

DEVOTION
TO
SAINT JOSEPH.

BY
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OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

"As the praise of Mary is the praise of Christ, so the praise of Joseph redounds to the honor of both."—GERSON. *Serm. on the Nat. B. V. M.*

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*We approve of the translation of the Work on
titled, "Devotion to Saint Joseph," by the Rev
Anthony Patrignani, of the Society of Jesus.*

✠ *JOHN, Archbishop of New York*





PREFACE.

THE work we now publish is a translation of that of Father Joseph Anthony Patrignani. The desire of the Father in composing it, was to contribute to spread devotion to St. Joseph, as well as nourish his clients' piety. The same is our desire. Does not this great Saint, whom God has distinguished above all others by the glorious titles of *Spouse of Mary* and *Father of Jesus*, and whose heroic acts have admirably corresponded to this twofold dignity, which no creature, human or angelic, can ever share with him—does not, I repeat, this great saint merit on our part a special worship and particular homage?

A great number of writers and sacred orators have undertaken, in elegant panegyrics, to show forth the

prerogatives and the virtues of St. Joseph, and they have succeeded in rallying around him a multitude of devout clients, who invoke him as their advocate and their father, as the worthiest object of their confidence and love, after Jesus and Mary. We shall endeavor, in our turn, to attain the same result, but by an easier and shorter way—that of examples ; a way to which Fr. Patrignani has given the preference. Examples, in fact, more easily enter into the mind, and penetrate more readily into the heart, than do the most solid reasonings. The latter merely convince ; the former, besides conviction, carry something more soul-stirring—persuasion.

In the first book we shall present the homage and services which have been rendered to St. Joseph, as so many motives for attaching ourselves to his worship : in the second, we shall narrate the favors granted by this saint to those devoted to his interests. The third book will contain certain pious practices calculated to honor St. Joseph and to make him known.

Fr. Patrignani wrote in 1709. Since that date the worship of St. Joseph has undergone many

changes in its exterior practices. Were we, in the present translation, merely to instruct our readers in those more ancient usages, without informing them of what is being done at the present day, we might deservedly be reproached for our want of being practical. Hence we have been obliged to make some modifications ; but whilst making them, we have respected the author's idea as far as possible. For the most part, we have had recourse to notes in order to correct whatever appeared to us as inexact and incomplete.

Of late years, the festivals of St. Joseph have multiplied ; pilgrimages and pious associations have been formed. These are unequivocal testimonies to the veneration of the faithful for this holy patriarch, and—may we not even say it?—they are the fruits of the excellent work we now present in an English translation. We have likewise thought that brief notices of these pious foundations would not be out of place, hence we have collected them together at the end of the second book. In the third book, to the practices already mentioned there, we have added those which are especially

appropriate to the new associations, or to the pilgrimages recently founded. Thus, one and the same work will contain both truly solid motives for honoring St. Joseph, and numberless means for rendering him the honor he deserves.

It now only remains for us, with the pious author, to offer this work to the great saint who is its object, begging of him to supply what is wanting, and favorably to accept our desire of spreading his devotion, of making his name amiable to all hearts, and his protection salutary to all those who invoke him with confidence.





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DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

Book first.

MOTIVES FOR DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

CHAPTER I.

PRINCIPAL MOTIVE FOR DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH—THE EXAMPLE
OF JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF.



WHEN Jesus Christ, while hanging on the Cross, said to His blessed Mother, pointing at the same time towards St. John the Apostle, "*Woman, behold thy Son!*" He doubtless intended to place all the human race under her protection in the person of the beloved disciple, who then, says St. Bernadine of Sienna, represented all the elect. In like manner, we may believe that the Eternal Father, in appointing St. Joseph, in his capacity

of Head of the Holy Family, to guide and protect Jesus and Mary during the flight into Egypt, to watch over and provide for them, designed to place all men under his fatherly care, and to inspire them with veneration for a saint to whom He confided the most precious trust—the Saviour of the World, the Incarnate Word, the Source of all Delights, and the Centre of all the Riches of Paradise. This motive alone suffices to inspire us with a tender devotion to St. Joseph ; but a still more powerful one is the example which the Son of the Most High has given us.

The whole life of the Saviour is a perfect, or, to speak more properly, a divine model proposed to our imitation. *“For I have given you an example,”* said He, *“that as I have done to you, so you do also.”* (St. John, xiii. 15.) Now let us consider the example that He has left us regarding the honor we should pay to St. Joseph. Jesus was the first among men to honor him ; He saw in this holy patriarch the representative of the Eternal Father, who had made him His guardian upon earth ; therefore He always considered him as a father : and had He really been his son, He could not have shown him greater respect.

Already, Christian reader, I imagine that I see in your heart a pious and eager desire, urging

you to inquire more particularly into the manner in which Jesus honored St. Joseph ; but how can I satisfy you when you ask me to reveal to you actions with which the Holy Ghost has not seen fit to acquaint us ? St. Luke, the depository of the secrets of the Incarnate Word, and the privileged historian of the mysteries of His divine infancy, includes all that the Man-God did from his twelfth to his thirtieth year in these three words : *Erat subditus illis. He was subject to them.* What ! has the Son of God, during the space of eighteen years, done nothing great or mysterious to serve us as a lesson ? To say so would be impious. Or, had the Evangelist no circumstantial information concerning the private life of Jesus during the many years He passed at Nazareth ? Was it not at the school of the Blessed Virgin, so to speak, that the sacred writer learned all that he had to recount ? Was it not from the lips of Mary herself that he drew the smallest details concerning the birth of the Saviour in a stable, the adoration of the shepherds, the canticle of the Angelic Host, and a thousand other particulars relative to the mystery of the Incarnation, on which account many authors have not hesitated to call him the Secretary of the Blessed Virgin ? Since, therefore, St.

Luke, the faithful historian, sums up all that our Saviour did during the greater part of His life in these three words, *He was subject to them*, it follows thence that Jesus obeyed Mary and Joseph so perfectly that, although he performed an infinity of heroic acts of piety, humility, patience, zeal, and all other virtues, yet He seems, nevertheless, to have had no other occupation than to do the will of His parents; for which reason, doubtless, He wished that His obedience alone should be chronicled in the Gospel, regarding it as an act at once the most noble, most glorious, and most worthy of the Incarnate Word.

But the obedience of Jesus presupposes a right in the person who commands Him: therefore, in the words just cited, we find both the abridgment of the life of the Son of God, and also that of St. Joseph. What, then, were the acts of Joseph during the eighteen years he lived with Jesus at Nazareth? All is comprised in three words: *He commanded Jesus*. He had a perfect right to do so, since, being the head of the family, it was his duty to govern it. Mary, doubtless, ruled over Him in her character of Mother, but the husband having the principal authority over the children, Jesus, who saw Joseph invested with that authority, practised special obedience

to him. This is the opinion of two great theologians, St. Thomas and Peter d'Ailly. Let us here address ourselves to the heavenly hosts, and ask them if they were not often filled with admiration at the sight of the Infant-God, during His sojourn at Nazareth? whether, speaking or acting, eating or reposing, He was ever submissive to the will of St. Joseph? But tell us, blessed spirits, which most excited your wonder and admiration—the humility of Jesus in obeying St. Joseph, or the dignity of St. Joseph in commanding Jesus? When the just Noah saw the ark resting on the top of Mt. Ararat, in Armenia, he needed no further measure to enable him to estimate the prodigious height of the waters of the deluge. In like manner Gerson, that devout servant of St. Joseph, finds in the profound abasement of Jesus obeying the holy patriarch, the measure of our saint's true dignity. The latter rises in proportion as the former humbles Himself, so that if the submission of Jesus attests His incomparable humility, it also proves the eminent dignity of St. Joseph.

Thus all the acts of submission practised by the Son of God, in His obedience to St. Joseph, were so many steps of glory for the latter. According to this rule, who can understand the dig-

nity of a saint who saw himself obeyed, respected, and served, during so many years, by his Creator and Sovereign Lord? Joshua has been admired by all ages, because he once arrested the course of the sun at the moment when that luminary was about to set. Yet what is the power of that famous captain compared to that of Joseph, who not once, but many thousand times, could, at his will, control all the actions of his God, the Maker of the sun? Great, truly, was the power exercised in Egypt by that Joseph to whom Pharaoh confided the government of his kingdom. Moses also could have possessed no more glorious nor wonderful title than that bestowed upon him by the God of armies, namely, "the God of Pharaoh;" but all these titles, great as they are, vanish before the dignity of a saint to whom the King of kings submits Himself as to a father and lord.

Hence it is as impossible to find amid all the inhabitants of heaven, if we except Mary, a greater saint than St. Joseph, as it is to conceive of an authority more extended than his, which allowed him to command the Son of God. Let us suppose that God created ten thousand worlds, that He gave to each one a separate king upon condition that all these monarchs should recognize and

submit to one among their number as sovereign lord over all the others. Imagine the dignity of the monarch who should be selected to receive the homage of ten thousand powerful princes ! the glory of the throne thus raised above all the rest ! However, that mighty sovereign could not receive so much honor from the submission of so many powerful kings as that experienced by St. Joseph from the perfect obedience of the Son of God. When Iphicrates said to his soldiers, that he considered his own position as commander of those who commanded others, to be far more glorious than that of an emperor, he merely uttered a vain boast ; but St. Joseph could truly say : "To me alone belongs the glory of commanding that God upon whom all creatures depend, to whom all princes must submit, and under whom they stoop that bear up the world." (Job, ix. 13.)

But if the glory of those in authority consists less in the power of commanding than in receiving prompt obedience and respectful submission, we must allow that the dignity of Joseph consisted less in commanding Jesus than in being punctually obeyed by Him. In order to satisfy the devout servants of St. Joseph, we will here give some detailed account, and mention some of the acts of obedience which the Son of God prac-

tised in the house of Nazareth, with as much submission as if He had been incapable of self-government. As we have stated above, St. Luke has comprised eighteen years of the life of Jesus Christ in the few words, "*He was subject to them,*" still we will permit ourselves, with the aid of the Holy Fathers, to develop these words, or at least their sense. St. Basil, in the fortieth chapter of his Monastic Constitutions, writes that the Saviour daily labored unceasingly to obey Mary and Joseph. St. Justin Martyr assures us, in his *Dialogue with Tryphon*, that the Incarnate Word assisted St. Joseph in his labors, and shared in them as far as His strength permitted. St. Jerome and St. Bonaventure say the same thing; but the most undeniable proof of the continual obedience of Jesus towards St. Joseph, is found in the words of the Blessed Virgin speaking to St. Bridget, her favored servant. She says: "*My Son was so obedient, that when Joseph said to Him, Do this or that, He did it immediately.*" (Rev. of St. Bridget, b. iv., c. 58.)

We may figure to ourselves Joseph and Jesus, the former exercising parental authority in the orders he gives, and the latter acquitting Himself of his duties with filial obedience. Joseph, who, to supply the wants of a God reduced to indi-

ence, followed the laborious trade of a carpenter, said, with a respectful voice, to his adopted Son :
*'Jesus, help me to saw this plank, to shape this block.
. . Jesus, take the hammer and drive in this nail.
Jesus, come and pick up these shavings, put away these boards which we have just planed. . . . Jesus, carry some chips and coals to your mother, and help her to make a fire.'* Light came not forth more quickly from darkness at the voice of the Creator than did Jesus hasten to execute the orders of the holy patriarch. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that the inhabitants of Nazareth looked upon Him as the true son of Joseph. They fell into this, then innocent error, from seeing Him constantly assisting the humble artisan in his labors. "*Is not this the carpenter's son?*" was their cry.

Again : contemplate, with Gerson, this King of glory, this God of majesty, whom millions of angels serve and honor ; see Him act, not only as companion to Joseph in his workshop, but also as servant to Mary in the little house of Nazareth ; see Him put wood on the fire, go to the fountain to draw water, lay the table, and even debase Himself so far as to perform the most menial offices. How was it that St. Joseph was not overcome by joy and confusion at the sight of such humility ?

Tobias prostrated himself with his face to the ground, filled with fear and astonishment at the moment when the angel Raphael, who had, under a human form, served him so long as guide, suddenly revealed the secret of his greatness. How much greater must have been the confusion of Joseph, understanding as he did the greatness of the God made flesh, and clothed with a servile form, when he received from Him all the services one generally expects from a son, or even from a servant ! Happy saint ! how often, penetrated with the most lively sentiments of respect and humility, have you not said to that blessed child, seeing Him out of breath and exhausted by fatigue : “ O Jesus ! O my son ! you know how much more I would prefer obedience to authority, but, obliged as I am to follow the orders of your Divine Father, it is necessary for me to command you. I adore your obedience, and my superiority only pleases me inasmuch as it has pleased you to give to the world the glorious example of the Creator subject to His creature. Ah, if you would suffer me to change places with you, and you take that of master ! ” But Jesus, to console Joseph, would doubtless reply thus : “ Dear guardian of my infancy, be resigned to the honors which I pay to you ; it is my will that you should

exercise the authority of a father in my behalf, and that I show you the submission due from a son : by this means we shall give the world an example of justice and propriety."

In this marvellous subjection of Jesus to Joseph, Origen sees a striking example of the respect and obedience children owe to their parents. We have a right to add, that our Divine Saviour, in thus honoring Joseph as His father, wished doubtless to leave to His great family, the Church, a striking example, which should teach her to pay Joseph special homage as the head of the Holy Family ; had Jesus Christ submitted but for one hour only to the directions and orders of Joseph, it would have been sufficient to render that holy patriarch venerable among all the saints ; but how much more should he not be honored after Jesus ~~was~~ consented to be subject to him during so many years ! Brought up, fed, and protected by St. Joseph for more than twenty-five years, could the Divine Saviour wish otherwise than that all Christians should endeavor to acknowledge by particular homage the long and faithful services which that good father rendered to His adorable person ?

Jesus Christ made known his wishes on this point to St Margaret of Cortona, by appearing to

her one day and telling her, among other things, to cultivate a special devotion to St. Joseph, who had performed the part of father towards Him with so much zeal and affection.


It would be an act of inexcusable ingratitude for Christians to refuse to pay to St. Joseph, through love of the God-Saviour, a tribute of honor and gratitude. As for me, O my Jesus, I will follow thy example ; I will serve him whom Thou hast served ; I will honor him whom Thou hast honored ; I will love him whom Thou hast loved with the tenderness of a son. Finally, O my sweet Jesus ! by that profound humility which rendered Thy adorable person obedient to the least motion of St. Joseph, I beseech Thee to grant that Thy unworthy servant may be devoted from this moment and forever to the service of this great Saint for the sole purpose of pleasing Thee, since Thou wast the first to give an example of affection towards him.





CHAPTER II.

SECOND MOTIVE OF DEVOTION TOWARDS ST. JOSEPH—THE EXAMPLE OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.

THE ancient patriarch Joseph, from his earliest childhood, knew the glorious fortune which awaited him. God showed him, in a dream, the two principal stars of the firmament, the sun and moon, inclining themselves respectfully before him. Thus the first Joseph was in some sort, we may say, the figure of the second, in whom the prophetic dream was most perfectly verified, when Jesus Christ, the true Sun of Justice, and Mary, the mysterious Moon, which communicated to the world the light of the Sun, rendered to Him, as to their chief, the most perfect obedience, and cheerfully depended in all things upon His direction. This is not all : another prophet, in a similar apparition, saw the same stars immovable in their proper spheres (Habacuc, iii.) In what earthly abode was such a

prodigy ever seen, save in the holy house of Nazareth? That house was truly the abode of the Sun and Moon ; but they were immovable, since they had no other motion than that which they received from St. Joseph. We have seen the Sun, that is to say the Son of God, submitting to the holy patriarch as to a father ; we shall now contemplate the Moon, that is, the Mother of God, equally subject to Joseph, not only as to her spouse, but also as to her protector, and in some sort her father.

Amid all the planets the moon is the most striking image of the sun ; Mary also, among all the saints, has been the most perfect imitator of the virtues and actions of the Man-God. Now, amid the many examples she has left us, I find the respect she showed to St. Joseph. He was her spouse, as such she yielded to him and humbly obeyed him in all things. Yes, sweet Virgin, even had not the conjugal tie placed thee in a state of entire dependence upon him, thou wouldst have rendered him all the duties of the most respectful servant, were it only to conform to the example of thy Divine Son, which thou hadst ever before thine eyes.

It is true that Mary knew that the Holy Ghost had given her as spouse a man perfected in all virtues—that alone was a sufficient reason for

honoring him ; but when she saw the Son of God obey him as His father, serve him as His master, and respect him as His lord, her esteem, veneration, and love towards her spouse greatly increased. She would have, so to speak, disputed with Jesus, in proofs of honor and respect ; but not being able to attain to such humility since it was the humility of a God, she found in this impossibility itself a subject of confusion, which feeling she made known to Joseph, as if to make up for what she could not do, not merely as spouse but also as servant,—thus imitating her Divine Son.

Albert the Great gives a noble title to St. Joseph by calling him the Protector, the Patron of Mary (*Patronus Virginis*), because this saint zealously defended her honor and virginity when, still ignorant of the mystery of her being with child, he wished to prevent calumny from attacking her reputation, and therefore resolved to withdraw himself from her quietly. Such was the wisest course to take to avoid casting any suspicion upon her ; but he afterwards undertook her defence with much more vigor when the angel had revealed to him the mystery, till then hidden from him. "*Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived*

in her is of the Holy Ghost." By which words the angel, or rather God Himself, declared Joseph the protector and guardian of that admirable purity, which, by a divine and special privilege, united in one and the same person the flower of virginity to the fruit of maternity, as Mary herself revealed to St. Bridget. (Rev., B. VI., c. lix.) From that moment, and through all succeeding ages, Joseph became an unimpeachable witness to the virginity of Mary against the outrageous calumnies which the spirit of error and heresy was one day to pour forth to tarnish its lustre. The Blessed Virgin, seeing her holy spouse inflamed by a zeal equal to that of the Cherubim who, armed with a fiery sword, guarded the terrestrial paradise, gave him, herself, as St. Bridget declares, the glorious title of defender of her virginity. And this was well done, since, although she had conceived by the sole virtue of the Holy Ghost, still the protection of St. Joseph was necessary in order to preserve the reputation of the Mother as well as that of the Son, and to enable the latter to enter the world without dishonor. The heart of Mary being full of grace, is no less filled with gratitude ; therefore we cannot express the measure of what she conceived to be her indebtedness towards her holy spouse, nor the eagerness

with which she strove to prove her gratitude to him by acts of the most respectful submission and tenderest attachment. Suffice it to say, with St. Bernadine of Sienna, that Mary favored Joseph with the most precious gifts which a virgin spouse and virgin mother could bestow. As a virgin spouse she gave him her own heart, her immaculate heart, the living sanctuary of the Divinity, in order that, enriched with this treasure, he might have henceforth the right to say : In quality of spouse, I possess the heart of Mary—the purest, the most loving, and most amiable of all hearts is mine. As a Virgin Mother she gave him Jesus, the fruit of the tree of life, the source of every blessing. And what flames of love did not the Divine Infant enkindle in the heart of Joseph ! with what torrents of joy did He not inundate his soul, in those delightful moments wherein God, who is the beatitude of the saints, smiled upon His adopted father, and rested in his arms ! Did not Joseph alone possess greater treasures, more delight than the heavens and earth could contain ? In the three words, *Jesus, my son !* he said more than the apostle St. Thomas, when he exclaimed, “*My Lord and my God !*”—more than the seraphic St. Francis, repeating a thousand times, “*My God and my all !*” Truly he was not the

father of Jesus according to nature, but he had not on that account less authority over Him, nor less right to call Him son, by virtue of his position as spouse of His mother ; and furthermore, did he not always prove himself a father, and the most tender of parents, by a love which no earthly father has ever equalled ? Therefore, Mary confirmed him in the possession of this beautiful title, and bestowed it upon him on every occasion. "*Ego et pater tuus quærebamus te : Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee.*"

It was not only towards the Man-God that St. Joseph showed himself a careful and tender father ; towards Mary herself he acted more as a father than as a spouse or master. Therefore, Mary, to correspond to the sentiments of her humble, pure, and loving spouse, made it ever her duty to love, honor, and serve him with all the deference of a wife, or, to speak more properly, with all the submission of a daughter towards a father. She knew that the Eternal Father was with her spouse, and that He directed him in all his actions, as it is written of the ancient Joseph : she realized that He had established him as His lieutenant, and had confided to his care not only the God-Man, but also His Mother ; therefore, as an obedient and respectful daughter, she had

yielded up the direction of her conduct into the hands of St. Joseph, that he might dispose of her as he pleased. Joseph wills that Mary should accompany him in his journey to Bethlehem : she sets out immediately. He desires that she should take the new-born child and fly with him into Egypt : she follows without a word of complaint. Joseph remains for years in that heathen land : Mary does not ask the reason for so protracted an exile. Joseph issues the order to return to Judea : Mary follows him as a docile sheep follows its shepherd. It is not to her, but to her spouse that the angels manifest the orders of Heaven : she is not displeased at that, but even shows herself as prompt and exact in executing the will of Joseph, as the stars are to move on in their orbits and to accomplish their revolutions. Pliny the Younger, in speaking of an empress whose praises he was celebrating, said : "A princess who has so great a hero as Trajan for her spouse, can fulfil no more glorious office than that of obeying him." Were you then, great Empress of Heaven, to be pleased to discover to us the sentiments of your heart, as you deigned to do to your beloved daughter, St. Bridget, you could in glorification of your spouse repeat to us these short but comprehensive words : "I did not think it beneath me to prepare what

was necessary for Joseph" (Rev., B. VII., c. xxxv.); or these words, no less expressive : "I found delight in rendering him the most humble services." That is to say, O most admirable Virgin, that in the house of Nazareth, you, like Jesus, placed your glory in obeying Joseph implicitly. His wishes were to you as commands, his will was the rule of your conduct, and to it you conformed your thoughts and affections. In short, there were no services too painful, no labors too humiliating, to which you did not think it a duty to apply yourself, to prove to Joseph all the affection you feel for the most worthy of spouses, respect for the most zealous of protectors, and deference for the tenderest of fathers.

