
 Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world
 Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world
 Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world*

*have mercy on us
 pray for us
 spare us, O Lord
 hear us, O Lord
 have mercy on us*

*God made him master of his household.
 And put him in charge of all that he owned.*

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Meditation

In the course of that pilgrimage of faith that was his life, Joseph, like Mary, remained faithful to God’s call until the end. While Mary’s life was the bringing to fullness of that fiat first spoken at the Annunciation, at the moment of Joseph’s own “annunciation” he said nothing; instead he simply “did as the angel of the Lord commanded him” (Mt 1:24). And this first “doing” became the beginning of “Joseph’s way.”¹

In the words of the “annunciation” by night, Joseph not only heard the divine truth concerning his wife’s indescribable vocation; he also heard once again the truth about his own vocation. This “just” man, who, in the spirit of the no-blest traditions of the Chosen People, loved the Virgin of Nazareth and was bound to her by a husband’s love, was once again called by God to this love.²

The novena continues on page 16.

March 11: The Birth of Jesus

Introductory Prayer

O most blessed patriarch, glorious Saint Joseph, who were chosen to be the earthly father of the Word made flesh, your sorrow at seeing the child Jesus born in such poverty was suddenly changed into heavenly exultation when you heard the angelic hymn and beheld the glories of that resplendent night.

¹ Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation “Guardian of the Redeemer” (GR), 1989, 17.

² GR 19.

By this sorrow and this joy, we implore you to obtain for us the grace to pass through life's journey to hear angelic songs of praise and to rejoice in the shining splendor of celestial glory. Amen.

Reading: Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on

spouse, has always held him in great honor and showered him with praise, having recourse to him amid tribulations."

What are the reasons for such great confidence? Leo XIII explained 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 presumed 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."¹⁷

Besides trusting in Joseph's sure protection, the Church also trusts in his noble example, which transcends all individual states of life and serves as a model for the entire Christian community, whatever the condition and duties of each of its members may be.¹⁸

The novena continues as follows:

Common Novena Elements

If appropriate, a reflection may follow the readings. Afterwards, the novena continues with the following daily prayers.

All kneel.

Litany of Saint Joseph

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

God the Father in heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

have mercy on us

have mercy on us

have mercy on us

¹⁷ GR 28

¹⁸ GR 30

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you."

Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.

Meditation

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 Pius IX this was no idle gesture, since by virtue of the sublime dignity which God has granted to his most faithful servant Joseph, "the Church, after the Blessed Virgin, his

them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

Meditation

Journeying to Bethlehem for the census in obedience to the orders of legitimate authority, Joseph fulfilled for the child the significant task of officially inserting the name "Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth" (cf. Jn 1:45) in the registry of the Roman Empire. This registration clearly shows that Jesus belongs to the human race as a man among men, a citizen of this world, subject to laws and civil institutions, but also "Savior of the world."³

As guardian of the mystery hidden for ages in the mind of God, which begins to unfold before his eyes "in the fullness of time," Joseph, together with Mary, is a privileged witness to the birth of the Son of God into the world on Christmas night in Bethlehem...

Joseph was an eyewitness to this birth, which took place in conditions that, humanly speaking, were embarrassing—a first announcement of that "self-emptying" (cf. Phil 2:5-8) that Christ freely accepted for the forgiveness of sins. Joseph also witnessed the adoration of the shepherds, who arrived at Jesus' birthplace after the angels had brought them the great and happy news (cf. Lk 2:15-16). Later he also witnessed the homage of the magi who came from the East (cf. Mt 2:11).⁴

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March 12: The Circumcision of Jesus

Introductory Prayer

O glorious Saint Joseph, who faithfully obeyed the law of God, your heart was pierced at the sight of the most precious blood that was shed by the

³ GR 9.

⁴ GR 10.

infant Savior during his circumcision, but the name of Jesus gave you new life and filled you with quiet joy.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us the grace to be freed from all sin during life and to die rejoicing, with the holy name of Jesus in our hearts and on our lips. Amen.

Reading: Luke 2:21

When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Meditation

A son's circumcision was the first religious obligation of a father, and with this ceremony (cf. Lk 2:21) Joseph exercised his right and duty with regard to Jesus.

