



*“Ite ad Joseph!” – “Go to Joseph!”*

Those words I learned as a very young child growing up in the North Country where on a clear day one could see in the distance the dome of St. Joseph’s Oratory on Mount Royal in Montreal.

They are also an invitation for you and me, like St. Joseph, to listen evermore to the voice of God in our lives. What better time to do so than in the holy season of Lent, during which we will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, on March 19<sup>th</sup>. So I would like to invite you to join me in a 33-day consecration of the Diocese of Syracuse to St. Joseph which will culminate in a diocesan celebration of his feast at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at noon on Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup>.

We invoke the intercession of St. Joseph as patron of the Universal Church, that you and I, like St. Joseph, may be living witnesses of the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus Christ – where we dwell and in our labors. More than ever, our witness of the Living Word is needed to counter the sin and dark terrors that seek to hide the light of Christ in our world today. I think again of one of my favorite images of Joseph holding a walking stick/shepherd’s staff with a lantern on it helping to light the way.

Is that not the Lenten call to conversion...to turn away from the darkness of sin and be faithful to the light of the Gospel...to be vessels filled with the light of Christ and lamplighters in our world today? In fact, at the culmination of our Lenten observance will be the Sacred Triduum. During the Easter Vigil at the lighting of the Paschal Candle these words will be announced to all, “Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, a light no darkness can extinguish!”

St. Joseph sought to help bring that Light into the world by following the call of God in his life. We, too, are invited to remember that on the day of our baptism each one of us was called by name and entrusted with the light of Christ. Maybe that flame has grown dim in our lives or maybe we think it could be stronger. This is where these days of consecration can assist you and me in recommitting ourselves to our baptismal calling. It is reminiscent of Joseph rising from a dream-filled sleep with renewed resolution to take Mary as his wife.

May you and I have this same renewed resolution in loving God with our whole heart and soul, and our neighbor as our self. Just a practical note that should you skip a day in this consecration due to the escape of time that can happen in our lives, simply pray the missed prayer the following day and continue the consecration. So let us together this Lent go to Joseph who in turn wants to share with us the light of Christ...the column of fire dispelling the darkness of the night!

Bishop Douglas J. Lucia