Such was the homage rendered by the Mother of God to the adopted father whom God had chosen for Himself upon earth, and whom He had given to her as a spouse. But she was to do still more : from the throne which she occupies in the highest Heavens, she in some sort abases herself to serve him still further by the invitations she gives to all Christians to offer him their homage. Who does not know that, in the holy house of Loretto, which is no other, as we are aware, than that of Nazareth, where she had given, during her life, so many striking proofs of respect and obedience to

St. Joseph, she ordered Father Balthazar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, her devout servant, to take the illustrious patriarch for his special protector? (See the Life of that Religious, ch. vi.) It was Mary who made another of her devoted servants, of the Premonstratensian order, change his name of Hermann to that of Joseph. (Surius, April 17.) She further commanded a Moorish slave at Naples, who was about to receive baptism, to take the name of Joseph, in memory of her holy spouse. (Father Segneri). And to thank St. Teresa for the glory which she had procured for St. Joseph, by extending his devotion throughout the Church, she came from Heaven to bestow upon her an inestimable present. (Life of the Saint, c. vi.) Finally, it was Mary who opened the Heavens to enable St. Gertrude to behold the incomparable brilliancy of the throne occupied by her holy spouse, and caused her to observe that at the name of Joseph, the Saints in Paradise, bowed their heads to do him honor. (Rev., B. IV., c. xii.)

If, then, Mary has left us these striking examples of respect and obedience towards St. Joseph, and if now that she can no longer serve him in Heaven, where they both reign in so much glory, she excites her devoted children to become also

the devout servants of her spouse, and to honor him with a peculiar title ; who is there among us who would think himself dispensed from revering him and rendering him homage ? I know that all Christians profess, though with more or less fervor, to give Mary the first place in their hearts, after Jesus. But how can they flatter themselves that they love them, if they do not also love him whom Jesus and Mary cherished with so tender an affection ?

A pious lady, named Anne Kertai, first undertook to introduce the devotion to St. Joseph into Tyrnau, in Austria, where that to the Blessed Virgin was already flourishing. She succeeded in executing her project by raising a chapel to the Saint in the Church of the Jesuit Fathers. The devotion of the inhabitants of Tyrnau towards Mary was doubtless a jewel of great price in her eyes, but she desired to see it encased in gold which should heighten its brilliancy. The desire to add so beautiful an ornament to the devotion towards Mary, induced her to exert all her zeal to inspire her fellow-citizens with an affection towards St. Joseph similar to that which they bore to the Blessed Virgin.


Some may, perhaps, object that, by adopting so many different devotions, we divide our hearts,

since what is given to one is as so much taken from the other. This is an imaginary fear, as experience makes it evident that devotion towards Joseph, far from diminishing that towards Mary, only increases it. We do not take our heart from Jesus to give it to Mary, nor do we take it from Mary to bestow it on Joseph. The mutual affection existing between Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, made of the Holy Family but one heart and one soul, *cor unum et anima una* : it will be the same with regard to the devotion which will reunite these three august persons in our heart. Many saints are of this opinion : according to St. Magdalen of Pazzi, St. Joseph takes especial care of the faithful who fight under the banner of Mary ; another saint declares that whoever will be truly devout to Joseph will be equally so to Mary ; so true is it that these two admirable spouses, like two harps tuned in unison, form together a most perfect harmony. Honor, therefore, St. Joseph, and do not fear to do too much for him, since the honor which you render to the husband will necessarily revert to the wife, by virtue of the affection which unites them ; besides which, among married people, even by human laws, there is a perfect community of honors and wealth.



CHAPTER III.

THIRD MOTIVE OF DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH—THE EXAMPLE OF THE HOLY ANGELS.

HEN the holy patriarch Jacob saw with his own eyes the glory of his well-beloved son, forgetting his position of father, he prostrated himself before the sceptre of Joseph, and rendered him the most respectful homage. What sentiments of veneration and respect must the example of this old man have excited in the hearts of his other children towards a brother become so honorable and exalted ! After having contemplated the Son of God and His mother at the feet of Joseph, you will, perhaps, judge it superfluous, dear reader, that we should point out to you the homage and veneration paid to him by the angels. It is not astonishing, you will say, that the lords of a court, those even of the highest rank, should honor a person to whom their sovereign himself

has rendered the homage due to a king. I agree with you, however, if what I have to say does not appear to you to contribute to our saint's glory. Your devotion, at least, will have cause to rejoice as well as your love for St. Joseph, at the sight of the homage which he receives from the angels, those humble servants of Jesus and Mary. The blessed spirits honored St. Joseph, as they had two powerful motives to do : firstly, because he was their equal by his purity and his other virtues ; secondly, because he surpassed them by his eminent dignity.

Our Divine Master greatly praises virginity. Virgins, though captives in this miry prison which is called the flesh, know, however, how to preserve, in all its purity, a flower which one would think could only bud and blossom in its own climate—that is to say, in heaven ; so that, although a stranger upon earth, it shines with a lustre as pure as it is unalterable, and exhales a perfume which rises even to the throne of God. For this reason, virgins have frequently been honored by the same title as the celestial spirits : thus, the name of angel was given to St. Aloysius, to Stanislas Kostka, to an Alexis, a Casimir, an Elzear, and to thousands of others ; but how much more justly still is St. Joseph the equal of

the angels, he who in purity excelled all the other saints, as the lily exceeds the other flowers in majesty !

The virginity of Joseph was, it must be confessed, a marvel without example at the time, since he was the first who practised it in the married state. Thus grace, in uniting two virgins in the persons of Mary and Joseph, added in their hearts a new lustre to that more than angelic purity which constituted their glory and their merit.

Blessed spirits ! you will permit me to say that the purity of Joseph far surpassed your own. At the sight of the Angel Gabriel appearing under a human form, at the words which he pronounced, the Queen of Virgins was troubled, said St. Ambrose (Lib. de off.) Never was she thus alarmed at the aspect or the words of her spouse : she did not fear to live nor to converse with him. I will say boldly, with St. Francis de Sales, Joseph surpassed in purity the angels of the highest hierarchy during the twenty to thirty years in which he lived with the Mother of God. The eyes of Mary, says Gerson, distilled a sort of virginal dew, which constantly purified the hearts upon which it fell : and since this heavenly dew fell abundantly each day upon the heart of Joseph,



which was perfectly disposed to receive its sweet influence, a new lustre was daily added to the purity of the holy patriarch. Therefore, it is not astonishing that Joseph should have become, so to speak, a pure spirit, nor that he has merited to be reckoned rather among angels than among men, according to a celebrated interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. (Cornelius à Lapede, on St. Matthew.)

But if Joseph was not inferior to the angels in purity, he was still more their equal by the prerogatives merited him by his eminent sanctity. It would be rashness in me to endeavor to paint to you the fulness in which Joseph enjoyed the possession of the power and functions of each of the celestial hierarchies ; other writers have undertaken it before me, and penetrating even into Heaven, they show us Joseph equal to the Guardian Angels of the first order by the vigilance he exercised over the Son of God confided to his care ; equal to the Archangels, by his transmitting to Mary the commands of God ; equal to the Powers, because he manifested to the Egyptians the power of the Word Incarnate, whose presence overthrew their idols ; equal to the Virtues, because he governed the Holy Family ; equal to the Principalities and Dominations,

because he commanded the King and Queen of Heaven ; equal to the Thrones, being himself the throne of Jesus when he carried Him in his arms ; equal to the Cherubim, since he penetrated into the most profound mysteries of the Wisdom Incarnate ; equal to the Seraphim, being raised on the wings of love, even to the highest state of contemplation, wherein he was enabled to repose sweetly on the bosom of that Divine Master whom the blessed spirits see unceasingly and never tire of beholding. *In quem desiderant angeli prospicere.* (St. Peter, Ep. I. c. i.)

We all know that resemblance induces love ; therefore the angels of all the various orders, beholding on earth a man, who, by a particular privilege of grace, equalled them in purity and sanctity, could not fail to love him in a special manner. Thus it was not without design that the angel, upon his first appearance to Joseph, called him by his name—*Joseph, son of David.* We see by the Scriptures that it was not customary for the angels to act thus in bringing messages from Heaven to men. “ *Son of man, arise,*” said the angel to Ezekiel ; “ *Rise quickly,*” said he to St. Peter ; “ *Write what you see,*” said he to St. John the Evangelist. The angels seem ignorant of, or to make no account of the names of these

illustrious personages. But such was not their course towards St. Joseph ; they called him by his own name ; they treat him as a prince, a descendant of King David—*Joseph fili David*. This glorious title belonged to him, and the angels bestowed it upon him, to honor by that distinction one whom eminence and sanctity had already distinguished. Furthermore, they loved to acknowledge him as their fellow-citizen, though he was still living in this land of exile, for, in fact, Joseph was only bodily on earth ; his soul seemed already dwelling in Heaven, enjoying its delights. So speaks Holy Church, when, addressing the holy patriarch, she says, "O admirable destiny ! even in this life equal to the angels, you share their happiness and enjoy the vision of God." (Roman Breviary, Feast of St. Joseph.)

The New Testament makes no mention of any man so favored with angelic visitants as St. Joseph. According to the Gospel, he received no less than four. Sylveira, a celebrated commentator of Holy Scripture, writing upon this subject, asks why God, who had himself warned the magi not to return to Herod, makes use of an angel to apprise Joseph of the project formed by that prince against the life of the Divine Infant ? His answer is, that the Lord, who never quitted

Joseph, made known to him His will by the angels in order to give the latter an opportunity of conversing with a saint for whom they entertained so great respect and affection. We are led to wonder why Gabriel, in revealing to Joseph the cruel projects of Herod, contented himself with ordering him to fly into Egypt, without specifying the time he is to spend there, and that visiting him there seven years after, he warns him to return into Judea, but without telling him where to fix his residence, to provide for the safety of the Holy Family, which he will come to tell him later. Why, then, these three visits, when one would suffice? Why leave matter of so great solicitude to the decision of St. Joseph? Sylveira well tells us: "The angel," says he, "so loved to repeat his visits to Joseph, in order to admire the grandeur of his faith in such profound mysteries and the tranquillity of his soul in such strange events, that he esteemed the satisfaction of seeing him frequently above the glory of enlightening him completely in a single apparition."

Let us remark again, with St. John Chrysostom, that the angels always visit St. Joseph during his sleep. "Why," he asks, "do they not make themselves known to him and visit him whilst he is awake, as they did to Zachary and the shep-

herds? If they wished to honor Joseph, would it not have been far more glorious for him had they come to him with a train worthy of the princes of the heavenly court? The most honorable visits are those which are accompanied with the utmost formality. Yet the angels paid more honor to St. Joseph by appearing to him and discovering to him the secrets of God in the obscurity of a dream, than in the glory of a visit full of grandeur and majesty, since they thereby evinced their belief in the firm and lively faith of a man, who, to receive the mysteries which were announced to him, had no need to see with his eyes the heavenly ambassadors, all brilliant with light and glory." (St. J. Chrys., Hom. IV. in Matt.; and also Theophylactus.)

Charmed by the faith of St. Joseph, a wise and pious writer, in addressing him, speaks thus: "O Joseph, most holy of men! how could you so readily and firmly believe so new, profound, and unparalleled a mystery?" But I, still more delighted with his promptitude in executing the orders given him, however painful they might be, say to him, with another interpreter, Drexelius: "Teach me, O glorious saint, why the angels, who make a profession of honoring your virtues and prerogatives, do not make known to you the

orders of the Most High with more respect! Why not leave you the time to prepare for flight and exile? '*Take the young child and His mother,*' there is the command; '*fly into Egypt,*' there is the place of abode; '*remain there till I tell thee,*' there is the duration, or rather the uncertainty of the length of an exile which had neither been foreseen nor prepared for. Why not have warned Joseph some days at least before his departure? I am waiting for my answer and Joseph is already on his journey, as prompt in following the orders of the angel as the latter was in executing those of God."

But some may ask, What honor does the angel here give to St. Joseph? Honor is for him who commands, not for him who obeys. I answer them: that Joseph had more glory in obeying the angel than the angel had in commanding Joseph. The angel commanded Joseph in order to honor him, knowing that, superior to the weaknesses and pride of human nature, he would give the world the example of truly angelic obedience. The angels obey God with promptitude and devotedness, and Joseph follows the example of those blessed spirits. He hears the command, rises, and sets out. Oh, what joy for the angel to see this promptitude of obedience! Formerly,

the angels were obliged to use a sort of violence ; to decide Lot to quit Sodom, they were forced to take him by the hand and lead him forth against his will from that infamous city. On the contrary, a word, a sign, is sufficient to make Joseph quit his country, for he makes no delay ; he is silent and obeys. (See, in the Roman Breviary, the Homily of St. J. Chrys. for the Octave of the Holy Innocents.)

Now, if the angels rendered so much honor to St. Joseph, because they saw in him their equal in purity, fidelity, and obedience, what fresh honors did they not render him, by reason of the dignity which raised him above all the celestial hierarchy ? To what one, I say, not only of the angels, but even of the Seraphim, has the Lord ever communicated His divine paternity ? To which of them has He ever said : "*Thou art my son,*" or far more still, "*You are my father ?*" Joseph, alone, to the exclusion of all the heavenly spirits, was judged worthy to bear that name which seemed incommunicable. The angels were ordered to adore, on earth, the incarnate Son of God. Joseph, alone, while adoring with them the Divine Infant, could justly say to them : "You angels of heaven can indeed praise and adore Him, for He is your Creator and Lord ; but I can

do more, I can embrace, kiss, and caress Him, for He is my Son." (St. Cyprian.) What must have been the sentiments of these blessed spirits at the sight of so sublime a dignity reserved for St. Joseph ! They were incapable of envy, but a sort of strife and rivalry arose amongst them as to which of them should testify the greatest respect, esteem, and affection for a father so favored by God.

What honors and services have not been rendered by the angels to some saints, solely because they saw in them the friends of God ! Father Segneri tells us, that they bestowed their care during seven days upon a hermit in his last illness. They served as physicians to Timothy, as couriers to Anthony, as laborers to Isidore, as sailors to Basilides, and as pilots to the old man whose marvellous history has been transmitted to us by St. Paulinus. "Therefore," says Suarez, "we may imagine the care which they bestowed upon him who was not only the friend of God, but the prince of the friends of God ; to him who was not only a saint, but the first among all the saints ; to him whom the mouth of a child-God had so often called father !" "With what eagerness," adds Sylveira, "did not the angels, at the sight of Joseph enduring hard labor, offering his

sweat to succor a God unknown and despised ; endeavoring to assuage His hunger, to quench His thirst, immolating himself to provide for the wants of this poor child, suffering every deprivation, and not having where to lay his head—with what eagerness, I say, must not the angels, if not from a sense of justice and duty, at least through admiration and respect, have descended from heaven, sometimes, to visit the workshop of St. Joseph, to assist him in his labors : sometimes to go to his house, to comfort him in his fatigue, and sometimes to accompany him on his journeys, to serve him as guides, and to provide for his wants ! How often must the sole desire of enjoying his company, and admiring his assiduity in serving the Incarnate Word, have drawn them to his presence !”

The venerable Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, who was spiritually enlightened upon the mysteries of the Divine Infancy, being one day interrogated by her Superior upon what she knew of the person of St. Joseph, said, among other things, “that he was often hired out by the day, and that God permitted that he should find work suitable to his taste for silence and prayer. Sometimes,” added she, “the angels came to aid him ; but the holy old man did not stop to con-

sider them, for his eyes, as well those of the body as the soul, having looked continually upon the Divine Infant, could no longer find objects capable of fixing their attention save Him and His mother."

We can readily believe that St. Joseph, humble as he was, could not see without pain the angels sharing in his labors; he would rather have wished to conform himself, in all respects, to the example of the Divine Infant, who, though the King of Angels, had come upon earth, not to be served, but to serve and to embrace all kinds of labor and fatigue. Be that as it may, will it not suffice, for the glory of our saint, to show that he was worthy the honors and services he received from the angels, by reason of the resemblance which his virtues and functions gave him with those heavenly spirits? But he was still more deserving of them from the pre-eminent dignity of his title of Father of Jesus. "*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.*" (Hebrews, i. 4.)

As for me, O glorious St. Joseph, I am so fully persuaded of your pre-eminence over those blessed spirits, that I would desire, with one of your most devout panegyrists, to see all the members of my body converted into as many tongues, to cele-

brate you. Ah! at least, I will serve you with
Jesus, love you with Mary, and honor and praise
you with the holy angels.

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CHAPTER IV.

FOURTH MOTIVE FOR DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH—THE EXAMPLE OF HOLY CHURCH.

THE chaste Joseph, victim of the shameful persecution of an infamous calumniatrix, passed several years in a dark prison. But at length, restored to liberty, he entered, full of glory, into the palace of the king of Egypt,—like the sun, which, after having disappeared under a dark cloud, comes forth more beautiful and radiant than before. Such, we may say, has been the destiny of the glorious spouse of Mary. During many centuries he remained almost unknown in the Christian world; but the clouds in which heresy had enveloped him being at length dissipated, he, like the sun, has issued forth more brilliantly than ever to enlighten the heavens of the Church.

During latter years, Holy Church seems anxious to indemnify him by more solemn honors for those

which she failed to render him in the first ages of Christianity. From the commencement she was persuaded, it is true, that Joseph was a great and perfect man, the true spouse of the Mother of God, and father of Jesus Christ, by the love and care he had for the Divine Infant. But as too strong a light is apt to dazzle the eyes of the sick and weak, so, by a wise disposition of Providence, she judged proper to keep the shining sanctity of Joseph hidden for a time. The heresy of Cerinthus imposed these precautions. That innovator taught that Joseph was the father of Jesus Christ according to nature, whilst revelation tells us he was only so in appearance. Thus, that heretic lowered the person of Jesus Christ, and also that of His Mother, from whom he ravished one of the most brilliant pearls in her diadem—her inviolable virginity—and deprived her Son of the glory of His miraculous conception by the power of the Holy Ghost. However watchful to counteract the poison of this heresy, the effects of which would have been so fatal to the faith of her children, the Church, among other precautions, took that of not favoring devotion to St. Joseph just at that time, fearing by that to accredit the error. Such are the words of a great theologian. Father Paul Segneri, a celebrated

modern writer, adds, that in order to effect this, she even pretended to neglect St. Joseph, to confound him with the crowd, and to prefer, apparently, many saints to him, who assuredly were not his equals in merit. Such was the wise reserve of the Church in order to maintain the full dignity of the God-Man. Another writer tells us, on the authority of St. Gregory Nazianzen, that, as the rising Church deemed it fitting not to develop all the points of faith on the adorable perfections of the Holy Ghost, the invisible spouse of the Blessed Virgin, before the faith in the Divinity of the Saviour had taken firm root in the hearts of the faithful; so also she judged it necessary not to turn their piety towards devotion to St. Joseph, the visible spouse of Mary, before the virginity of this divine Mother was acknowledged and honored throughout the universe.

