

## Fr. Matt's Reflection for the Solemnity of St. Joseph Solemn Vespers Service

Tonight we begin our celebration of the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. Sadly, we do it apart from one another. I think, though, it is God's providence that presents St. Joseph to us in a time like this.

The challenges that Joseph faced in his mission to care for and protect Jesus and Mary were not dissimilar to the challenges we are facing right now with the current public health crisis.

Over and over again, Joseph was confronted with the reality that he wasn't in control; that powers and situations far beyond him frustrated his every effort.

He was responsible for caring for Mary and her baby but could find no place for her to give birth other than among animals, nowhere to place the infant other than the food tray of livestock. Then, the government sought to kill his family and he was forced to flee to a foreign country with no clear means of providing for their survival. Years later, he tried to return home but learned he couldn't and settled in yet another new place.

Time and time again, Joseph was forced to admit his powerlessness. And thank God for that. Because of that, because Joseph was able to avoid the illusion of self-reliance, he depended solely on God, and in that way became a good and faithful protector of the Holy Family.

This time that we are in shatters the illusion of control that we can too often have. It calls out from us a recognition of our absolute dependence upon our Heavenly Father. **Use** this time, be **open** to these graces. It is the same grace that was given to Joseph, the grace to realize our poverty and yet take the next step to receive the strength and power that come only from God, a strength and power that not even death itself can overcome. Joseph surrendered the illusion of control in his life, and in that way allowed God's greater plan to unfold. On this Solemnity of Saint Joseph, that is a grace being offered to each and every one of us.