The principle that holds that all the rites of the Old Testament are a shadow of the reality (cf. Heb 9:9ff.; 10:1) serves to explain why Jesus would accept them. As with all the other rites, circumcision, too, is "fulfilled" in Jesus. God's covenant with Abraham, of which circumcision was the sign (cf. Gn 17:13), reaches its full effect and perfect realization in Jesus, who is the "yes" of all the ancient promises (cf. 2 Cor 1:20).⁵

At the circumcision, Joseph names the child "Jesus." This is the only name in which there is salvation (cf. Acts 4:12). Its significance had been revealed to Joseph at the moment of his "annunciation": "You shall call the child Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (cf. Mt 1:21). In conferring the name, Joseph declares his own legal fatherhood over Jesus, and in speaking the name he proclaims the child's mission as Savior.⁶

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⁵ GR 11

⁶ GR 12.

conjugal happiness, to accept the conditions, the responsibility and the burden of a family, but, through an incomparable virginal love, to renounce that natural conjugal love that is the foundation and nourishment of the family.¹⁵

As we have seen, the apostolic witness did not neglect the story of Jesus' birth, his circumcision, his presentation in the Temple, his flight into Egypt and his hidden life in Nazareth. It recognized the "mystery" of grace present in each of these saving "acts," inasmuch as they all share the same source of love: the divinity of Christ. If through Christ's humanity this love shone on all mankind, the first beneficiaries were undoubtedly those whom the divine will had most intimately associated with itself: Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Joseph, his presumed father.¹⁶

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March 18: The Patron of the Universal Church

Introductory Prayer

O most powerful patriarch, Saint Joseph, patron of that universal Church which has always invoked you in anxieties and tribulations, from the lofty seat of your glory you lovingly regard the Catholic world and never leave us abandoned.

Look down with your paternal heart upon the mystical spouse of Christ and his vicar, weakened by sorrow and persecuted by powerful enemies. We beseech you, by the sufferings and joys that you experienced on earth, to accompany us on our pilgrim journey through this world and to intercede with the Giver of peace and charity, that, with every hostile power being overcome and every error being destroyed, the whole Church may serve the God of all blessings in perfect liberty. Amen.

¹⁵ GR 26.

¹⁶ GR 27.

Teach us to stay close to you and your beloved spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that we will lead a holy life and die a happy death. Then take us with you into that life of heavenly joys and eternal bliss with God that knows no end. Amen.

Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

Meditation

The same aura of silence that envelops everything else about Joseph also shrouds his work as a carpenter in the house of Nazareth. It is, however, a silence that reveals in a special way the inner portrait of the man. The Gospels speak exclusively of what Joseph “did.” Still, they allow us to discover in his “actions”—shrouded in silence as they are—an aura of deep contemplation. Joseph was in daily contact with the mystery “hidden from ages past,” and which “dwelt” under his roof. This explains, for example, why St. Teresa of Jesus, the great reformer of the Carmelites, promoted the renewal of veneration to St. Joseph in Western Christianity.¹⁴

The total sacrifice, whereby Joseph surrendered his whole existence to the demands of the Messiah’s coming into his home, becomes understandable only in the light of his profound interior life. It was from this interior life that “very singular commands and consolations came, bringing him also the logic and strength that belong to simple and clear souls, and giving him the power of making great decisions—such as the decision to put his liberty immediately at the disposition of the divine designs, to make over to them also his legitimate human calling, his

¹⁴ GR 25.

March 13: The Prophecy of Simeon

Introductory Prayer

O most faithful Saint Joseph, who shared the mysteries of our redemption, the prophecy of Simeon regarding the sufferings of Jesus and Mary caused you to shudder with mortal dread, but at the same time filled you with a blessed joy for the salvation and glorious resurrection that would be attained by countless souls.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us through the merits of Jesus and the intercession of Mary the Virgin Mother, that we may be among the number of those predestined to a glorious resurrection. Amen.

Reading: Luke 2:22-35

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother were amazed 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 to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Meditation

This rite, to which Luke refers, includes the ransom of the firstborn and sheds light on the subsequent stay of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve.

The ransoming of the firstborn is another obligation of the father, and it is fulfilled by Joseph. Represented in the firstborn is the people of the covenant, ransomed from slavery in order to belong to God. Here, too, Jesus—who is the true “price” of ransom (cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pt 1:19)—not only “fulfills” the Old Testament rite, but at the same time transcends it, since he is not a subject to be redeemed, but the very author of redemption.

The gospel writer notes that “his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him” (Lk 2:23), in particular at what Simeon said in his canticle to God, when he referred to Jesus as the “salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” and as a “sign that is spoken against” (cf. Lk 2:30-34).⁷

“It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will (cf. Eph 1:9). His will was that all should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and, thus become sharers in the divine nature (cf. Eph 2:18; 2 Pt 1:4).”⁸

Together with Mary, Joseph is the first guardian of this divine mystery. Together with Mary, and in relation to Mary, he shares in this final phase of God’s self-revelation in Christ, and he does so from the very beginning.⁹

⁷ GR 13.

⁸ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, “*Dei Verbum*,” 5.

⁹ GR 5.

among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.

When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.”

And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them.