But now that the darkness of ancient errors is dissipated, and the opposite truths shine in all their lustre, in the full blaze of Christian faith, Holy Church seems, as I have before said, to take every means to indemnify St. Joseph for the homage of which he was so long deprived. Not content with raising altars, oratories, and temples in his honor, erecting confraternities and forming religious orders under his name, establish-

ing numerous feasts in his honor, with proper Masses and Offices, containing hymns in which his praises are celebrated with so much pomp that they alone would suffice to give an idea of the virtues and privileges which elevate him above all other saints ; but, moreover, by placing his principal festival in the time of Lent, she has imposed upon sacred orators who during that holy season are constantly preaching the Word of God, the sweet necessity of yearly publishing the glory and greatness of St. Joseph, even to the extreme ends of the world. Can we mention any other saint to whom has ever been offered so universal and striking a homage ? We hear the panegyric of such and such a saint on the day of his feast, but it is generally only in some particular town, and in some one special church of that town. Such is not the case with the Feast of St. Joseph ; it belongs to all churches, to all towns, and to every village, and as many panegyrics are pronounced in his honor as there are preachers in each city ; so that, from the east to the west, wherever the Saviour's name is heard, there also resounds that of His beloved guardian. Thus are verified the words of Ecclesiasticus : "*He who protects his Lord shall be glorified !*" Is not the intention of the Church manifested to us by

the singular favors she grants in our own time to the practices destined to ennoble the devotion to St. Joseph, by the encouragement she gives to all the associations which invite persons to enroll themselves under the banner of the glorious patriarch? And, after the practices whose end is to honor our Lord or His holy Mother, do we find any more powerfully patronized than those which refer to St. Joseph? Can it not be said that all classes of society, animated by the examples of the clergy and religious orders, rival one another in endeavoring to extend the devotion towards this illustrious saint?

But if in the honors she now renders to this holy patriarch, the Church compensates for those which were refused him during the first ages, she also pays him a just tribute of gratitude for the signal favors received from him. She fully realized, says St. Bernard, that Joseph had, by his sanctified life, contributed more towards the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the Word than the ancient patriarchs had done by their sighs, tears, and merits; she saw that his virginity had been, in one sense, more fruitful than the fecundity of all the ancestors of the Saviour, and that this chaste father had been more happy in his posterity than all the heroes of the ancient law put

together. She knew that our saint had been in some way necessary to the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, not only that the Saviour might come into the world without dishonor, but also, as St. Thomas says, to establish throughout the universe the belief in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the virginity of Mary. She felt that if the parents of Tobias were indebted to the Angel Raphael, who had served the young man as guide during his journey, the Holy Family and the Christian world owed still more gratitude to Joseph, who had protected the Infancy of his incarnate God and Saviour. Unlike the viceroy of Egypt, St. Joseph had not contented himself merely with amassing a provision of material corn to nourish the subjects of an idolatrous monarch, but he had sheltered and preserved for the faithful the wheat of the elect, the true bread of God's children, the vivifying and living bread, the germ of salvation, the food of immortality. She was not ignorant that if the guilty incredulity of Thomas had done more towards establishing the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, one of the principal foundations of Christian faith, in like manner the excusable doubt entertained by St. Joseph when he first heard of the mysterious pregnancy of Mary had served

to confirm the new Christians in the faith in the mystery of the Incarnation, the source and principle of all the graces we receive from our Lord Jesus Christ. In short, she knew that the functions of guardian, foster-father, and defender both of the Son and the Mother had cost Joseph pains, labors, and anxieties, and that he had endured them all with incomparable love and constancy.


Considering these invaluable services, Holy Church deems herself bound to acknowledge him for her signal benefactor, and to prove her gratitude to him by offering him her homage, with that of all her children. And if Pharaoh, to show his appreciation of his minister, raised him not only above all the lords of his court, but, furthermore, confided to him the supreme authority throughout his entire kingdom, Holy Church has, it appears, done no less towards Joseph, the nursing father of Jesus. "O Joseph," she says to him, "I commend my children to your care; how happy they will be under the protection of him to whom the Eternal Father confided his principal treasures! Jesus, your son, is my spouse; Mary, your spouse, is my Mother and my Queen; you, adorable saint! will be my father and protector. In adopting the Saviour of the world for your son, you adopted all His brethren—that is to say,

all the Faithful, who are my children. The service which you rendered to Jesus, you render equally to those who have become his brothers. What homage can I offer you which can equal your benefits and merits ! I will style you, the glory of the angels and saints, the invisible prop of Christianity, the glorious conqueror of hell, the great minister of our salvation, the advocate of sinners, the refuge of the afflicted, the aid and consoler of the dying ; finally, to include in a few words all your glorious and praiseworthy titles, I will call you the father of Jesus and the spouse of Mary. Blessed father of Jesus ! be ever the father of His Church. Join your spouse in watching over my children ; defend them against the impiety of the many Herods who endeavor to stifle the faith in and love of Jesus in their souls. What a happiness for me, O glorious Joseph ! if I can cause your name to resound over all the universe in company with those of Jesus and Mary ! What a charming concert will be formed by the united voices of the Church, both triumphant and militant, celebrating the virtues which have rendered you the worthy spouse of the Queen of Virgins !" (Roman Breviary, Feast of St. Joseph.)



CHAPTER V.

FIFTH MOTIVE—THE FRUITS OF THE DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH
THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.

O sooner had the Egyptians, remarks St. Bernard, fixed their eyes upon the great and admirable qualities of Joseph, than, as if by enchantment, they were attracted to his person. The spouse of Mary, more amiable assuredly than the minister of Pharaoh, has obtained a more signal favor, for, within the last few centuries, the grandeur of his virtues and the excellence of his merits having appeared in their full light, he has seen the most docile as well as the most savage hearts attach themselves to him. I mean by this, that the devotion to St. Joseph has been spread, not only throughout all Europe, which is the centre of religion, but it has also passed into Asia, Africa, and America. If we go into Turkey, we will there find Latins, Greeks, and

Catholics of every rite remarkable for their devotion to our saint. Should we penetrate into the thickest forests of North America, we will hear the first Iroquois who received baptism glory in the honor of bearing the name of Joseph. If we cross the seas and visit the scorching plains of Paraguay, we will meet with numbers of Christians bearing that beautiful name, and we may admire their devotion to that great saint. Impelled by the breath of the Holy Spirit, it has steered its way so fortunately, that, passing the bounds reached by the most daring conquerors, it has crossed the ocean to implant itself in the hearts of people heretofore unknown. If we follow the apostolic missionaries into Tonquin, we will disembark at ports which are always safe as long as they are under the protection of St. Joseph, and we will find his name given to the first one baptized there. If, surmounting our fatigue, we advance into the most distant parts of India, everywhere in the East as well as the West, our hearts will bound with joy in hearing the sweet name of Joseph.

If we seek to know the reason why devotion towards this great saint has made such rapid progress in those idolatrous countries, we may, perhaps, find it in the reflection that, as our Saviour, in

His infancy, would only enter Egypt carried thither by St. Joseph, in the same manner the faith of the Saviour seems only willing to introduce itself among infidel nations by the aid of the intercession of the same saint ; and, if it was in his company that the Infant Jesus threw down the idols of Egypt, it is also by the devotion to His beloved foster-father that He will combat them at the present day. In fact, is it not in order to recompense St. Joseph for the labor and fatigue he underwent in that barbarous country, that God has rendered his name illustrious among idolatrous nations ? Is it not in order to manifest to the world the ardent zeal of this saint for the salvation of the Egyptians, who had given shelter to Jesus and Mary, that the Eternal Father has confided to him, if we may judge from appearances, the conversion of so many infidel nations ? St. Hilary, considering St. Joseph in the journey from Judea into Egypt, carrying the Infant God in his arms, sees in this devoted servant the figure of the apostles, who were to carry all over the world the faith of their Divine Master.

Also, St. Anselm represents to himself, in the person of Joseph, whose heart burned with the desire of seeing the entire world subjected to the

amiable yoke of Christ, preachers who extend the limits of Christianity, and who, like valiant captains, cease not to enroll new soldiers under the banner of Jesus Christ. God, therefore, wished to do more for our saint than the king of Egypt had done for the first Joseph. The recompense of his zeal and labors was, firstly, the conversion of idolatrous people, like the Egyptians, operated by his special intercession ; and, secondly, the perseverance of many in following the light of faith. Thus, the Church contemplates with joy the happy accomplishment of the project she had formed to spread devotion to St. Joseph throughout the universe, hoping thereby to find in him a protector full of zeal for the propagation of the faith. And since things are never better preserved than when under the action of the hand which formed them, it is very probable that our holy religion, which, while yet in the cradle, was confided to the guardianship and care of St. Joseph, in the person of the Infant Saviour, must, according to the designs of Heaven, and in the different states in which she finds herself, experience the effects of his protection,—God wishing that she should take birth, develop, maintain herself, and flourish under the guidance of him who, according to St Bernadine of Sienna, held in his

hands the keys to open the gates of the new law and close those of the old.

Nothing is so dear to the Church as her faith. She looks upon it as a stronghold, to the preservation of which is attached the salvation of the kingdom of her Divine Spouse. Relying implicitly upon the promise of Jesus Christ, it is not through fear that the gates of hell or the powers of earth can ever succeed in weakening it; but she dreads the snares which are laid for her children, and spares no pains to repulse the enemies who surround her. Therefore, she has special recourse to the protection of those saints who preached or defended it with the greatest success; as, for example, that of the princes of the apostles, SS. Peter and Paul. It was in the midst of the greatest dangers of the Church, according to some writers, that the devotion to St. Joseph took its rise. A fatal schism had arisen in the West, which, like a furious hurricane, attacked the faith on all sides, and threatened destruction. A council was held at Constance to devise means to remedy the evil.* Then Gerson, in

* The Council of Constance, convoked by Pope John XXIII., assembled November 5, 1414; it lasted until the month of April, 1418. The schism, kept up by numerous candidates for the papal chair, had desolated the Church

a discourse which he pronounced before this august assembly, proposed, among other means

for many years. It was on the 8th of September, 1416, that Gerson, deputy of the University of Paris, of which he was then the chancellor, and, at the same time, ambassador from the king of France to the Council, pronounced the discourse of which we speak. He took as his text the passage of St. Matthew: "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." To the praises of Mary he joined those of St. Joseph, and exhorted the Fathers of the Council to have recourse to those holy spouses, in order to obtain by their intercession the peace of the Church. In the same sermon, Gerson made another remarkable proposition in favor of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. Though he admitted that the Immaculate Conception of Mary is not formally laid down in the Scriptures, he nevertheless urged the Council to examine into the propriety of proposing that privilege as an article of faith. Then, extolling the prerogatives and dignity of St. Joseph, he spoke of his sanctification from the womb of his mother, of his perpetual virginity, of his assumption into heaven, of the place he occupies above all the other saints, though beneath that of Mary, in honor of whose Immaculate Conception he proposed to institute a solemn feast. (Since then, his present Holiness, Pope Pius IX., has officially declared it an article of faith, by a decree, dated December the 8th, 1854.)—TRANSLATOR.

The legates of the Holy See, more than twenty cardinals, two hundred bishops, and a crowd of doctors, were present, who, far from contradicting the learned theolo-

of calming the tempest and bringing about a change of morals, to invoke St. Joseph in a special manner, and to propagate devotion towards him, in hopes that it would be a forerunner of that peace which was so ardently desired. According to him, the illustrious patriarch, having been the guardian, and, in some sort, the tutor of Jesus Christ, he would also fulfil the same offices to Christianity in general. His discourse was favorably listened to and approved by the Council.

The Holy Ghost seemed to approve of Gerson's language, and manifested His approval by inspiring the people of the West with the thought of

gian, listened to him with great attention, and approved of his proposal to invoke the aid of St. Joseph. Scarcely a year had elapsed ere peace was restored to the Church; that great Catholic family was reunited under Martin V., who was elected in place of the three contending popes, Gregory XII., Benedict XIII., and John XXIII., in the fourteenth session of the Council, November 8, 1417.

The celebrated cardinal, Peter d'Ailly, archbishop of Cambray, formerly chancellor of the University of Paris, and later, legate of Martin V., assisted at this Council; he, no less than Gerson, his former disciple, was full of zeal for the honor of St. Joseph. Thus many writers hold that we may date the progress of the devotion towards St. Joseph from this Council of Constance.

honoring St. Joseph by a special devotion. They seemed convinced that the prayers and merits of this great saint not only averted the evils which threatened Catholicity, but that they also drew down upon them the richest blessings ; so says Isidore de l'Isle, a pious and learned Dominican.

Since the Church has experienced the efficacy of St. Joseph's protection, whether in propagating or manifesting forth the faith in all its purity, she is inspired with a fresh motive to honor him—namely, the benefit thence to be derived by the Faithful. Therefore, she seems to regard St. Joseph as the protector of all Christians, and, as such, she judges him worthy to be chosen, invoked, and imitated by all ages and conditions of men. It was therefore with reason that the same Isidore did not hesitate to call him the Patron of the Church Militant. But we will treat at length upon this point in the following chapter.





CHAPTER VI.

SIXTH MOTIVE—THE POWER AND BENEVOLENCE OF ST. JOSEPH IN
HIS CHARACTER AS PROTECTOR OF ALL CHRISTIANS.

GOD has, as the angelic doctor teaches, given to some saints the power of protecting us in certain necessities, but has shown Himself more generous towards St. Joseph, by making him in some manner His minister-plenipotentiary, His treasurer-general, to assist and solace all souls, in all cases whatever. Such is the doctrine of St. Teresa, and her testimony certainly equals that of thousands of other writers, because it was founded upon the daily experience she had of the influence of the saint. Such, likewise, is the sentiment of Holy Church, since she asks through his intercession all that she cannot obtain of herself: *Ut quod possibilitas nostra non obtinet; ejus nobis intercessione donetur.* King Pharaoh referred all the requests and petitions of his subjects to the ancient Joseph, whom he had constituted

absolute master of his court and kingdom. "*Go to Joseph : and do all that he shall say to you.*" (Gen. xli. 55.) The King of heaven has given similar power in His kingdom to His foster-father. Other saints, it is true, have a great influence with God, but they intercede as supplicating servants, and do not command as masters. Joseph, on the contrary, who in the house of Nazareth had seen Jesus and Mary subject to his authority as father and as spouse, now that he dwells in the house of God, where those titles, far from being annihilated, shine with an incomparable lustre, can doubtless obtain all that he desires, both from the King, His Son, and the Queen, his spouse ; he has an unlimited power over both, and, as Gerson expresses it, "commands rather than supplicates." Hence the power enjoyed in heaven by this illustrious saint.

But that which further enhances the power of his intercession is his tender heart, the love which he bears us, the deep interest he takes in hearing our petitions. Jesus Himself, in becoming his son, filled his heart with a more tender love than that of any father, and that not only to experience the effects of being loved as a son, but also in order that the love of the holy patriarch might be felt by all mankind, now become

his children. It is to this truly paternal love that the venerable Mother St. Joseph, the first Carmelite of France, makes allusion in the second book of her life, where she says "that God, having chosen our glorious saint to hold the place of father to His only Son, willed that he should hold it equally towards His adopted brothers, the mystical members of the Divine Infant, and that, for this reason, he communicated to him a special grace of love, tenderness, and solicitude. Thus, his thoughts and affections being concentrated upon them, he is thereby induced to do them as much good as the most tender father could desire for his own children. Truly, St. Joseph's family is a numerous one; it equals in number that of Jesus Christ, and comprises all the children of the Catholic Church. But what matters it! he embraces them all in his charity. Ah, Jesus! you who have so often reposed upon the heart of Joseph, and enkindled there a furnace of love proportionable to the paternal care with which he was invested, you know well how to dilate that heart and render it much more vast than the one you gave to Solomon, the wisest of kings. Since it is so, let the children of Holy Church have instant recourse to the paternal heart of St. Joseph; they will find it sufficiently

capacious to enclose them all, and tender enough to give them all a share in his favor and protection. His heart is larger than the heavens, whose sphere surrounds the globe of the earth, in order to spread its beneficent influence everywhere round."

But now, before addressing a word to each one of the faithful to invite them to place themselves under so sweet and powerful a protector, I appeal to you, O Joseph, father full of goodness! Deign to purify my tongue as well as my heart; obtain for me, not a sterile eloquence, but the grace of persuading, even by the simplicity of my words, all ranks and all ages to choose you as their **protector** and father.





CHAPTER VII.

SEVENTH MOTIVE—THE INTEREST WHICH VIRGINS, RELIGIOUS, THOSE PERSONS WHO LEAD INTERIOR LIVES, ARTISANS, PRIESTS, THOSE WHO EDUCATE YOUTH, MARRIED PEOPLE, AND EVEN SINNERS, HAVE TO TAKE ST. JOSEPH FOR THEIR PROTECTOR.



IF, as says St. Cyprian, virgins are the most honorable and the most cherished portion of the family of Jesus Christ, we must thence conclude that we owe them particular care. It is, therefore, to you, Christian virgins, that I assign the first claim to the special love and protection of the glorious saint to whom was committed the care of the Infant Saviour and the defence of the Virgin Mother. The latter, as I have said above, and as she herself taught St. Bridget, found in Joseph a zealous defender of the privilege of her virginity against the poisonous breath of those heresies which endeavored to tarnish it. (Rev., B. I., ch. liv.) St. Francis of Sales assures us that St. Joseph has

surpassed in purity even the angels of the highest hierarchy.

"If," says the same saint, on another occasion, "the material sun needs but a few days to deck the lily in all its dazzling whiteness, who can conceive to what an admirable degree of excellence the purity of St. Joseph rose, exposed as it was, day and night, during so many years, to the rays of the Sun of Justice, and to the influence of that mystical Moon, which borrows its splendor from that same Sun?" Thus, you see, Christian virgins, to what a powerful protector I recommend you! Imitate those youthful virgins of a Christian city, who yearly offered St. Joseph a bouquet of flowers, symbolical of purity, in order that he might preserve them from every thing calculated to tarnish its lustre.

Now, then, ye souls who cherish the interior life, do you seek a wise director, an excellent spiritual father? Give yourselves up entirely to the guidance of a saint, who, during his mortal life, had the happiness of equalling the heavenly spirits, and of enjoying God in the sweetness of contemplation. The protection which St. Joseph bestows upon those who apply themselves to the interior life is so well known, that the greater number of houses used for retreats have taken

him as their patron. St. Teresa did not fear to assert that no soul was ever devout to our saint who did not make great progress in the spiritual life. We all know that the venerable Fathers Claude de la Colombière and Louis Lalemant of the Society of Jesus, aided by St. Joseph, whom they had taken as their model, attained to a great union with God. Favored by so powerful and zealous a friend, we may confidently hope to make daily fresh progress in the way of perfection.

The world, we may say, resembles a vast sea agitated by storms, and interspersed with numberless shoals. Among these, there is none more dangerous than the marriage state, wherein daily we are called upon to deplore some new shipwreck. Those, then, who perceive themselves to be in danger, have need of a good pilot to guide them safely into port; but can they desire one more experienced than St. Joseph, who, by the will of God Himself, contracted the purest and happiest marriage that can be imagined? The ancient Joseph, says the Scripture, drew down the blessings of Heaven, first upon the house of Pctiphar, then upon the court and entire kingdom of Pharaoh, which felicity lasted as long as the king followed the wise counsels of his min-

ister ; but it ceased on the accession of a new monarch, who *knew not Joseph*. The latter observation contains a warning for Christian families, whom Heaven would seemingly teach by this double circumstance of the life of the first Joseph, that He will bless them in proportion to the homage they pay to the second, who is as superior to the former as the reality is to the figure. You, then, heads of families ! if you wish to have well-bred children, to preserve peace in marriage, fidelity in your servants, patience in tribulations, to learn to govern your house wisely, and, in a word, to render your home tranquil and happy, place it under the protection of him whom God established as head of the Holy Family. Let Joseph be your counsellor, your steward, your model ! God Himself has established him the protector of those engaged in the married state.

Religious families, no less than secular ones, have urgent motives for placing themselves under the protection of our saint. No founder of any religious order has left such a perfect example of all holy virtues as he has done. He is an excellent model of purity, chastity, and obedience, and in the little house of Nazareth, was a most accomplished master of a common life, and a perfect rule of the active and contemplative life. Many

religious houses, as we shall prove hereafter by authentic facts, have been indebted to the protection of St. Joseph, either for being increased by new subjects, when in danger of becoming extinct, or for being provided for in time of need. Well-regulated houses will always be dear to a saint who sees therein a repetition of the life which Jesus led during thirty years at Nazareth, a life of obscurity and strict obedience.

According to the general opinion of the Fathers, **St. Joseph** followed the trade of a carpenter; therefore workers in wood have usually chosen him for their patron. All artisans should follow their example, and to their own proper patron join **St. Joseph**; in whom they will find a most perfect model. There never has been, nor ever will be, a more holy artisan than he was, since the Son of God has chosen to be called his son, and has Himself given him the name of father. Consider the virtues he practised in his daily occupations: he labors, but without cupidity; he is content to gain enough to support his family; and if he fixes a price for his work, he does it with good faith and integrity. Though assiduous at his work, he does not lose sight of the Divine Infant: being in this similar to the angels, who, though watching over us, do not cease to contem-

plate the Lord, and to find in Him their eternal beatitude. Ah ! if we knew how to learn from St. Joseph the precious art of working and praying at the same time, we should gain doubly, and, with the means of procuring temporal life, secure also that of eternity. Let all artisans, then, recommend their interests to him ; let them endeavor to merit his protection, by imitating the virtues of which he has given them the example.

Would not those intrusted with the education of young people render themselves, in some way, guilty towards Joseph if they neglected to take him for their model and patron in that employment, since, having brought up the Son of the Most High, he obtained a special grace to protect childhood and youth ? Young Tobias had an angel as guardian, but the Infant Jesus would have none other than St. Joseph. Interpreters of the Scriptures and ecclesiastical writers, considering the functions of the holy patriarch, have styled him, indifferently, father, foster-father, guardian, and guide of Jesus Christ. The various offices which the saint exercised towards the Infant God he also exercises in favor of the colleges and seminaries confided to his care. And whilst the superiors and masters will learn of him vigilance, charity, prudence, and all the other virtues neces-

sary to good government, their young scholars will find in the Infant Jesus a perfect example of docility, respect, and love towards their parents and masters. These considerations induced the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and many other congregations, to place their schools, especially those of very young children, under the special protection of St. Joseph.

Prelates, priests, and all ministers of Holy Church, will likewise find a most finished model in St. Joseph. We especially, the ministers of God, who so often touch the body of Jesus Christ, should have a special love for the saint who was the first among men to receive into his arms the Saviour of the world, and who offered to the Eternal Father the first fruits of the precious blood shed by the Incarnate Word in the circumcision ! Why do we not contemplate Jesus on our altars with the same ardent charity which animated Joseph when he saw Him in His crib ! O God ! with what tender sentiments of piety, reverence, and love did the holy patriarch carry the Divine Infant in his arms, on the road to Egypt ! We priests have also the opportunity of carrying Him, hidden under the sacramental veil, through towns and cities, for the relief and consolation of the sick. But, alas ! how different are

our sentiments from those which filled the heart of Joseph ! and yet faith teaches us that the dignity of the priest exceeds, in some degree, that of foster-father of Jesus. If Jesus submitted entirely to St. Joseph, He submits still to the voice of His minister, whoever he may be. He presented Him in His crib to the adoration of the shepherds ; the priest offers the flesh and blood of this Divine Lamb in sacrifice to the Eternal Father. He gave Jesus the bread requisite to sustain His mortal life ; the priest gives to faithful souls Jesus himself, under figure of bread, to be their eternal nourishment. What more shall I say ? The priest has no reason to envy Joseph the kisses, the embraces, and caresses he was permitted to bestow upon and to receive from Jesus ; on the contrary, he might rather envy not only priests but even the simple laity, the happiness they possess in being nourished with Jesus Himself. What we should specially envy in St. Joseph, is that admirable purity of heart by which he daily disposed himself to obtain an increase of sanctity. In contemplating the Divine Infant, he found, in the hands of Jesus, the grace to act solely for Him ; in the eyes of Jesus, the light which enabled him to penetrate more and more into His divine mysteries ; in the heart of Jesus, flames of

love which constantly enkindled a more ardent charity. The Lord, in order to produce the same effects in our souls, has yielded Himself unreservedly to us. As priests of the Lord, let us beg St. Joseph to obtain for us the grace to become worthy ministers of a sacrament, which he had not the happiness either to administer or to receive.

I wish, above all, that poor sinners, in order to be more promptly delivered out of the abyss into which they are plunged, would have recourse to St. Joseph with the same ardor that an unfortunate man, who had fallen into a deep ditch, would implore the aid of the passers-by. Our saint has certainly no less tender a heart than the first Joseph, who could not restrain his tears upon seeing his brethren struck by fear, overcome with remorse, and filled with sorrow at the remembrance of the crime they had committed against him. And if the second Joseph sheds no tears, he will do more ; he will cause repentant sinners to weep over their sins.

The motive which induces Mary to be their refuge likewise inspires her spouse. Would he have been the father of Jesus, if there were no sinners ? Joseph well knows that the cause of their regret is the misfortune of having lost the friendship of Jesus. When he lost not His friend-

ship, but His presence, what anguish he endured, although it was not his own fault ; no earthly father ever experienced the like. Let us be fully convinced, that the remembrance of the bitterness he then experienced cannot but increase his compassion for sinners, and engage him more strongly to obtain for them the grace of a sincere repentance. He will serve as their guide, to conduct them to the temple, where, after three days of sadness and tears, they will certainly, as Origen tells us, in the company of Mary and Joseph, find Jesus. Therefore, O sinners ! hesitate no longer ; go with confidence to St. Joseph : say to him, as the Gentiles did to the Apostle St. Philip, when they wished to be introduced to the Saviour, "*Sir, we would see Jesus !*" Merciful and powerful father, lead us to Jesus ; it is through you we solicit an introduction to Him. Rebellious sinners that we are, we should never of ourselves have the hardihood to present ourselves, but, borrowing the language of the Egyptians to the patriarch who prefigured you, we will say, "O great saint ! our salvation is in your hands. We hope that, by virtue of the influence and authority you exercised here on earth over Jesus, it will be easy for us to find pardon with Him."

Finally, addressing to all ranks of Christians the invitation given by the wise and pious Gerson to the Duke of Berry, "My Lord, take St. Joseph for your special patron, for your powerful protector, and for your most faithful friend," Christians, I conjure you by the love which you bear to Jesus and Mary, by the respect which you owe to your mother, the Holy Church; by the regard you have for your own interests, choose St. Joseph for your protector, your intercessor, and your friend. Remember that you must die; therefore delay not whilst there is yet time to interest in your favor, for that terrible hour, a saint who is generally recognized as the patron of the dying.





CHAPTER VIII.

EIGHTH MOTIVE—THE EXAMPLE OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

THERE is no religious order which has not given some signal mark of devotion to a saint who, after Jesus and Mary, may be considered as an accomplished model of perfection; but it must be owned that the Order of Mount Carmel has distinguished itself above all others. It was the first to compose an office in honor of the holy patriarch, which was introduced into Europe from Syria. It is true (such is the weakness of human nature), that the devotion to St. Joseph gradually weakened in the order, and that the above-named office, which till then had been recited in his honor, was finally lost sight of. The illustrious St. Teresa, chosen by Heaven to reform the Carmelite Order, re-established in all its ancient fervor a devotion so dear to her heart. Among the many monasteries

which she founded, there are but few that she has not placed under his protection and invocation. To complete the work so happily begun by this great saint, the Discalced, or Barefooted Carmelites, in the year 1620, assembled in a general chapter, and solemnly recognized St. Joseph as father and patron of the order ; the decree pronounced was received with universal joy. In 1680, they obtained from the Congregation of Rites an authorization to enable them to establish the feast of the patronage of St. Joseph, with the double rite of the second class and a special office, which was composed by Father John, of the Conception, General of the Order. The Congregation of Rites has fixed this feast on the third Sunday after Easter ; and His Holiness, Pius the Ninth, by a decree, dated September 10, 1847, has rendered it obligatory for the whole Church.

The Franciscan Order likewise distinguished itself, from its infancy, for its devotion towards St. Joseph ; a general chapter, held in 1399, established a feast in his honor, the solemnity of which was further increased in many succeeding chapters. Without entering into details, it will be sufficient to peruse the remarkable and touching writings of St. Bernadine, of Sienna, relative to St. Joseph, to form some idea of the devotion

which the Order of St. Francis has ever cherished towards our holy patriarch. No one, however, has ever contributed more to give fresh lustre to this devotion than St. Peter of Alcantara, at the time in which he was engaged in reforming the Franciscan Order. In 1561, seeing that the number of those members who desired to return to the ancient rigor of the rule was daily increasing, he convoked, by virtue of the power committed to him by the Holy Father, a general chapter of the reformed members ; the nine houses who submitted to it were erected into a special province. At the same time, the holy reformer, wishing to ensure to the still feeble plant a prop calculated to support it, gave it the name of Joseph, and recommended all his religious to honor him as their special patron ; finally, he adopted the image of St. Joseph carrying the Divine Infant as the Seal of the new province.

The Dominican Order did not show itself less zealous for the glory of our holy patriarch. Albertus Magnus, or the Great, one of its most distinguished members, had, as early as the fourteenth century, composed an office of St. Joseph, to gratify some pious souls who had a special devotion to him. Some time after him, Isidore de l'Isle was charged by the General of the Order to com-

pose a second one. This office breathes so tender a piety, that it alone would suffice to obtain for its author the gratitude of all hearts truly devout to St. Joseph. This venerable writer was one of the first who labored to draw our saint's name from the obscurity which had surrounded it. Foreseeing the glory with which it was destined to shine in centuries to come, he invited those writers who should succeed him to meditate on the life of St. Joseph, and to display the inestimable treasures of merits which it contains. His words are a sort of prophecy, the accomplishment of which we now see. "Men," says he, "great in science and in virtue will apply themselves to discover the graces hidden in the interior of Joseph, and they will find therein more precious riches than in the holy patriarchs of the old Law." It is also to the order of St. Dominic that we must, in a great measure, attribute the custom so generally prevalent of celebrating the feast of the Holy Espousals of Joseph and Mary. That feast, already established among the Franciscans, was granted to the Dominicans at the solicitation of Father Aurato, who composed its first office; they obtained from Pope Paul III. permission to celebrate it on the 23d of January, with all possible solemnity.

The Barefooted Augustinians were no less distinguished for devotion towards St. Joseph than the orders we have already mentioned. In 1632, their general chapter, held at Rome, decreed that all their houses, both in Italy and Germany, should place themselves under the special protection of that holy patriarch. By virtue of this decree, the Novitiates and Colleges of the order have been specially consecrated to the Holy Family, and every Friday in the year they recite their vespers. And, moreover, the general chapter of the order, in 1700, regulated that thenceforth a commemoration should be made of St. Joseph in all the semi-double offices; the procurator-general was also charged to ask from the Congregation of Rites, in the name of the whole order, the permission of celebrating the solemn Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph in the same manner as the Barefooted Carmelites.

Finally, the Sons of St. Ignatius would not have considered themselves as fully belonging to the company of Jesus, if they were not consecrated to that saint who had been the foster-father of the Divine Saviour. They it was who chose him as patron of the Bona Mors, or Exercise for a Happy Death, as it is called, in order that all the faithful who should adopt that holy practice

might, at their last hour, confidently claim the assistance of St. Joseph by virtue of his precious death in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Furthermore, St. Joseph being justly regarded as a perfect model of humility, recollection, and interior life, it is under his invocation that the Company of Jesus has placed the greater number of their houses of the third probation, where the religious, after completing the study of human sciences, go to acquire that of the saints. The Bollandists remark that in Spain, France, and the Low-Countries, there was not a college of the Society in whose church there was not at least a chapel dedicated to St. Joseph. We will remark, in our turn, that the first church raised to his honor in France, was erected by the Jesuits of Lyons, and that he has been pleased to grant extraordinary favors to those who have invoked him in that privileged sanctuary. The Society, not content with promoting his honor in our own clime, has extended his devotion even among the savages of the New World, or to speak more properly, from one end of the vast continent of America to the other. Among the vast *reductions* of Paraguay, that of St. Joseph, scarcely established owed to its powerful protector the glory of having, by its example, drawn to

Christianity six savage tribes which surrounded it.

This filial affection of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus for St. Joseph, has increased with time ; many of its missions and colleges are placed under his protection. Congregations of the Bona Mors, and associations of young workmen, established in nearly all the towns where the Fathers have themselves been able to reside, are witnesses of their devotedness to the cause of St. Joseph. This very year (1859), the General of the Society of Jesus begged, as a special favor, that the Feast of the Patronage might be raised to the rank of the first class, with an octave, for the whole Society.


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CHAPTER IX.

NINTH MOTIVE--THE EXAMPLE OF PRINCES, CITIES, AND KINGDOMS.

INCE it has pleased Heaven to reveal to the Christian world the glory of St. Joseph in a more striking manner than in preceding centuries, we may apply to him, more justly than to Mardochai, those words of Assuerus : " Thus shall he be honored whom the king hath a mind to honor." Truly our Saviour has acted with a divine magnificence during these latter centuries, when, after having caused the glorious name of Joseph to resound from the east to the west, He has brought monarchs and empires to pay their tribute of respect and love to the saint whom He acknowledged as His favorite, His guardian, and His foster-father. A pious practice is quickly adopted by the people, when they see it encouraged and followed by their

princes. The devotion to St. Joseph had this advantage. Witness, for example, the rapid increase it experienced in Germany, at the time when the pious Emperor Leopold I., of glorious memory, having adopted it for himself, employed all his zeal in extending it in his States. Already Bohemia was consecrated to St. Joseph under the title of Preserver of the Peace, and had celebrated on that occasion a feast which was a real triumph. The whole of the Germanic empire took him for its patron, immediately after its pious sovereign placed Hungary under his protection, he having delivered its capital, which had long been under the Turkish yoke. Leopold being fully convinced that he owed so glorious a victory to the intercession of Mary and Joseph, obtained permission from the Holy See to celebrate the feasts of their chaste espousals, as a mark of his gratitude.

But the devotion to our glorious saint never shone with greater lustre in Germany than in the memorable event of which we are about to speak. The imperial family was nearly extinct, from want of an heir, which misfortune was deeply felt. In his affliction, Leopold had recourse to St. Joseph, and in order to obtain a son through his intercession, solemnly declared that he acknowledged him as special protector of the house of Austria ;

moreover, he erected in his honor a large statue of massive silver ; finally, by his orders, for eight consecutive days processions were made in eight different churches, and the same number of panegyrics were delivered in honor of the holy patriarch. St. Joseph heard the petitions of the pious parents, as the event evidently proved. The empress, nine months after, was happily delivered of the son so ardently desired. Who could describe the outburst of joy and gratitude which spread throughout Germany and Austria at this good news ? The emperor, in the transports of his gratitude, desired that his son should be the first of his race to bear the name of Joseph ; and to give fresh proof of his devotion towards his benefactor, he made a vow to erect a statue in his honor in one of the public squares of Vienna. Death not permitting Leopold to fulfil his pious undertaking, Joseph, the heir of his throne, as well as of his devotion towards our saint, carried the project into execution. He raised the statue on the very day of his feast, the 19th of March, 1709, and assisted in person at the august ceremony, surrounded by his court and the entire population of Vienna.

Spain, as is well known, has been ever distinguished for her piety ; after our Divine Saviour

and His holy Mother, one of the first objects of her devotion is the glorious spouse of Mary. Already the burning zeal of St. Teresa had spread the glory of her beloved patron, but when the court had given the example and introduced into the kingdom the Feast of the Espousals of Mary and Joseph, devotion to the glorious patriarch was prodigiously increased. Spain soon communicated her fervor to the Netherlands, by means of the archduchess, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, who was then governess of the Low Countries. Scarcely had this pious princess arrived at Brussels, when she gave such unequivocal proofs of devotion towards St. Joseph, that, on the day of his feast, even before the decree of Urban VII., which rendered it obligatory, all labor was suspended, shops were closed, and the whole city occupied in celebrating it with extraordinary solemnity and piety. But no city of the Netherlands has ever equalled that of Antwerp. A pious family, named Komer, erected two magnificent chapels in his honor, one in the Augustinian church, the other in that of the Jesuits. This latter is really a masterpiece, wherein art has, as it were, surpassed herself; and what renders it more remarkable, is, that St. Joseph has there displayed such miraculous proofs

of his power and goodness, that in less than six years a volume of examples was compiled.

The Bollandists, who relate some of these favors, give testimony to the homage which the above-named city pays to our saint. We will not follow them in detail, it is enough to say that, in the chapel of which we have spoken, three Masses are celebrated every Friday, in order to obtain a happy death through the merits of the glorious death of the holy patriarch. At every one of these Masses the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and the crowd of persons is so great, especially at the earliest one, that the church, though very large, is almost inadequate to contain them.*

Turning towards France, we find that, at the

* The Bollandists, from whom the author has borrowed these details, published the life of St. Joseph in 1668. Since that time the chapel erected by the brothers Komer, in the Jesuit church, continues to be much frequented; the one built by them in the Augustinian church has entirely disappeared. The Confraternity of St. Joseph, which held its meetings in the Carmelite church, has met with a similar fate; but the archives of both churches, having been carefully preserved, show us the names of the most illustrious families inscribed upon the registers of those ancient confraternities, and furnish us with striking proofs of the favors showered upon the city of Antwerp by our holy patriarch

beginning of the fifteenth century, the time at which St. Joseph was scarcely known in other countries, the illustrious Chancellor, John Gerson, sowed the first seeds of devotion to the saint. It is true that precious seed was not immediately developed; it resembled wheat, which, after remaining buried in the earth during the time of frost, grows with vigor on the return of spring, and sprouts forth abundantly. The first chapel erected in France in honor of St. Joseph was built at Avignon, by Pope Gregory XI., and a confraternity of young girls was established there under the auspices of the saint. Anne Teresa of Austria gave fresh impetus to the devotion to St. Joseph by bringing into France the children of that admirable virgin, who had labored so powerfully in Spain to promote his glory and honor. The name of Teresa, borne by the queen, served her as a fresh motive for imitating the reformer of Carmel in propagating devotion to our saint. To the name of Louis, given to her eldest son, she added that of Joseph.

We will not mention the numerous religious orders which have sprung up and devoted themselves to the service of childhood and youth, under the protection, many even under the name, of St. Joseph. The good they have effected,

even in our own time, is sufficiently known; neither will we cite the various works which, from the days of Gerson down, have been published in France in honor of our saint, and also been translated into every known language; their number alone would suffice to attest the tender devotion felt throughout that kingdom for the worthy spouse of Mary.

Let us cast a glance towards Italy. In this respect she can dispute the palm with all other countries: and to begin with the city of Florence, where I am now writing, I do not know of any other city which can be compared to her in devotion towards St. Joseph. The inhabitants prepare themselves for the saint's feast by two solemn novenas. The feast itself is a real triumph of Christian love. On that day many persons have adopted, in honor of the head of the Holy Family, the pious custom of the merchant of Valence, mentioned by St. Vincent Ferrier; namely, to receive at their tables three poor persons—an old man, a woman, and a child. Those families who cannot carry this out in the letter, give alms to three poor persons. Not satisfied with celebrating the Feast of St. Joseph on the 19th of March, in common with the universal Church, Florence observes three other feasts. On the

first Sunday after the Epiphany, she commemorates the feast of the hidden life which Joseph led in company of Jesus and Mary; on the 23d of January, that of the espousals which united him to the Holy Virgin; and on the 20th of June, she observes, in a special manner, the feast of the happy death of St. Joseph, who expired in the arms of Jesus and Mary.* Many congregations of men and women are established under the invocation of St. Joseph. We will not dilate further, as we have already said sufficient to prove the unparalleled affection borne to the illustrious patriarch by the Florentines.

The city of Naples also prepares for the Feast of St. Joseph, by the various practices which she

* The author inhabited Florence when he composed his work. He will not pronounce as to the validity of the reasons which led the citizens of that city to celebrate the 20th of June as the date of the death of Joseph, the spouse of Mary. Many churches have observed the same custom. The Eastern Church has a tradition, carefully handed down, which assures us that he died on the 26th of June. (Consult the Bollandists, March 19th.) The Greek Church celebrated his chief festival on the 26th of December, as Cardinal Baronius tells us in his Martyrology. Some churches also commemorate his flight into Egypt on the 22d of January, and his return thence on the 17th of January.

observes in his honor on the seven **Wednesdays** which precede the 19th of March. Venice prepares herself by pious and solemn novenas, made in several churches at once; and not only the city, but the whole republic constantly glories in honoring the holy patriarch. Not satisfied with the privilege already granted to her, that of introducing into all her States the Feast of the Espousals of Joseph and Mary, that republic obtained a second privilege, namely, that of being the first among all Christian nations to celebrate the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, on the third Sunday after Easter.