Meditation

Joseph, of whom Mary had just used the words “your father,” heard this answer. That, after all, is what all the people said and thought: Jesus was “the son (as was supposed) of Joseph” (Lk 3:23). Nonetheless, the reply of Jesus in the Temple brought once again to the mind of his “presumed father” what he had heard on that night twelve years earlier: “Joseph...do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” From that time onwards he knew that he was a guardian of the mystery of God, and it was precisely this mystery that the twelve-year-old Jesus brought to mind: “I must be in my Father’s house.”¹³

The novena continues on page 16.

March 17: The Hidden Life

Introductory Prayer

O great St. Joseph, your hidden life at Nazareth with Jesus and Mary leads us to understand where the greatest joy of heart is to be found on earth: in true communion with Christ and through him with the Father and the Spirit.

¹³ GR 15.

In the human growth of Jesus “in wisdom, age and grace,” the virtue of industriousness played a notable role, since “work is a human good,” which “transforms nature” and makes man “in a sense, more human.”

What is crucially important here is the sanctification of daily life, a sanctification that each person must acquire according to his or her own state, and one which can be promoted according to a model accessible to all people: “St. Joseph is the model of those humble ones that Christianity raises up to great destinies...he is the proof that, in order to be a good and genuine follower of Christ, there is no need of great things—it is enough to have the common, simple and human virtues, but they must be true and authentic.”¹²

The novena continues on page 16.

March 16: The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Introductory Prayer

O glorious Saint Joseph, pattern of all holiness, when you lost the child Jesus, you sought him sorrowing for three days, until with great joy you found him again in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors.

By this sorrow and this joy, we ask you to keep us from ever having the misfortune of losing Jesus through mortal sin. Grant also that, should we commit a serious sin, we always may seek him with unceasing sorrow, until we find him again, ready to show us his great mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Amen.

Reading: Luke 2:41-50

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him

¹² GR 22-24.

The novena continues on page 16.

March 14: The Flight to Egypt

Introductory Prayer

O most watchful guardian of the Son of God, glorious Saint Joseph, great was your toil in supporting and waiting upon the Son of God, especially during the flight into Egypt! Yet, how you rejoiced to have God himself always near you.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us the grace that would keep us safe from the devil, especially the help we need to flee from dangerous situations. May we serve Jesus and Mary, and for them alone may we live and happily die. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 2:13-15

When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Meditation

Herod learned from the magi, who came from the East, about the birth of the “king of the Jews” (Mt 2:2).

And when the magi departed, he “sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under” (Mt 2:16). By killing them all, he wished to kill the newborn “king of the Jews,” whom he had heard about.¹⁰

¹⁰ GR 14.

The Church deeply venerates this Family and proposes it as the model of all families. Inserted directly in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Family of Nazareth has its own special mystery. And in this mystery, as in the Incarnation, one finds a true fatherhood: the human form of the family of the Son of God, a true human family, formed by the divine mystery. In this family, Joseph is the father: his fatherhood is not one that derives from begetting offspring, but neither is it an “apparent” or merely “substitute” fatherhood. Rather, it is one that fully shares in authentic human fatherhood and the mission of a father in the family. This is a consequence of the hypostatic union: humanity taken up into the unity of the Divine Person of the Word-Son, Jesus Christ. Together with human nature, all that is human, and especially the family—as the first dimension of man’s existence in the world—is also taken up in Christ. Within this context, Joseph’s human fatherhood was also “taken up” in the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation.¹¹

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March 15: The Return to Nazareth

Introductory Prayer

O glorious Saint Joseph, you marveled to see the King of heaven obedient to your commands. Your consolation in bringing Jesus out of the land of Egypt was troubled by your fear of Archelaus. Nevertheless, being assured by an angel, you lived in gladness at Nazareth with Jesus and Mary.

By this sorrow and this joy, obtain for us that our hearts may be delivered from harmful fears, so that we may rejoice in peace of conscience and may live with Jesus and Mary, and, like you, may die in their company. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 2:19-23

When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazorean.”

Meditation

Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth. The Gospel specifies the kind of work Joseph did in order to support his family: he was a carpenter. This simple word sums up Joseph’s entire life. For Jesus, these were hidden years, the years to which Luke refers after recounting the episode that occurred in the Temple: “And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them” (Lk 2:51). This “submission” or obedience of Jesus in the house of Nazareth should be understood as a sharing in the work of Joseph. Having learned the work of his presumed father, he was known as “the carpenter’s son.” If the Family of Nazareth is an example and model for human families, in the order of salvation and holiness, so, too, by analogy, is Jesus’ work at the side of Joseph the carpenter. In our own day, the Church has emphasized this by instituting the liturgical memorial of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1. Human work, and especially manual labor, receives special prominence in the Gospel. Along with the humanity of the Son of God, work, too, has been taken up in the mystery of the Incarnation, and has also been redeemed in a special way. At the workbench where he plied his trade together with Jesus, Joseph brought human work closer to the mystery of the Redemption.

¹¹ GR 21.