Let us now turn towards Rome. It is from the capital of the Christian world that the devotion to St. Joseph has issued, as from its true source, and spread itself throughout the universe. From the time when Pope Clement X. raised his feast to the rank of the great solemnities, and gave it a special office, the devotion of the Faithful towards the head of the Holy Family took a new and astonishing growth. Soon, within the walls of Rome, churches, sanctuaries, and altars arose in his honor; numerous confraternities were established under his invocation, and the example of the capital caused a holy emulation throughout most of the Italian cities. The States of the

Church, which had shown themselves so earnest in propagating the devotion towards St. Joseph, had obtained from the saint favors granted to no other country. Thus, to Perugia the spouse of Mary confided his nuptial ring ; to the Church of St. Anastasia, in Rome, he left his cloak and staff, precious relics which are still venerated there. It is also in the States of the Church, at Loretto, that we find the Holy House of Nazareth, that terrestrial paradise,* wherein the infernal serpent has never penetrated ; that asylum and refuge for sinners ; that ark for propitiation, always full of graces for the faithful ; that sanc-

* The House of Nazareth was converted into a chapel in the early ages of Christianity, and afterwards enclosed within a church by the pious care of St. Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great, and, we are told by St. Gregory of Nyssa, Sts. Jerome, Epiphanius, Nicephorus, John Damascene, and the venerable Bede, that for many centuries it was devoutly visited by pilgrims from all countries. The first Christians whom the Crusades let into the East hastened thither, to honor the Man-God and his Virgin Mother, who had dwelt therein. Cardinal de Vitry celebrated Mass there, and St. Louis received Holy Communion at the same Mass ; this holy house disappeared in 1294, after the conquest of the Holy Land by Saladin. According to a well authenticated tradition, it appeared, at that very time, near Tersatc

tuary where Mary was conceived, where **the** Word was made flesh, and where he passed almost all the years of his mortal life, in the sweet company of Jesus and Mary.

in Dalmatia, next in two different places of the country of Loretto, and finally in the spot where it now stands, and where the town of Loretto quickly arose. These facts are incontestable, though often called in question by heretics. We refer, as proof of their truth, to the bulls of Popes Paul II, Leo X., Paul III., Paul IV., and **Sixtus V.**, **Urban VIII.**, **Innocent XI.**, and **Benedict XIII.**





CHAPTER X.

TENTH MOTIVE—THE EXAMPLE OF NUMEROUS PIOUS WRITERS.



SINCE the foundation of the Church, our Lord has never ceased to employ the pen of Christian learning to spread, through all climes, the glory of His holy mother, and to cause her name to be celebrated among all nations, as she had herself predicted: "All generations shall call me blessed." (Luke, i. 48.) Thus, for some centuries past, He has been pleased to raise up new writers, who endeavor to portray the incomparable privileges of the worthy spouse of Mary, His own faithful guardian and foster-father, thus accomplishing this other oracle, "He that is the keeper of his master, shall be glorified." (Prov. xxvii. 18.) We cannot doubt that these words of the Holy Ghost are fully verified in the person of St. Joseph, when we hear the Holy Church sing, "May the

hearts of Christian people everywhere praise you." (Hymn for the 19th of March, attributed to Clement XI.)

Nothing being better calculated to convince and persuade than example, I will cite some authors who have signalized their zeal and devotion, in their writings, in praise of St. Joseph. The first of the panegyrists of the illustrious patriarch is the Holy Ghost Himself; He has traced his praise by the hand of the Evangelists. Since He comprises, in few words, the praises of the Blessed Virgin, we need not be surprised that He has acted in a similar manner towards her holy spouse; but the little that He has said encloses an inexhaustible mine. Listen to what we find in the Holy Gospel: "Joseph, spouse of Mary, mother of Jesus. . . . Joseph, her husband, being a just man. . . . Joseph, son of David, fear not. . . . Thou shalt call his name Jesus. Thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing. He was subject to them." Every one of these words seem a mere stroke of the pen, but to those who succeed in penetrating their true sense they offer the most magnificent teachings. Thus, the stars of the firmament, which to vulgar eyes appear merely luminous points, are to those of true astronomers as so many suns of immense magni-

tude. For my part, I am content to adore in silence the words of the Spirit of God. I leave to others the care of explaining their mysterious sense. Truly, how could I undertake to treat upon so great a subject, when St. Gregory Nazianzen himself, dazzled by the lustre of so many virtues and prerogatives, could not restrain this cry of admiration: "Yes, the Lord has united in Joseph, as in a sun, all the light, glory, and splendor of all the other saints."

Another panegyrist of the holy spouse of Mary, is Mary herself; she dictated his praises to St. Bridget, who, in this circumstance, acted as secretary to the Mother of God. We will mention some of the more remarkable passages: "Be certain," said Mary to the saint, "that Joseph, even before our marriage, knew, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of the vow of virginity by which I had consecrated myself to God; he knew that I was pure in thought, word, and deed. Therefore he only espoused me in view of becoming my servant, and of considering me as his sovereign. As for me, I clearly saw, by inspiration also, that my virginity would remain pure and unsullied, though, by virtue of a mysterious disposition of Providence, I had accepted him as my spouse.* Joseph, perceiving that I was with child, was surprised, but

would not allow himself to form any disadvantageous opinion of me ;† on the contrary, remembering that, according to the words of the prophets, the Son of God was to be born of a virgin, he esteemed himself unworthy to serve the mother of such a Son ; and, full of anxiety as to the course he was to pursue, he hesitated to remain with me. But the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said to him : ‘Do not abandon the virgin who has been confided to your care ; she has conceived by the Holy Ghost, and the Son whom she will bring forth will be the Saviour of the world.’ From that moment Joseph more than ever considered me as his sovereign ; while I, on my side, fulfilled towards him all the duties of a most humble servant.‡ In the services which he rendered to me, in our mutual relations, I never heard the slightest word of impatience, murmuring, or levity issue from his mouth. He endured poverty with admirable resignation ; in time of need he gave himself up unreservedly to the most laborious occupations ; whilst he ever showed himself full of meekness and gentleness towards those who had offended

* Revelations, St. Bridget, B. VI., c. xxix.

† Idem, B. VII., c. xxv.

‡ Idem, B. VII., c. xxix.

him. As to myself, he served me with as much respect as affection ; he was the faithful guardian of my virginity, and the unexceptionable witness of the marvels which God had operated within me. Entirely dead to the flesh and to the world, he breathed only the things of Heaven. Such was his confidence in the divine promises that I often heard him exclaim : ‘ If I wish to live, it is only to see the will of God accomplished.’ In short, all his desires and all his efforts tended to the execution of that adorable will, for which reason he now enjoys so great glory in Heaven.” Such is the summary given us by Mary, relative to the earthly life of her holy spouse ; it is short and simple, but it can be justly compared to pearls and diamonds, which, though of very small volume, are, however, of inestimable price. It contains so many ideas, that, in simply meditating on each word, we could find material for as many panegyrics as there are virtues recorded therein.

All the ancient Fathers, Latin as well as Greek, have spoken more or less at length of the virtues and prerogatives of St. Joseph. Among the writers of the latter centuries, Gerson, either by reason of his seniority, from the excellence of his doctrine, or by the tenderness and vivacity of his devotion, merits the first rank, and, as a modern

author remarks, "among those who, in imitation of that great servant of St. Joseph, have undertaken to celebrate our saint, there are few who have succeeded in adding to the praises he has left." Among those writers who succeeded him are Cardinal Peter d'Ailly, Archbishop of Cambray, the master and contemporary of the illustrious chancellor, who was, like him, specially devout towards St. Joseph.

The pious Isidore de l'Isle, the Dominican of whom we have already spoken : he wrote in 1522.

Father Paul de Barry, of the Society of Jesus, whose work has had twenty-six editions ; he first published it in 1639, and dedicated it to St. Joseph, as a mark of his gratitude, because, through his protection, he and all his brethren of Lyons escaped from the ravages of the plague which had desolated that city.

Father Stephen Binet, another Jesuit, who, penetrated with a most lively devotion towards our saint, published a work entitled, "The Excellences of St. Joseph." He begins by asking his pardon, first for himself, and then for all the inhabitants of the earth, who have so long delayed tribute by all means in his power to point out his pre-eminence among the saints.

to honor his virtues and implore his protection. "May all future ages," he adds, "may we ourselves, by multiplying the homage we pay you, make amends for the indifference of former centuries !" Father Binet was born at Dijon, 1569.

Father Peter Moralès had written some time before the two above-mentioned Fathers ; his work was published at Lyons, in 1614, some years after his death. That learned theologian himself tells us, in his dedicatory epistle, that he undertook the work through gratitude towards the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, who had facilitated his entrance into the Company of Jesus. The thousand folio columns of his work sufficiently convince us how inspiring is the study of the life of the holy patriarch when prompted by piety and gratitude. It is one of the finest monuments we have in honor of St. Joseph and the Holy Family.

We may further consult the blessed Peter Canisius, Francis Juarez, Stephen Menochius, John Jacquinot, the Bollandists, all of the Society of Jesus ; finally, the commentators of the New Testament, especially Cornelius-à-Lapide, and those authors who have written upon the lives of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. There is no one among them who has not spoken eloquently in praise of St. Joseph, and endeavored to con-

tribute by all means in his power to point out his pre-eminence among the saints.

Could the pious Isidore de l'Isle come back into the world, where, during life, he found his only consolation in the hope that one day the Lord would employ the tongue and pen of the learned to celebrate the praises of our saint, how great would be his joy on beholding his dearest wish fully accomplished, since, at the time in which I write (1709), that is, in less than three hundred years, counting from the time of Gerson, more than three hundred authors, historians, or **panegyrist**s of St. Joseph !





CHAPTER XI.

ELEVENTH MOTIVE—THE EXAMPLE OF PERSONS DISTINGUISHED FOR THEIR VIRTUES.

BY those eleven stars which worshipped the ancient Joseph,* it seemed as if God intended to prefigure some personages of the new law, who, in these latter times, were to signalize themselves by the singular homage they would render to the second Joseph. We will not repeat what we have already said at the commencement of this work, of the Sun of Justice and the mysterious Moon ; that is to say, of Jesus and Mary rendering to Joseph the most striking, and, at the same time, the most humble homage—that of perfect obedience to his will and desires. What we will occupy ourselves with, at present, are the eleven stars which surround our saint ; not, indeed, to eclipse him, but to augment his lustre and to crown him with a diadem of glory.

* Genesis, xxxvii. 9.

The first star which appears upon the horizon was, as we have said, the illustrious Chancellor Gerson, who, as soon as he was capable of speaking and writing, consecrated his pen, his voice, his zeal, and that learning which already placed him at the head of all the doctors of his time, to the glory of St. Joseph. He thus opened the career to those who were to come after him, and discovered to the world a mine rich in as many precious pearls as he has pointed out heavenly prerogatives in the person of St. Joseph. It was he who first exhorted the clergy, with all his eloquence, to celebrate his feast in a solemn manner, and to recite his Office. He composed a Mass, hymns, and panegyrics in honor of the saint. His zeal did not stop here ; not content with having endeavored to make his dear devotion flourish in the hearts of princes, prelates, and doctors, by means of letters as solid as urgent, being charged to preach before the Council of Constance, on the day of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, he consecrated, as we have related in the fifth chapter, a part of his discourse to the praises of her august spouse. Gerson did not cease, during the whole space of his life, which was greatly prolonged, to labor for the glory of his chosen hero. Though the pains he

took on the subject did not immediately produce the fruits he had reason to expect (for it was not till about one hundred years after that the devotion towards St. Joseph commenced to become general), yet this delay will not deprive him, in the eyes of angels and men, of the merit of having discovered the long-concealed source of the torrent of grace, which, in the present day, waters the field of the Catholic Church.

The second star which embellishes the crown of St. Joseph is St. Francis of Sales, that model of prelates, that sweet and enlightened master of the spiritual life. He spoke of the saint with loving tenderness in his various writings, and dedicated to "his protector and well-beloved father, St. Joseph," his Treatise on the Love of God. He had but one picture in his breviary, that of St. Joseph. "O Father!" he said one day to a Jesuit Father, "know you not that I am all St. Joseph's?" Invited by Father Bernard, rector of the College of St. Joseph, the professed house of the Jesuits at Lyons, to preach in his church on the Feast of St. Joseph, after having been already engaged by Cardinal Markmont, Archbishop of Lyons, for a similar occasion, he replied with his accustomed sweetness: "Although, when I bring forth twins by one day's

labor I shall not come off well, yet for the love of St. Joseph I will do it." He wished that the devotion with which his heart was filled should serve as milk to his first daughters of the Visitation. He gave them St. Joseph for their father and protector, placed under his invocation the first church of their order, which he built at Annecy; and, finally, wishing to leave to posterity a convincing proof of the tender affection he bore towards our saint, he recommends the novices and postulants to take him for their master and guide in the interior life, in which, as spouses of the Saviour God, they are called to walk.

The third of the eleven mysterious stars is the Blessed Gaspar Bon, of the Order of Missions. He may be counted among the most devoted servants of St. Joseph, since he unceasingly conversed in spirit with the Holy Family, in the house of Nazareth, and had constantly on his lips the holy names of *Jesus, Mary, Joseph*. Those three names being to him as three drops of honey, it is not astonishing that none but the sweetest words of devotion fell from his lips. It was delightful to hear this holy religious, whether in asking a question or giving an answer, always begin and finish by the names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. During his last sickness, he earnestly

commended those who assisted him, that when they saw him in his last agony they would frequently repeat these names in his ears, as they were a singular cordial to keep and conduct his soul in its passage to God ; and he died with these words in his mouth.

The fourth star in the mysterious pleiad is the venerable Peter Cotton, of the Company of Jesus, who has equally distinguished himself by his talents as an orator and his virtues as a religious. His zeal for the glory of St. Joseph was truly wonderful. In no sermon or exhortation that he gave, did he ever fail to relate some trait in honor of his beloved protector. He also brought it about that the first church in France which was honored with his glorious name, should be dedicated to him at the Novitiate of Lyons, near Bellecourt. He had so tender an affection for him, as thereby to move St. Joseph to reveal to him the day of his death, and to procure it upon his own feast. It is said that in his last illness the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and told him that she had come to assist him to die happily, through gratitude for his tender devotion towards her cherished spouse. These united circumstances clearly prove that such a death was the recompense of the services he had rendered to St. Joseph, who ac

knowledgeed them by introducing him into heaven on the day of his own special feast.

The fifth among the stars which surround St. Joseph is unquestionably the venerable Father Louis Lalemant. This holy man merited, by the regularity of his life and from his exactitude in religious observances, to be generally looked upon as a living copy of the Rule of St. Ignatius, of whom he was the disciple and faithful imitator. In order to have ever before his eyes a perfect model of the interior life, to the practice of which he constantly applied himself, he meditated assiduously upon the virtues of St. Joseph in the following manner. IN THE MORNING he considered, 1st, his fidelity to grace, and drew therefrom occasions of humbling himself by reason of his failure in imitating his glorious patron ; 2d, his continual recollection even in the midst of exterior occupations ; then examined himself to discover in what manner he had diverged from his model. IN THE EVENING, he considered St. Joseph in his relations with Jesus and Mary, studying on one side his delicacy towards his holy spouse, and on the other, the respectful homage which he paid to the Infant God, and then asked similar sentiments for himself. Father Lalemant had a special grace to inspire devotion towards the

august patriarch in the hearts of others. His confidence was such, and his credit so great, that there was no favor he could not obtain. Therefore, in engaging the faithful to honor him, he did not fail to encourage them to have recourse to his intercession, assuring them that they would obtain every thing from his goodness. We will mention a remarkable example of the confidence he reposed in his generous patron. Whilst he was rector of the College of Bourges, he remarked two young professors among the faculty who gave great evidences of piety. The Feast of St. Joseph drawing near, he called them to him and promised to obtain for them from the saint any favor they might ask, on condition that they would exhort their scholars to honor him in some special manner on the day of his feast. The two professors gladly accepted the rector's proposition, and their exhortations were so efficacious that every member of their respective classes received Holy Communion in honor of the saint on his feast-day. The professors went on the same day to the Father Rector and secretly informed him of the grace they desired to obtain. The first, who was the celebrated Father Nouet, asked the grace to be enabled worthily to speak and write upon the subject of our Divine Lord. The hu-

mility of the other professor not permitting him to specify the favor he asked, we only know that he obtained it. As to Father Nouet, the day after the feast, having changed his mind, he went to the Father Rector and told him that, having seriously reflected, he thought he ought to ask some grace more calculated to advance his perfection. The Father answered that it was too late, because St. Joseph had already obtained for him the one previously asked. How fully he received the grace he had solicited his eloquent and fervent sermons and voluminous writings sufficiently prove especially, his work on the Excellences of Jesus Christ. In that work, so often reprinted, we find heavenly lights and flames of love capable of moving every heart. From all this we may conclude that Father Lalemant was one of the dearest favorites of St. Joseph, and that he had unlimited credit with him. As a last proof of the admirable devotion he bore towards his powerful protector, we are told that being at the point of death, he begged that the picture of St. Joseph should be placed in his coffin.

We have now to consider the sixth, and, if I may so express it, one of the most brilliant stars, one of the most beautiful diamonds in St. Joseph's crown—Teresa of Jesus, that illustrious

virgin whose sanctity and learning have shed so much lustre on the Church of God. If St. Teresa is glorified in being chosen to reform and revise the ancient Order of Mount Carmel, she is no less so, in having been selected to complete the noble work of spreading the devotion of St. Joseph throughout the Christian world, and to surround it with the splendor it now enjoys. In order to render His Church more glorious, Jesus Christ would not lay the foundations amid monarchs nor amid the rich, powerful, and learned of this world, and for the same reason would employ neither science nor the credit of men to spread abroad the knowledge of His adopted father, and procure him the homage of all nations. He reserved that great work for a virgin till then unknown, thereby showing the power of His Almighty arm.

From her tenderest infancy the virgin reformer of Carmel felt a lively affection and filial confidence in the spouse of the Mother of God ; she gave him no other names than the sweet ones of Father and Lord. Of eighteen houses of the reform which she founded, thirteen were specially dedicated to St. Joseph, and in all of them his devotion was regularly established ; she placed every one of them under his protection, and al-

ways caused his statue to be placed over one of the doors. Though careful to conceal the favors with which she was enriched, yet when there was a question of contributing to the glory of the saint, her tongue and her pen betrayed the secret of her affections; she could not avoid manifesting the extraordinary graces she owed to his intercession.* It is sufficient to read her life to understand her zeal for the cause of St. Joseph, and the favors she received from him. "I cannot remember," she tells us in the sixth chapter of her life, "that I ever asked any thing of him that I did not obtain. I cannot think without astonishment of the graces God has granted me through his intercession, nor of the perils, both of soul and body, from which he has delivered me. It seems

* In the admirable Counsels she addressed to her religious, she says: "Although you may honor many saints as your protectors, preserve, however, a special devotion to St. Joseph, whose credit is so great before God." She bequeathed to her entire order her ardent zeal for the glory of St. Joseph. At the end of the eighteenth century the Carmelite Order possessed more than one hundred and fifty churches dedicated to St. Joseph. In a short time all religious orders followed her example, and vied with one another in honoring the holy patriarch. The first glory of introducing the devotion belongs to the Carmelite Order.

that God grants to the other saints the power of assisting us in certain special necessities ; but as to St. Joseph, I know from experience that he can assist us in all our needs, as though our Lord would wish us to understand that, as He submitted entirely to him while on earth, acknowledging in him the authority of a father and guide, He is still pleased to do his will in heaven by granting all his requests. Other persons, whom I have advised to recommend themselves to St. Joseph, have experienced the same favor as myself, and have now a great devotion to him. I am daily more and more convinced of the truth of what I say by the experience I have of the signal favors he obtains from God. I would I knew how to induce the whole world to attach themselves to his service. I never knew any one who had a true devotion to him, or rendered him any particular service, but obtained an advancement in virtue ; for this celestial protector favors in a special manner the spiritual well-being of those souls who recommend themselves to him. During several years past I have always asked him some special favor on his feast, and have always obtained my wish. If, by reason of my imperfection, my request deviated ever so slightly from the divine glory, he altered it in such a manner

as to enable me to draw therefrom greater spiritual good. Had I permission to write, I should feel great pleasure in relating in detail the numerous graces for which many persons besides myself are indebted to this great saint. For the love of God, I conjure those who are unwilling to believe me to make the trial themselves; they will see, by experience, how advantageous it is to recommend one's self to this glorious patriarch, and to pay him special devotion. Interior souls, especially, should love him with filial tenderness. I do not understand how a person can think of the Queen of Angels, and of all the sorrows she endured during the infancy of the child Jesus, without thanking St. Joseph for the perfect devotedness with which he succored both the Mother and the Son." From these, as well as many other passages which we could quote, it is easy to conclude the opinion St. Teresa held relative to the incomparable dignity of the holy patriarch, the credit he enjoys in heaven, and of his goodness towards those who are devoted to his service.

The zeal shown by the illustrious saint during her entire life for her well-beloved patron, still manifested itself after her death, under the following circumstances. Many of the houses of the

Carmelites, which she had herself founded, to testify their joy at the canonization of their beloved mother, conceived the idea of placing their respective churches under the invocation of St. Teresa, and to substitute her name for that of the saint to whom they were already dedicated. They made known their wishes to the Father Provincial of the Carmelites, who, having a special devotion to the newly canonized saint, strongly approved the project of his spiritual daughters. Not so she whom they thus sought to honor; for she appeared to a religious of the Convent of Avila, and gave her this express command: "Thou wilt tell the Father Provincial to take away my name from the churches of our monasteries, and restore to them the one of which they have been despoiled, that of St. Joseph." The injunction was quickly obeyed. Therefore, those who wish to please this great saint should endeavor to love St. Joseph as she loved him; and if they have devotion towards her, should have still more to St. Joseph. This was well understood by a rich and pious benefactor, who, in building a chapel in honor of St. Joseph in the church of the Barefooted Carmelites at Rome, placed it opposite to that which had been consecrated to St. Teresa,—either to place, as it were, before the

eyes of the saint the object dearest to her heart, or to instruct the faithful that those two souls, so closely united in God, ought also to be united in the homage paid to them in the petitions addressed to them ; in short, in the hope of obtaining all, either from St. Joseph, who will grant his favors through love of his faithful servant Teresa, or from Teresa, who will hear all petitions through respect for her beloved patron St. Joseph.

The seventh of the stars which heighten the glory of our saint, is a daughter of St. Teresa, the venerable Clara Mary, of the illustrious house of Colonna. She only made use of her noble birth to extend the glory of St. Joseph, in view of which she spared neither efforts nor solicitations to obtain from the Holy See numerous privileges, which added new solemnity to his feast. She strove anxiously to nourish devotion to St. Joseph among the religious of the monastery which she founded at Rome, under the title of *Regina Cœli*, and where she had erected a chapel. On the 19th of March, she decorated it magnificently and exposed one of his relics, which was carried by the religious of the convent, who sang canticles which she had herself composed in his honor. Instructed by her mother, St. Teresa, Clara Mary, in the full assurance of being heard,

had recourse to St. Joseph in all her wants. She once wrote to a religious who was greatly in her confidence : "The Feast of St. Joseph passed off well. I feel my devotion to him redoubled. I look upon that great saint as a father, to whom I can address myself with confidence. I present myself before him, with all my miseries, and beg him to obtain for me from God a tender love for His Divine Majesty." She had so frequently experienced the effects of the power and goodness of St. Joseph, that she testified, like St. Teresa, that she had never asked him any thing in vain. He was her constant resort in all the necessities of the monastery. One day, finding a pious picture, representing the *Ecce Homo*, she placed it near the statue of St. Joseph, to whom she said, with holy simplicity : "It is for you to draw from the treasury of Jesus' suffering all that is necessary for the wants of the house." But the devotion of this pious woman shone with greater lustre, when, having become superioress of the monastery, she was able, by means of the alms she distributed in his honor, to give him tokens of her gratitude. On the day of his feast, especially, she entirely clothed a poor old man, and bestowed alms, which had no bounds save those imposed by a state wherein poverty is pro-

fessed. Among the needy whom she assisted at that time, an unfortunate carpenter, debtor to the monastery, obtained the greater share. This man, from his trade of a carpenter, and his name of Joseph, bore striking marks of resemblance to the holy patriarch, which did not escape the observation of the religious, who immediately remitted his debt, and, finding that he had a large family, found means to ensure a dowry to his daughter.

The eighth star, which contributed to glorify St. Joseph, was another daughter of St. Teresa, the venerable Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament. This holy soul was so dear to the Infant Jesus, that He gave her the name of spouse of His Divine Infancy. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were the continual objects of her meditations and love; and Joseph being the head of the Holy Family, she endeavored to honor and imitate him as her most perfect model, after our Lord and His holy Mother. Finally, according to the mystery she venerated in the Infant Jesus, she united her heart to the heart of Joseph. Thus passed away her youth, the age of candor and simplicity to which God loves to reveal Himself. Her mistress, suspecting that something extraordinary was passing within her, asked her several questions

about St. Joseph. The youthful Margaret astonished her by the depth of her answers, which appeared to her the more admirable as they were conformable to what the most learned theologians have written concerning him. One of her sweetest practices, amid the various occupations which filled up her time daily, she has related in a letter to a nun who was in her confidence. "I rejoice," she writes, "to see you in the office you now hold. I beg you to unite yourself to our dear and loving Infant Jesus. In St. Joseph's workshop, He was not master, He merely aided him. Unite yourself to Him in fulfilling your employment; accustom yourself to consider the sister whom you assist in the same light as He considered St. Joseph. I also assist one of our sisters, and I do all in my power to be faithful to the practice I now recommend to you." We pass over in silence many equally beautiful practices to which Margaret subjected herself, in honor of her well-beloved saint. The little we have said suffices to make us understand the extent to which she carried her devotion towards him, and the manner in which she endeavored to do him honor.

The ninth star of St. Joseph, and one of the most brilliant, is another Margaret, a Domin-

ican nun, of Civita Castellana. Her constant subjects of meditation were the divine maternity of Mary, the birth of the Incarnate Word, and the services which Joseph had the happiness of rendering to the Son and the Mother, either in the grotto of Bethlehem, in Egypt, or in the house of Nazareth. These mysteries inspired Margaret, even from her earliest years, with so lively an affection for our holy patriarch, that from that period till her death she carried his image in her heart, with those of Jesus and Mary—all three engraven thereon by the hand of Divine Love.

The tenth star devoted to the honor of St. Joseph, was the venerable Jane of the Angels, an Ursuline nun, of Loudon. Her virtue was admirable, because she always kept the life of St. Joseph present to her mind, in order to meditate upon its perfections, and to reproduce in herself whatever she found could be imitated therein.

To the rigorous fast she observed on the eve of his feast, she added other austerities ; the day following after Holy Communion she chose him as her yearly patron, and renewed her assurances of filial affection. It was not without reason that this venerable religious was thus devoted to St. Joseph ; it was to his intercession that she owed her deliverance from evil spirits who had ob-

essed her, and her recovery from a dangerous malady, which had reduced her to the last extremity. We might safely add that the saint had himself filled her heart with the tender affection she bore him, since one day he showed himself to her more beautiful than the sun, and exhorted her, in the most touching manner, to support her sorrows patiently, and to put all her confidence in God, who knew how to turn to her soul's welfare the tribulations she endured. The saint further declared to his pious servant, that she would be still more pleasing to him if every year she would make nine communions in his honor, on the day of the week on which his feast fell.

Finally, the eleventh and last of the stars composing the diadem of our glorious saint, is the venerable Mary Catherine of St. Augustine. God withdrew her from France, where she was the mother of the poor, and sent her to serve as a hospital sister, in the Hospital of Mercy in Quebec, then the capital of New France, as it was called at that time. The tender devotion she had always felt for the chaste spouse of Mary, the special protector of Christianity, which had been so lately established amid these barbarous countries, inspired her to add the name of St. Joseph to those

which she already bore ; she immediately put her project into execution, and from that time was called Mary Joseph. We will mention, for the further glorification of our saint, a vision granted to this holy soul on the feast of the Ascension of our Lord. She saw a solemn procession, composed entirely of the blessed, in the midst of whom appeared the King of Glory ; whilst the august train rose in the air, and advanced in triumph towards heaven, Mary Joseph distinguished St. Joseph, who, preceding all the others, directed their steps, and approached the nearest to the Eternal Gates. When all had entered heaven, and the Sacred Humanity was seated on the throne prepared for him at the right hand of God, she heard her holy patron speak these words : "Behold, Eternal Father, the talent you confided to me on earth. I return it to you to-day, not only doubled but increased a hundred-fold as many times as there are in this innumerable multitude souls whom He has redeemed." "Faithful servant," answered the Eternal Father, "as you were, while on earth, the head of the Holy Family, I will that you should hold the same office in heaven, and that you should have the title, not of servant, but of Lord." Jesus Christ, speaking in His turn, declared that He would continue to do

the will of His foster-father, St. Joseph. Then Mary Joseph, turning towards her glorious patron, said: "Great Saint, ask of the Lord of Glory, that I may have the happiness of never losing His love. He cannot refuse you this grace." Her prayer was granted, but only on condition that she would not forget the promise she had made to God, to abandon herself always to His holy will; furthermore, she saw the place prepared for her in Heaven, where she was to have the happiness one day of reigning with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Now, devout souls, do not your hearts bound with joy at these proofs of the unlimited power of your patron in the Heavenly Kingdom? Is it not surprising that Jesus, the King of Glory, should have conceded to His adopted father the right to command Him, as it were, even in Heaven? But the surprise will diminish if we listen to these words of St. Bernardine of Sienna upon the same subject: "We may not doubt that Jesus Christ, who, during his mortal life, not content with having admitted Joseph to an intimate familiarity with Himself, rendered to him also the respect and obedience which a son owes to his father, has continued to bestow upon him the same sublime prerogatives even in Heaven, and that He has even wonderfully

perfected them. If the God Saviour," continues the same saint, "wished, in order to satisfy His filial piety, to glorify the body as well as the soul of the Blessed Virgin, on the day of her assumption, we may piously believe that He would do no less for St. Joseph, the greatest among all the saints, and that He would have raised him all glorious on that day on which, after having risen Himself from the dead, He resuscitated so many others from the dust of the tomb." He uttered these words in one of his sermons delivered at Padua before a numerous auditory, and it is related that at the moment at which he pronounced them a most brilliant golden cross was seen above his head, seemingly to ratify, by its miraculous appearance, his testimony relative to the resurrection of St. Joseph.





CHAPTER XII.

TWELFTH MOTIVE—ST. JOSEPH IS THE PROTECTOR OF THE AGONIZING, AND THE PATRON OF A HAPPY DEATH.



IF the examples hitherto quoted have not been sufficiently powerful to lead the reader, whoever he may be, to choose St. Joseph for his special protector, we will now present a last inducement—namely, the following : As there is no one but must die, sooner or later, so there is no one but should attach himself to this powerful patron of a happy death.

A plaintiff, engaged in a lawsuit where there is question of great gain or as great loss, seeks for the most skilful lawyer, and one who is disposed to favor his side of the case, to whom he confides the suit upon which depends his fortune or perhaps his life. Every Christian, at the moment of death, awaits the decision of a terrible trial ; the rage of the demons, the remembrance of the sins he has committed the uncertainty of his present

state, the terrors of the future, all unite to dispute with the dying soul the inheritance of Heaven, and to threaten him with the sovereign evil, which is hell. At so critical a moment would he not naturally seek the assistance of some one of the saints who would deign to plead his cause, and procure a successful termination to his suit at that dreaded tribunal, from whence there is no appeal, should one have the misfortune to be condemned? But what saint can better defend us than St. Joseph? The whole Christian world recognizes him as the advocate of the dying and the patron of a happy death, and for that very reason have everywhere established confraternities and raised altars under his invocation.

Among the motives which force us to recognize this great saint as the special advocate and patron of the dying, we may mention these three principally: 1st. Joseph is the father of our Judge; the other saints are merely His friends. 2d. His power is formidable to the demons. 3d. His death was the sweetest and most privileged one on record.

In the first case, Joseph being the father of our Judge, must necessarily have great influence with Him. Moses, by his vocation, was merely the chief and leader of the children of Israel, yet he

acts towards God in so authoritative a manner, that if he prays to Him in behalf of that rebellious and apparently incorrigible people, his prayer seems to have become in some sort a command which ties the hands of Divine Justice, and renders it powerless to punish the guilty until Moses has himself restored them (as it were) to liberty. (Exodus, xxxii.) But how much greater power will not our holy patriarch possess to arrest the arm of the Sovereign Judge, having been called to the sublime dignity of guide, guardian, and foster-father of Him who is Judge both of the living and the dead ! Let us represent to ourselves Joseph, who, desirous to aid one of his devout servants at the hour of death, presents himself before the tribunal of Jesus Christ and addresses Him as follows : "Through regard for me, my Son, have pity on this dying sinner ; aid him by Thy powerful grace, enable him to make a sincere act of contrition at his last moment. I ask Thee this grace, O Sovereign Judge ! by the sweet name of father with which Thou hast so often honored me ; by these arms and these hands which received Thee, which warmed Thee at the instant of Thy birth, which carried Thee into Egypt to save Thee from the fury of Herod. I ask it also by these eyes, whose tears I have

so often wiped away, by that blood which I stanch'd at Thy circumcision, by the fatigue and labors which I underwent to nourish Thee during Thy infancy." Could Jesus possibly resist such pressing prayers? No, certainly; they will be as so many chains which will bind His hands, and will only permit Him to say, as God formerly said to Moses: "Let me alone, that I may destroy them." But Joseph will not yield; he will only free the hands of the Judge upon His promise of absolution, not punishment. Although, as Gerson says, "Jesus does not wait for Joseph to command, one of his prayers having for Him the full force of an order." What happiness, then, for the dying soul to have so eloquent an advocate, so powerful a defender in a cause whose infallible issue is either the possession or the privation of eternal happiness!

It is, further, a great advantage for the dying soul to have on his side a saint whose very name causes hell to tremble. Amid the praises the Church bestows upon him, we find the title of Conqueror of hell. He merited this glorious title, when, in order to preserve the Divine Infant from the death which Herod had prepared for Him, he carried Him into Egypt; for, since Herod was the figure and instrument of the infernal dragon, the

persecutor of Jesus and of all the souls whom He has redeemed, Joseph, by baffling that prince's scheme, triumphed over the demon ; and that first victory having been gained, enabled him to accomplish another still more striking one, since, as Origen tells us, in the order given by the angel to St. Joseph to fly into Egypt was comprised the power to drive thence all the demons, who had, as it were, fixed the centre of their empire in that infidel country. And at the moment when the holy patriarch entered that land with the Infant Jesus and His Mother, the idols were overthrown, the oracles became silent, the father of lies was enchained, and the infernal spectres took to flight at the first sight of the Divine Sun of Justice, then hidden under the veil of His humanity, as had been announced by the Prophet Isaias : " Behold, the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud, and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." (Isaias, xix. 1.) Those victories undoubtedly belonged to the Infant God ; but He wished, in their accomplishment, to make use of the arm of St. Joseph, as head of his family, director of the journey, and himself the saviour of the Saviour of men. Thus, from that moment, the conquered demon began to fear the name of Joseph.

How much greater reason has he not to dread his name, now that he sees his power, dignity, holiness, and merits shine forth with so great lustre ! Joseph is one of the greatest princes of Heaven, occupying there the proper station befitting the father of its King and the spouse of its Queen. Lucifer knows it, for which reason he fears almost to approach the bed of a dying Christian who, during life, has been a devout servant of St. Joseph. He well knows that the Divine Saviour, in order to recompense the saint for having protected Him from Herod's sword and from a temporal death, has conferred on him the special privilege of delivering from the grasp of the demons and from eternal death, those dying persons who have confided themselves to his protection. Joseph will not suffer so glorious a privilege to remain unexerted, and we will later cite some examples to prove the favors he bestows upon his clients. It is these signal marks of protection which induce numbers of Christians to fly to him, in order to find under his wings an impenetrable buckler against the darts of the enemy, at those critical moments when his fury is redoubled at the sight of a prey about to escape him.

A Christian soul desires not only a protector to

assist him in his last moments, but also a friend, who can console, fortify, and strengthen him in the bitterness of death. Who can better fulfil so sweet and salutary an office than he who, at his own death, received such powerful assistance and such sweet consolation? To you alone, O Joseph, was reserved the happiness of seeing Jesus and Mary around your death-bed. Both those divine personages, grateful for the services rendered them by St. Joseph for so many years with so much zeal and affection, vied with each other in attending him during his last illness, ministering to his wants with their own hands with a charity worthy of the God-man and his Mother. They compensated for the needs their poverty could not supply, by redoubled care and marks of tenderness, which delighted the heavenly hosts. We are told that, during the day immediately preceding the death of St. Joseph, troops of angels came from Heaven to console him and to gratify him with their songs of praise. We may readily believe this, since, if God, as so many authentic writers attest, has deigned to grant His celestial consolations to so great a number of His servants, how could He have refused them to the most faithful of them all, to the guardian and foster-father of the Incarnate Word? It is said that at the

death of the venerable Isabella, a Carmelite religious, four angels were seen to place themselves at the four corners of the bed, who, in order to console the invalid, sang, accompanying themselves upon the harp, these words of Isaias : " Say to the just that his reward is sure." Who better than Joseph merited to hear that sweet song? Did he not receive the name of *Just* from the Holy Ghost Himself? " Pass to a new life," might the angels say to him ; " no one better than yourself has a right to expect the death of the just. Yes, your death shall be that of the just, because you shall yield up your soul in the arms of Him who is justice and sanctity, upon the bosom of Him who is the true Life. You, whom we may call Prince of the Patriarchs, go, carry to them the news of the approaching redemption. And we will go and weave a crown of lilies for the Virgin spouse, a crown of roses for the first persecuted member of the rising Church, a crown of brilliant stars for the adopted father of the Saviour, for him who surpasses all in virtue as in dignity, we will go to prepare a throne near to that which his spouse, the Virgin Mother, will occupy. Happy Joseph ! more exalted in heaven than the ancient patriarch at the court of Pharaoh, you will be prime-minister at the court of the Most

High, the dispenser of His treasures, the protector of the Church, the advocate and patron of all Christians." But if the angelic concerts so gladdened Joseph at his last hour, what shall we say of the far sweeter words which Jesus then addressed to him? St. Bernardine of Sienna, considering the happy death of Joseph, assisted by the two greatest denizens of heaven, Jesus and Mary, lacks terms to express the consolations, the sweetness, the light, the delicious languor, the flames of love, which filled that thrice-blessed soul. Jesus, during His infancy, had received so many caresses from that pure and tender father, that He undoubtedly wishes to return them with all the vivacity of filial love, at that hour so favorable to the marks of tenderness and compassion which a good son ordinarily lavishes upon a beloved father. Jesus fully repaid, at that moment, all Joseph's fatigue and labors by torrents of interior joy, all his anguish by sure pledges of confidence and peace, all his tears by heavenly consolations. With one hand He sustained the dying head, and, pressing with the other the same heart whereon He had so often reposed during His infancy, He pierced it with the arrows of His love. Mary, on her side, humbly thanked her spouse for his holy company, for his

watchful care of her ; and her words were as so many darts of love which consummated his life. Thus, some authors have not feared to say that love alone caused his death. However that may be, the Church compares his death sometimes to a peaceful slumber, like that of a child sweetly sleeping on its mother's breast ; sometimes to an aromatic torch, which consumes itself in burning, and which dies in exhaling the sweet odor which pervades its substance. We may envy the death of all the saints, because all die in the embrace of the Lord ; however, this embrace has no reality, it is merely a precious feeling of love. But Joseph died actually in the embrace of the Lord, since he expired in the very arms of Jesus. And if, as must be believed, he preserved his speech and consciousness to his last sigh, which could have been but a sigh of love, how otherwise could he have crowned such a life but by pronouncing the sacred names of Jesus and Mary ? As for me, blessed Joseph, if I cannot, like you, expire in the presence of my Saviour and his Mother, may I at least, with my dying lips, join your beloved name with the sweet names of Jesus and Mary.

The love of the Son and the Mother for St. Joseph was not extinguished by his death Both assisted in closing his eyes and paid him the last

offices with mingled sighs and tears ; for we should not consider it unbecoming in Jesus to weep on such an occasion, His affection for Joseph being much more lively than that which He afterwards conceived for His friend Lazarus. Now, if the groans and tears which He lavished on Lazarus astonished the spectators and caused them to exclaim, "Behold how He loved him!" is it not much more reasonable that He should give those marks of affection to one who had been not only His friend but His guardian, His guide, His foster-father, in order that all those who came to visit the body of St. Joseph might also say of Jesus : "See how He loved him !" Such is the reasoning of a pious contemplative, John Eckius, in a homily upon St. Joseph. Gerson adds that Jesus Himself washed this virginal body, crossing his hands on his breast ; then blessed it, to preserve it from the corruption of the tomb, and ordered His angels to guard it till the moment when it should be laid in the tomb of his fathers, between the mount of Sion and that of Olives. According to the common opinion, St. Joseph died about the age of sixty years, before the time our Lord quitted Nazareth to go and receive baptism from St. John the Baptist.

We can readily realize from the above how just

and reasonable it is, that all Christians should choose St. Joseph for their protector at the inevitable and critical moment of death. Father of their Judge, he is not wanting in authority to appease Him and induce Him to show mercy. Conqueror of demons, he well knows how to drive them from the bed of death by his mere presence. Himself favored by the sweetest and most happy death ever known, he will undoubtedly come, in company of his blessed spouse, to aid those to die happily who have frequently invoked him during life, and shown themselves his devout clients. Since, then, we must all die, we should all hasten, whilst there is yet time, to obtain the protection of St. Joseph as patron of a happy death. The Church herself exhorts us to do so in the hymn in which she celebrates his happy passage to a better life.* As a docile child of that holy mother, I joyfully conform to her intentions; and, from henceforth, I invoke his assistance for my last hour as my august protector, and address to him this humble prayer:

“Blessed Joseph, it is not without reason that you are honored, in preference to so many saints, as patron of all in their last agony, as special

* In the Breviary, Office at Lauds--March 19

protector of those who wish for a happy death. Your death was so sweet, peaceful, and precious in God's sight, that it excites the envy of all the Faithful. Jesus and Mary were continually beside your bed, both eager to return you all the services which you had bestowed upon them during your life. By turns they presented you with a drink, or with some other relief compatible with their poverty. Jesus comforted you with the words of eternal life. Mary consoled you by the most tender care and attention. How many times did not Jesus hold up your dying head with His divine hands, and Mary wipe off the perspiration which bathed your pale forehead! Ah! could you have done otherwise than die of love, seeing yourself assisted during your agony by a God, and consoled by the Mother of a God? Holy Simeon died in peace and full of joy for having contemplated Jesus for a few instants, whilst you, O blessed Joseph, who for so many years had had Him constantly under your eyes, who had so often embraced Him as a tender father, and received from Him the caresses of a son—you, whom He made it a duty to obey until your dying day—you might hope to breathe forth your last sigh in receiving the parting kiss of Jesus; you, in short, who knew that Mary's hand would

close your dying eyes, with how much more reason than Simeon might you, before expiring, have sung that joyful canticle, 'To-day, therefore, O Jesus, my son and my God, let Thy servant, Thy guardian, Thy father, depart in peace! Since, then, O holy patriarch, your death was so sweet, so holy, and so precious before God, I now implore your protection for my last hour. Obtain for me, I beseech you, at that moment so terrible to the sinner, a sincere contrition for all my past sins, a firm hope in the infinite mercy of that Saviour God who began the work of my salvation in the manger and finished it on the cross. Finally, in assured confidence in the aid of Mary and yourself, I wish to say with my dying breath, and I now repeat with all the affection of my heart,

"Jesus, Mary, Joseph, to you I cry,
Be my defenders in my last agony."






Book Second.

FAVORS DUE TO THE PROTECTION OF ST. JOSEPH.

CHAPTER I.

**PROTECTION SHOWN BY ST. JOSEPH TOWARDS ST. TERESA AND
THE CARMELITE ORDER, AS ALSO TOWARDS MANY OTHER RE-
LIGIOUS ORDERS.**

T. JOSEPH, from his position as tutor and head of the Holy Family, has acquired a right of patronage over all Christian families, especially over those which, by their profession of following the evangelical counsels, become, by that very fact, a most perfect copy of the Holy Family. We have laid down this doctrine in a former chapter (chap. vii., B. I.) ; we will now proceed to furnish some examples.

The reader doubtless remembers what we have

before related concerning the tender devotion shown by St. Teresa towards St. Joseph, and the efforts which she made to extend his devotion throughout the world : we will now say something of the paternal affection of the holy patriarch Joseph for his pious servant, and concerning the miraculous proofs which he gave of it to her, as also to the entire family of Carmel. We borrow the facts we mention from the Bollandists, who have drawn them from the purest sources.

St. Teresa, from her very infancy, began to experience the benevolent protection of St. Joseph. She relates in her life, written by herself at the command of her superiors, that after three years of violent sickness, which left her neither repose nor hope of recovery, she had recourse to St. Joseph, and through his intercession miraculously recovered her health.

At the beginning of the reform of Carmel, our Lord pressed her to hasten the foundation of her first monastery of Avila, promising to assist her and to put His own hand to the work, as He foresaw He would be served there with great perfection. He told her, also, not to give this first house of the reform any other name than that of St. Joseph, and also to place over the door two equally vigilant and faithful guides, Mary, His

Mother, on one side, and Joseph, her spouse, on the other.

The holy foundress immediately began her work, but quickly found herself in great need of money to pay the workmen. Turn which way she would, she saw no means of escape. Then St. Joseph appeared to her, bidding her confidently to agree with the workmen, and engage for all necessaries for the building, promising she should not want money to defray the expenses; and, in effect, she found he performed his promise, for, both to her own and others' astonishment, she received money from persons of whom she least expected so great charities.

This illustrious servant of St. Joseph relates, that on the day of the Assumption, being at prayer in the Dominican Church, it seemed to be that some one clothed her in a mantle of exceeding whiteness. She did not at first perceive who it was that so honored her; but suddenly she perceived the Blessed Virgin on her right and St. Joseph on her left, who covered her with that rich garment, giving her to understand that she was purified from all her sins. Thus clothed, her heart filled with inexpressible joy: it seemed to her that she pressed in her hands those of our Blessed Lady, and that the latter testified her

great satisfaction at seeing her so affectionately devout towards her holy spouse, and recommended her to ask St. Joseph whatever she considered necessary or useful to the welfare of her monastery, assuring her that her wishes should be granted. In confirmation of her promise, she made her a present of a precious stone. Finally, she thought she saw around her neck a magnificent collar, with a golden cross suspended from it. The holy spouses then returned to Heaven, escorted by a host of blessed spirits, leaving Teresa inundated with celestial joy, and, as she herself confesses, animated with the desire of consuming herself entirely in God's service.

During a journey which she made with some of her religious to found the monastery of Veas, which was to bear the name of St. Joseph, she was preserved from inevitable death by his assistance. The coachman having wandered from the direct road, the horses dragged the carriage upon the very brink of a precipice. Teresa, seeing her companions terrified, said to them: "My dear daughters, the only means of escaping certain destruction is to implore the aid of our good father, St. Joseph." They had no sooner done so than they saw an old man, who cried out to them with a loud voice: "Stand, for you will all be lost if

you go one step further!" Wherefore they asked of him, "Which way shall we take?" "That way," replied he. The road indicated seemed no less dangerous than the one they had followed; nevertheless, they obeyed implicitly, and in a moment they found themselves miraculously out of danger. They endeavored to find out the old man in order to thank him, but in vain, as St. Teresa foretold, who assured them it was her good father St. Joseph who had freed them from the great danger they were in. On another journey, the saint became entangled in a wheel, which threw her down violently: the fall was sufficient to crush her, but St. Joseph coming to her assistance, she did not experience the slightest injury.

With regard to the favors granted by St. Joseph to the entire Carmelite Order, we learn from the historian of the reform of St. Teresa that two Carmelite friars had just left the door of their monastery of Grenada, when they perceived an old man of venerable aspect, who, placing himself between them, asked whence they came. The elder of the two replied that they came from the Convent of the Discalced Carmelites. "Fathers," answered the stranger, "why have they such devotion towards St. Joseph?" "Because," re-

sumed the same religious, "our holy mother, Teresa of Jesus, had herself great love to that great saint, who had greatly assisted her in the building of her monasteries, and obtained numerous heavenly graces for her; therefore, in gratitude for his favors, she gave the name of St. Joseph to nearly all the monasteries she founded." "I already knew all that," replied the old man: "look me full in the face, and preserve a devotion towards St. Joseph, in imitation of your holy foundress; all that you ask of him you shall obtain." So saying, he disappeared, and the two religious vainly sought him on all sides, but could see no one. On their return to the convent they related what had taken place to their Superior. "That was St. Joseph," he said to them, "and the vision was for my instruction, not yours; for I have not been sufficiently devout to that great saint: henceforth I will honor him with more care." This event took place in 1584, two years after St. Teresa's death.

The saint did not delay in the execution of his promise. The Carmelites had founded a convent at Consuegra, in Spain, but the premature death of the pious founder deprived them of nearly all their resources, at the very time they had begun to build the house they were to occupy. Not

knowing any one who had either the power or the will to assist them, they found themselves greatly embarrassed. A Father belonging to the Reform, who was then at Consuerga, going to the Prioress, said to her : " Your monastery is under the invocation of St. Joseph, our father ; by that very title it belongs to him. Besides, you know by experience his power with God. If you desire his aid, make, with your entire community, a solemn communion in his honor ; I am quite confident that he will require nothing more to induce him to help you in your misfortune." His advice was followed. The next day, the same Father, whilst walking in the public square, was accosted by a notary, who said to him, that hearing the Carmelites were endeavoring to borrow money, but could find no one to loan it, though they had offered to pay a high interest, he wished to make it known that he would gladly render them that service, if they could obtain the consent of his wife, who, till then, had shown great repugnance to his project. The religious immediately repaired to the lady's house to endeavor to change her sentiments, when, strange to say, he found her not only perfectly willing to lend the money, but disposed to consider herself specially favored by being allowed to employ part of her means in

building their convent. So sudden and unexpected a change plainly proved the intervention of St. Joseph, who was eager to recompense the faith and confidence of his servants.

The power of St. Joseph was also strikingly manifested at Zumaya, in Biscay. Some of the principal women of the town had formed the desire of consecrating themselves to God in the religious state, and proposed to enter a monastery of St. Teresa. They wrote on the subject to the Bishop of Pampeluna, their chief pastor. The latter, far from approving their design, repaired to Zumaya and proposed to them a less austere order. The virtuous women insisted, appealing to the prelate's conscience. But the latter, proving inflexible, ordered them to choose some order which was not barefoot,—adding, that he would only give them the time of his Mass to make the choice, and that if, when that was finished, they could come to no decision, he would himself point out the order they were to enter. So saying, he entered the Church and began his Mass. The pious women, on their side, begged our Lord, through the intercession of St. Joseph, to admit them among the Barefooted Carmelites, and their prayer was granted. During Mass, the saint appeared to the bishop, strongly reprov-
ed him for

thus afflicting those pious souls by refusing to yield to their wishes, and ordered him to suffer them to embrace the rule of St. Teresa. The Mass finished, the humbled bishop related to them the vision he had witnessed. Having granted them his full permission, he completed their joy by placing the new foundation under the invocation of the saint who had so loudly proclaimed himself their protector.

During the early part of the seventeenth century, the Carthusian Order was in great trouble ; for, fearing so great a desolation as the destruction of their order would have been from the want of subjects, as none presented themselves to embrace that mode of life, a general chapter was held at their great chapter-house at Grenoble, to the end that they might obtain St. Joseph's powerful intercession for the support of their order. They made a decree in general chapter, by which they chose him for the patron and advocate of **their order**, and **ordained** that his feast should, for the future, not only be kept as of obligation throughout their whole order, but with very great solemnity. The decree was carried into execution, vocations were soon declared, the novitiates were filled up, and no further alarm was felt upon the subject.

The house at Lyons, which was one of the most afflicted through need of novices, made a vow, some years ago, that the priests should make a daily commemoration of him in their Mass, since which time they have never wanted fit subjects to increase their number.

A monastery of nuns received the same favor from St. Joseph. The older religious seeing that no one presented herself to take the habit, felt greatly alarmed thereat. The Superioress thought it necessary to have recourse to St. Joseph, to beg his assistance, and therefore it was resolved that for six months they should together daily recite his prayer after Mass for this intention, which all the religious cheerfully performed. The devotion was no sooner begun, than a young lady, with a good fortune, offered herself to live and die with them in God's service : she was admitted and persevered, her sisters always looking upon her as St. Joseph's child.

St. Teresa and the entire Carmelite order fully prove to us that poor monasteries never fail in obtaining aid from St. Joseph, in all their temporal necessities. Other religious orders have experienced the same assistance. I learned from the Superior of one of our professed houses, which subsists only by alms, that two virtuous and aged


Fathers had taught him to have recourse to the saint whenever his house should be in want, and that he never had done so without experiencing the happy effects of his protection.





CHAPTER II.

PROTECTION GRANTED BY ST. JOSEPH TO THOSE SOULS THAT AIM
AT THE INTERIOR LIFE.

OD seems to have specially confided to the care of St. Joseph those souls that live in recollection, in recompense of his interior life in the house of Nazareth. If, then, Christian souls, it is so advantageous to make progress in the path of perfection, and to have a wise and experienced director therein, all you who tend towards the interior life should abandon yourselves to the direction of our saint, and you may rest assured that he will conduct you safely to the end of the career you have embraced.

As an example in point, we will mention a young man who, in the turmoil of worldly affairs, had preserved an admirable simplicity and innocence. Father Segneri, of the Society of Jesus, accidentally meeting him, and finding him so

wonderfully replenished with extraordinary gifts and graces from God, that in his life he had never met with the like,—for, although the youth had never been instructed, and only served a priest until he was eighteen years of age, yet he spoke on spiritual matters not only like a divine, but also like a saint,—the Father asked him if he were devout to St. Joseph? To which he made answer, that for the last six years this saint had been his protector and director; and affirmed that our Saviour Himself had given him St. Joseph for this end; adding, that he was the greatest of saints, after the Blessed Virgin, that he had the plenitude of the Holy Ghost with the Apostles, and that he was the master and spiritual director of those souls who led an interior life.

Another example is as follows. A religious of St. Clare, wishing to go through the spiritual exercises, resolved to take a saint for her patron during that holy time, and inclined to choose St. Francis, as being the father and patron of her order. Whilst her thoughts were thus employed an interior trouble of mind seized her, and raised doubts whether or no this choice would be in conformity to the will of God. Whereupon she resolved to draw lots, and to write the name of

St. Joseph, who came first to her mind, with that of St. Francis, separately on little slips ; and twice together the first she drew was that of St. Joseph, which proved to her that it was God's will that she should take the latter saint for her director in her solitude. Some time after, God gave her a strong impulse to make choice of some saint that might, for her life, direct her interiorly. Hereupon she thought to choose some of those saints for whom, from her tender years, she had had a great devotion. Nevertheless, it came to her mind to put St. Joseph among the rest. After she had well mingled the papers, St. Joseph, as before, twice fell to her lot. However, though it was pleasing to her that she had thus drawn him, yet she begged of God, that she might certainly know His will, to permit her, if it were His divine pleasure, to light upon the same lot the third time. Wherefore, mingling them again, the first that came to her hand was St. Joseph, which success made her entirely acknowledge and receive him for her spiritual father, protector, and faithful director of her interior religious life.

But why need we resort to lots to discover the Divine will in such a case, when Mary declares to us that her faithful spouse Joseph

should be our spiritual guide? A fervent religious, being greatly disquieted by some temptations she suffered, especially in time of prayer, giving her a great deal of trouble and discouragement, as they made her think she should never be able to treat God with fervor, nor have so open and liberal a heart towards His Divine Majesty as she found necessary to serve Him, she addressed herself to the Blessed Virgin as to her tender mother, and affectionately tells her, with a filial confidence, that she must needs obtain for her this liberty of spirit, and inspire her what saint she should choose to help her herein, and in whose assistance she might securely confide. She had no sooner ended her petition but she obtained a grant thereof, for she found that St. Joseph was presented to her mind with great interior sweetness; and the excellence and great perfection of this saint were so clearly set before her that she never forgot it, and ever after confided in him in all and for all, as in a loving father, who immediately freed her from the pain she was in, not only for the present, but for the future; and when at any time any of her former temptations returned, she found no disquiet; nor did she do any thing but confidently cast herself into the tender arms of her dear father, and im-

mediately found peace of mind, accompanied with a most comfortable union and entertainment with God.

As for prayer, St. Teresa assures us, in her life, that he who cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, must choose St. Joseph for his guide and director, and he will certainly find out the way to perform this exercise well. To confirm this, Father Barry tells us that he knew two persons who found great difficulty in prayer: the one by frequently recommending himself to St. Joseph, the other by undertaking the recital of a few prayers in his honor, were assisted by him, even as soon as they had performed these devotions; and they have since, by his intercession, obtained so great a facility in mental prayer, that there is no greater consolation to them than this exercise. "Another religious," he adds, "told me that desiring very earnestly the gift of quiet prayer, and to be freed from distractions, found herself inwardly moved to have recourse to this good master, to whom she readily and confidently addressed herself and obtained the favor she sought, as also that of being preserved, even during sleep, from any thought or dream not pure and holy."

t. Joseph also communicates his love of the

Cross to souls truly devout to himself. Appearing once with his holy spouse to the venerable Mother Anne Rodriguez, a Franciscan religious, whilst Mary was recommending her to her Divine Son, Joseph offered her a vase containing two kinds of meat, one very sweet, the other very bitter, saying to her, "Choose, my daughter, whichever of the two you prefer." The religious, who was greatly devoted to St. Joseph, chose the bitter portion. St. Joseph then showed her a very beautiful but very heavy cross, saying to her : "My daughter, you have made an excellent choice ; henceforth you shall always have the cross with its bitterness : but rejoice, because you will find therein the means of rendering yourself very agreeable in the sight of God."


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CHAPTER III.

PROTECTION GRANTED BY ST. JOSEPH IN SPIRITUAL THINGS.

T. JOSEPH, like that father mentioned in the Gospel, loves not only his dutiful children who hearken to his voice, and lead innocent lives, but also his wandering and prodigal ones ; that is to say, that if he bestows his favors upon the just to aid them on their path towards perfection, he does not refuse his paternal care to poor sinners. Isidore de l'Isle, in the tenth chapter of the fourth book of his great work upon St. Joseph, which he wrote in 1522 and dedicated to Pope Adrian VI., recounts a very remarkable example of a gentleman of Venice, so devoted to St. Joseph that daily he was wont to recite before his image several devotions in his honor. This person lying dangerously ill, without thinking, as he should have done, of a penitent confession, his cares being rather taken up about

the health of his body than that of his soul. In this condition St. Joseph appeared to him, and pointed out to him the sinful state he was in, enabled him to see the enormity of faults in their true light, warned him to make a good and speedy confession, and to prepare himself for death, which was nearer than he imagined. He followed this counsel, conceived a true contrition for his sins, received the last sacraments, and, assisted by St. Joseph in his last agony, made a most happy end, receiving thereby a reward for his constant devotion to our saint.

The following example will, we hope, serve as an encouragement to those feeble and timid souls, who, having had the misfortune to fall into a serious fault, abandon themselves to false shame, and cannot bring themselves to mention it in confession; as it will prove to them that they will find the intercession of St. Joseph a powerful means to overcome their cowardly timidity. Father Barry tells us that a person of worth, and a confident friend of his, hearing that he had in hands a work in honor of St. Joseph, wrote to him, assuring him that St. Joseph had delivered her from the most miserable slavery and thralldom of mind, which happened to her after the following manner. She having failed in a

matter of great importance, even against a vow made to God, could not bring herself to a plain and clear confession of her fault. She thus remained for some time at enmity with God and a prey to the reproaches of her conscience, the ordinary consequence of sin. She fully resolved to overcome so dangerous a false shame ; and for this end, that she might obtain grace from God, to put her soul in a good state, she for nine days together said the Hymn and Prayer of St. Joseph : and upon the ninth day she felt a strange remorse for her offence, found sufficient courage to declare all, and to make a good confession, which she performed with a very great sorrow, and a firm purpose of amendment ; resolving ever after to carry about her a picture of St. Joseph, even in the night, to prevent bad dreams, whereby she acknowledged to receive very singular help and assistance.

The same writer relates two wonderful conversions due to the intercession of St. Joseph. The first was that of a young man of Lyons, of good family, who passed his youth in the fear of God, and was resolved to quit the world and entirely give himself to God's service, for the greater security of his salvation : but his parents not liking his design, endeavored to divert him from

it, but very unhappily ; for seeing himself frustrated of executing his good desires, his former fervor cooling by little and little, from remissness in his devotions, he fell into an entire neglect of them. At last he became a shameless libertine, and finally betook himself to the wars, where he wallowed in all the licentiousness of a soldier's life, so that he was the ringleader in every excess. Divine Justice thus punishing at once the parents and the son : the latter, for having through an ill-advised compliance closed his ears to the voice of God ; the former, for having through blind affection opposed Heaven's designs upon their child. But both parents, having a sense of piety and God's honor and glory, became sensible of their fault, fell into inconsolable affliction of mind, acknowledging their error and endeavoring by every means in their power, and by the counsels of others, to persuade him to quit his irregularities ; but all in vain, his heart being obdurate. As a last resource, they applied to St. Joseph, daily beseeching him to reclaim and bring back this prodigal child, by taking him under his protection. The third day they had earnestly offered their devotions : the young man returned home, cast himself at his parents' feet ; begged pardon for his follies began a new life, and corresponded

to his former vocation by entering into religion, in which God rewarded him with perseverance ; in short, these words of the Gospel might safely be applied to him : "He was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found."

The second conversion he mentions, took place at Paris. A Father of the Society of Jesus had a near relative who, for many years, had by his evil conduct dishonored not only the name he bore but also his priestly character and Christian education. The zealous religious, after having vainly employed the mildest reproofs and the more severe warnings, begged God that since all other means had failed, He would graciously send him some grievous sickness, as there is no surer means of recalling wandering souls than the road of tribulation, as Holy Scripture teaches : "Trouble gives knowledge." Wishing the remedy to have its full effect, he invoked the aid of St. Joseph, causing his friends to make two novenas—one of communions, the other of masses—in his honor. The coveted grace was obtained ; the scandalous priest fell ill, and was soon reduced to extremity. He at last opened his eyes to his dangerous state, sincerely detested his sins, and made a free and contrite confession. St. Joseph, to perfect his miraculous cure, obtained for him also health of

body. Upon his recovery he took a firm resolution to employ all his future time and all his energies in laboring for God's glory, which he ever after faithfully performed, to the edification of all around him.

Those souls who are anxious to find a faithful guardian and zealous defender of their chastity, that precious yet fragile treasure, which, as St. Paul tells us, we carry in vases of clay, should address themselves to St. Joseph. He knows the great price of that heavenly virtue, which shone forth so brightly in his chaste spouse. Whilst breathing the delicious odor of that beautiful lily, growing amid the thorns of this world, he felt the love of and esteem for virginity redouble within him; as also the most lively zeal to preserve its purity in the hearts of his devout servants. We find in the chronicles of the Reformed Carmelites, that there was, in their monastery of Perpignan, a very holy religious, who one night was visited by the prince of darkness, who assailed him with all the fury common to that impure spirit, whom the Church entreats the Lord to keep far away from her children. The struggle lasted all night, giving great uneasiness to the chaste religious, who repulsed the enemy with all his might, without being able to prevent his return-

ing to the charge. Only at daybreak did grace enable him to put the tempter to flight. Some hours after, having occasion to go into town with the prior of the convent, he met a venerable looking man, who said to him: "Why did you not think of St. Joseph during those multiplied assaults you underwent last night! Why did you not invoke his assistance?" The religious, greatly astonished that he should be aware of what had passed in the secret of his soul, was about to answer, when his questioner disappeared. He remained firmly persuaded that the old man was none other than St. Joseph, who delights to be invoked, particularly in temptations against the virtue so dear to him.

Father de Barry, also, mentions the cases of two young persons of singular piety, who, exposed to similar temptations, owed their deliverance therefrom to St. Joseph.





CHAPTER IV.

PROTECTION BESTOWED BY ST. JOSEPH UPON HIS DEVOUT SERVANTS IN SAVING LIFE AND CURING MALADIES.



SINCE God Himself placed St. Joseph at the head of the Holy Family, there is no earthly father who should not specially honor him, and invoke his aid in all his family matters. Undoubtedly, children are the most precious ornaments of a Christian family, and their good education should be their parents' most important duty. To succeed therein they should have recourse to St. Joseph with the greater confidence, as, by accepting the care of the holy infancy of the Saviour, he received, at the same time, the guard of all the Church's children who were ransomed by the blood of his adopted Son. The following example will prove this. In 1631 the great crater opened on Mt. Vesuvius ; so terrible a deluge of fire and ashes

poured out, that the burning lava, like an impetuous flood, covered the surrounding country, especially that part styled *Torre di Grecco*. In that town dwelt a woman named Camilla, very devout to St. Joseph ; and with her a young child, aged five years, her nephew, whose name was Joseph. To escape from the fiery flood she fled, with the little Joseph in her arms. But closely followed by the burning waves, and finding her passage impeded by a rock, which extended as far as the sea, she found herself exposed to the double danger of being burned to death if she stopped, or drowned if she went on. At this critical moment she remembered her protector, and cried out : "Great Saint, I recommend your little Joseph to you ; save him." At these words she placed the child on the rock and boldly jumped down on the side facing the sea. Instead of falling into the waves, as one would naturally have supposed, she fell on the gravel, and received no injury. She was saved ; but the loss of the child, whom she had left to the mercy of the waves, caused her extreme pain : in her grief, she ran hither and thither, like one distracted, deploring her misfortune. Suddenly she heard her name called in the voice of her child, who came running to meet her full of life and joy. "Dear child," exclaimed Ca-

milla, pressing him in her arms, "who has preserved you from the hot ashes which might have stifled you, and the fire which might have consumed you?" "It was St. Joseph," answered the child, "in whose care you left me; he took me by the hand, and conducted me to the place where you saw me." The pious woman, weeping with joy, threw herself immediately on her knees to return thanks to her loving protector for the two miracles simultaneously operated, in preserving her nephew from the flames and herself from the waves, into which she must naturally have fallen and perished.

Among the exercises of piety practised in honor of St. Joseph, there is one generally known—namely, that of meditating on his seven joys and seven sorrows. This devotion owes its origin to a celebrated event, never omitted by any historian of the saint. It is as follows. Two Franciscan Fathers were sailing along the coast of Flanders, when a terrible tempest arose which sunk the vessel with its three hundred passengers. The two Fathers had sufficient presence of mind to seize hold of a plank, upon which they were tossed to and fro upon the waves for three days and nights. In their danger and affliction their whole recourse was to St. Joseph, begging his assist-

ance in their sad condition ; who appeared in the habit of a young man of beautiful features, and encouraged them to confide in his assistance, and, as their pilot, conducted them into a safe harbor. They, desirous to know who was their benefactor, asked his name, that they might gratefully acknowledge so great a blessing and favor. He told them he was St. Joseph, and advised them daily to recite "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" seven times, in memory of his seven dolours or griefs and of his seven joys, and then disappeared.*

The city of Lyons has been singularly favored by St. Joseph ; one might easily fill a volume with the many wonders wrought there. Father de Barry has collected some of the most remarkable, some of which we will mention.

Sister Jane of the Angels, Prioress of the Ursulines, fell ill of a pleurisy, accompanied by a violent fever, and suffered intolerable pain. No remedies could give her any relief, and her death seemed inevitable. The day when her extreme sufferings had deprived her of the use of her exterior senses, without, however, impairing in the least that of the faculties of her soul, she saw St.

* See this Exercise, B. III., c. i., No. viii.

Joseph, her cherished protector, descend from Heaven with a benignant aspect, and enter her cell ; which became for her a little paradise. In the midst of a bright cloud the sick person perceived a young man of gracious aspect, richly clothed, whom she recognized as her angel guardian, holding in his hand a lighted taper. Near him appeared the glorious St. Joseph, brighter than the sun, and surrounded with incomparable splendor, resembling, in age, a man of forty or forty-five years. He looked at Sister Jane in a most gracious manner, and, addressing her, exhorted her to persevere in the homage she rendered to him, and restored her to health. The vision then disappeared ; immediately the religious left her bed and dressed herself. Meanwhile the doctor was announced, who remained immovable from surprise on seeing her restored to health and vigor, as he expected to find her either dead or dying. The entire community returned thanks to St. Joseph, and endeavored to merit new favors by redoubling their devotion towards him.

During the plague which ravaged Lyons in 1638, many persons were preserved from it by the intercession of St. Joseph. We will mention two cases. Mr. Augery, an advocate in the parliament of Dauphiny, being at Lyons, had a child,

seven years old, attacked by the dreaded malady, and threatened with death, made a vow that if St. Joseph would, by his intercession, procure his son's recovery and preserve his family from the plague, he would for nine days together hear Mass in his church and offer tapers and wax-candles at his altar, with a votive picture, as a lasting memory of this favor. In the mean time, the sick youth being visited by the plague surgeons, who gave him up for dead, was taken out of the house and carried to St. Lawrence, the pest-house, for fear of infecting others, where he immediately recovered. His father, full of gratitude towards St. Joseph, hastened to accomplish his vow.

Martin De Bau, a little child four years old, residing in the same city, was seized with the plague while at play. His mother gave him up for dead, when she was counselled to recommend him to St. Joseph, which she immediately did, in these words: "St. Joseph, I recommend my child to you; he was born on your feast." About two hours after, the child's father, perceiving some signs of death, calls his wife; she, giving him up for dead, made a kind of pious complaint, saying: "Ah, St. Joseph!" Suddenly she hears the child ask for something to eat, and rise from his bed, exclaiming: "I am well; St. Joseph has cured

me." His mother offered a votive picture at the altar of St. Joseph, to testify her gratitude. This miracle greatly increased the popular devotion towards our holy patriarch.

The Augustinian nuns of Antwerp had, as we have previously stated, in the interior of their monastery, a chapel dedicated to St. Joseph, remarkable for its beauty, and still more celebrated by reason of the many favors granted there. Among the religious was one named Elizabeth, who, for three years, had suffered terribly from the stone ; her pain was so intense, that it produced a violent fever and frequent fainting fits. The physicians, judging the stone to be too large for removal, despaired of her cure and gave her up for dead. Thus deprived of human aid, she had recourse to St. Joseph, to whom she was greatly devoted, and put on a girdle blessed under his invocation ; furthermore, she solicited and obtained permission for her Superioress to offer as many prayers, vows, and mortifications as she judged necessary to obtain the aid of her heavenly physician. To further her cure, she recommended herself to the prayers of all who came near her, and prayed unceasingly, day and night, to St. Joseph. The more she prayed the greater became her confidence ; so that she said one day

to the Prioress : " Yes, mother, I shall be cured by the aid of St. Joseph ; I shall soon be freed from this stone, which causes me such cruel torments ; you will have the sure proof of it before your eyes." She continued to solicit her cure with redoubled fervor, when, on the 10th of June, 1659, worn out with the terrible sufferings she endured, at the moment when her companions, weeping around her, were holding her in their arms, she threw herself before the picture of St. Joseph and conjured him to help her. All at once she ceased to suffer, and passed a large stone. The Superioress, and the other religious witnesses of the prodigy, united with her in offering thanks to her heavenly benefactor for so great a favor. The stone weighed three ounces, and was suspended before St. Joseph's altar, in remembrance of the miracle. A Protestant physician, having examined it, testified that such a cure could only be effected by a miracle." *

The renown of this miraculous cure animated

* According to the Bollandists, this event happened June 10th, 1649. On the 9th of January following a legal process was drawn up, and among other signatures are found those of Mary Martens, Prioress of the Convent of Catharine Martens, the Infirmarian, and of Sister Elizabeth Sillenort, the sick person here spoken of.

the confidence of a poor mother, whose son, aged four years, was greatly reduced by the gravel. The physicians decided that it was necessary to operate upon him. But the mother ran to the church and prostrated herself before the altar of St. Joseph. After praying fervently with many tears, she returned home. The sick child, whom she had left in an almost dying state, had already felt the effects of her earnest prayers, as he was completely cured. This event took place in 1654.

Sister Margaret Rigaud, a professed religious of the monastery of St. Elizabeth of Lyons, fell from one floor to another. The fall caused such a bruise in her head as made the blood gush out of her eyes, ears, and nostrils, and deprived her of her senses. They used all remedies, but nothing could ease her head, which was so much bruised, that for several months together she was not able so much as to lean, or rest it even upon the softest pillow. Her brain also was so greatly affected as to render her incapable of any mental exertion. The physicians and surgeons concluded that her head should be trepanned. The sick woman shrank from the terrible operation, and its execution was deferred, and in the mean time the Superioress determined to apply a sweeter and surer remedy, and ordered

all the Sisters to make, for nine days, a general communion, for her recovery, in honor of St. Joseph, thereby to obtain his intercession. Her sufferings so increased in violence during eight days of the novena, that on the ninth day some of the Sisters, who despaired of help, proposed to substitute St. Anthelmus in place of St. Joseph, as he was wont by his intercession to cure such kind of maladies. Another religious hearing this, and being unwilling that any but St. Joseph should have the honor of this cure, begged him with the utmost fervor to operate the cure, telling him that his honor was at stake, and would be greatly compromised if he left the glory of the miracle to another. She added that the sick person would not fail to recognize his assistance by making, after her recovery, a second novena of prayers and mortifications. St. Joseph was not insensible to her petitions. On the ninth day, when they least expected it, she was suddenly cured, and so perfectly that she could not restrain herself from running about the house and crying out, "A miracle ! a miracle ! St. Joseph has cured me !" And she was so indeed, for she not only received health of body, but of soul, enjoying ever after a continual peace of mind, a love of devotion and regular observances. She imme-

diately resumed all her former occupations with a vigor which evinced no trace of her former malady. She also received from St. Joseph many precious graces greatly conducive to her advance in perfection.

We will close this chapter by a passage from the life of Venerable Mary of the Incarnation. Mme. de la Peltrie, a French woman of eminent piety, reading one day an account of a mission that the Jesuit Fathers had undertaken among the savages of Canada, felt herself inwardly impelled to co-operate in the salvation of those poor souls. Whilst meditating on the necessary means of accomplishing her project, she was attacked by a dangerous and extraordinary malady, which so puzzled the physicians that they doomed her to certain death. The fervent Christian did not renounce her holy desires. God Himself, in spite of her sickness, fortified her in her resolution, and inspired her to make a vow to St. Joseph. The invalid knew that it was to his protection that the missionaries had recommended the conversion of the New World : she therefore promised that, if it pleased the saint to restore her to health, she would found and endow, at her own expense, a house of education for the young girls of that country. The saint immediately granted her re-

quest, her sufferings ceased, and no signs of sickness remained save a little lassitude. The doctor, joyfully surprised at so sudden a change, asked her where her sufferings had gone to. "Sir," she pleasantly answered, "my sufferings have just left for Canada." To fulfil her vow, she soon constructed a monastery, destined to receive the young Canadian girls, and Mary of the Incarnation, called by God Himself to begin this work, became the first Superioress. Afterwards, it was shown to her, in a vision, that St. Joseph being the protector of the New World, had through his intercession obtained for her the favor of being selected to co-operate in the salvation of souls. Therefore she gave the new house the name of St. Joseph, and chose, as the seal of the new foundation, the image of the glorious patriarch carrying the Infant Jesus in his arms





CHAPTER V.

PROTECTION GRANTED BY ST. JOSEPH TO HIS DEVOUT SERVANTS
DURING THEIR JOURNEYS.



OUR glorious saint, in receiving the order to transport the child Jesus into Egypt, to preserve Him from the fury of the cruel Herod, acquired another privilege, that of being the protector and guide of travellers. It is of him, we may piously believe, that Isaias spoke, when he said : "Behold, the Lord will enter Egypt, carried on a light cloud." For, in fact, St. Joseph carried the Divine Child into Egypt, and bore Him back again to Nazareth. Was he not then the beautiful cloud wherein the rising Sun yet hid His rays ? In heaven, this Sun ruled the course of the stars, and effaced them by His splendor ; on earth, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and reposing in the arms of His foster-father, He had no other movements than those He received from

him, as Albertus Magnus and Abbot Rupert tell us. The office then rendered by St. Joseph to the child and traveller Jesus, he continues, even in our own day, to his devout servants, in the various dangers and accidents to which their journeys expose them.

A monk of the Monastery of Montserrat, in Spain, was greatly devoted to St. Joseph, and especially to the mystery of his journey into Egypt, with Jesus and His holy Mother. Returning, quite late, one evening to his monastery, he lost his way among the mountains. Night drawing on, he saw himself in danger of becoming a prey either to wild beasts or to the brigands who infested those solitary places. In his extremity he recommended himself to St. Joseph, when suddenly he met a grave old man leading an ass, which had a woman upon it holding an infant in her arms. The monk inquired the road to his monastery "If you will follow me," answered the stranger, "although the night is dark and the road difficult, I will show it to you, for I know it perfectly." As they went on, their discourse was of God, and with so much fruit, that never did the religious man, even in prayer, feel the like sweetness, and the fatigues of the journey were quite forgotten. When they

reached the environs of the monastery the strangers bade him adieu and disappeared. He felt assured that it was St. Joseph, who, in company of Jesus and Mary, had delivered him from his perilous position. Their holy words remained so deeply engraven on his heart, that he preserved the sweet savor of them to his dying day.

The venerable Mary of the Visitation, a Barefooted Carmelite, also had the honor of St. Joseph's company during a journey. Whilst still young, she led a holy life in her parents' house ; but God wished her in the cloister, and employed a most extraordinary means of leading her thither. He impressed her with so lively a sense of her miseries, that she fancied herself a scandal to the whole country. Her confessor, and several other ecclesiastics, endeavored to convince her of her mistake, which might be very prejudicial to her advancement in virtue, but all to no purpose ; she resolved to leave home secretly by night, in the intention, as she afterwards owned, to fly from herself even, if that were possible. She finally set out, carrying with her nothing but a crucifix, which she bathed with her tears. After walking the greater part of the night, she met an old man, who asked her where she was going. "I am going," she answered, "into some solitary

place, to fly from myself and my sins." Then the old man drew a circle around her with his stick, and, pointing to the road which led to Palençá, said, "Take that road, otherwise you will go astray," and immediately disappeared. The young fugitive easily recognized in the stranger St. Joseph, her special patron from her infancy. By the circle drawn round her, and the road pointed out to her, she understood an order to go to Palençá and embrace the religious life in a cloister. She set out towards that city, but was soon overtaken by her relations, who, upon learning of her flight, had set out in pursuit of her, intending to bring her back either with or without her consent. They overwhelmed her with reproaches, to which she listened in silence, being interiorly strengthened by the order she had received from Heaven, and remained firm in her resolution. Thereupon her relations, conquered by her firmness yet gentleness, resolved to accompany her to Palençá, and, as if guided by a secret inspiration, led her to a convent of Barefooted Carmelites dedicated to St. Joseph. She was admitted as a choir-religious, but that rank seeming to her far beyond her merits, she would frequently, in the middle of the office, close her breviary, and, raising her eyes towards Heaven, cry aloud: "O

Lord, what of my soul, my poor soul?" She really feared to lose it if she remained a choir-sister; consequently, she earnestly begged to be permitted to become a lay-sister. Her request was finally granted, principally to edify the entire community by giving them, in the person of that youthful virgin, so great an example of virtue.

One of the customary trials for the Jesuit novices is that of pilgrimages. It is a sort of essay of the apostolic life. The novices set out without either money or provisions, exposed to all the hardships of such a life—fatigue, hunger, thirst, and other similar privations. Three young religious who were making this pilgrimage, found themselves one day in an extensive plain; no house was in sight, and they were completely worn out with weariness and hunger. But full of fervor, and eager for suffering, they mutually encouraged one another, hoping that if earth refused them assistance, Heaven would come to their relief. At that very moment they perceived an old man, with a woman carrying an infant in her arms. The strangers approached our three novices, kindly saluted them, and seemingly touched with the state of weariness to which they were reduced, offered them food, placing before them a most delicious repast. The novices,

equally surprised at the food and the kindness of the strangers, were anxious to know to whom they were indebted, but, either from modesty or timidity, refrained from all questions. Their curiosity was quickly satisfied ; they distinctly heard this sentence : " We founded the Society of Jesus." Scarcely were the words pronounced when the three persons disappeared. We may readily imagine the lively joy and gratitude these words, so clearly indicative of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, left in the hearts of the young religious. They forthwith prostrated themselves to pour out their gratitude and veneration, then resumed their journey, blessing God and animating one another to show themselves always worthy of their heavenly benefactors, who, during their lives, had always been such perfect models of the religious state. In Joseph they found the vigilance of a superior, in Mary, the virtue of a perfect religious, in the child Jesus, the simplicity and docility of a novice.

The venerable sister, Cecilia Portaro, of the Third Order of St. Francis of Milan, was celebrated for her devotion to St. Joseph. One of her practices was that of fasting every Wednesday on bread and water, in his honor. In all her spiritual or temporal wants, she had recourse to

her dear patron, which custom merited for her the favor we are about to relate. She had joined with some pious companions in making a pilgrimage to our Lady of Trapani, in Sicily: the vessel which was to bring them back, having weighed anchor before they had embarked, left them exposed, during the night, on the shore, at some distance from Palermo. Whilst her terrified companions abandoned themselves to despair, Cecilia had recourse to her ordinary refuge; whereupon a venerable old man suddenly presented himself before them, clothed as a traveller, holding a staff in his hand, and offered to serve them as a guide, adding, that there was a youth with him who would carry their bundles. The pious women gladly accepted his offer, telling him, however, that they lived some distance off, in St. Joseph's street. "I also live in that street," answered the old man: "come, children, let us hasten forward and fear nothing." He accompanied them to the place indicated, and laid down their packages on the threshold; when they turned to thank him for his kindness, he, with the young man also, had disappeared. Astonished at this prodigy, Cecilia and her companions concluded that it was St. Joseph, accompanied by either his adopted Son or by the angel guardian of

one of the party. (Franciscan Legend, June 19.)

The venerable Sister, Jane Rodriguez, also of the Third Order of St Francis, received a visible proof of St. Joseph's assistance, in recompense for her extreme devotion towards him. She was travelling with another woman, when thick clouds covered the horizon and threatened a terrible tempest. Already Jane's companion, full of dismay, was vainly seeking a place of shelter. Suddenly a stranger appeared to them and graciously offered to be their travelling companion, assuring them that the rain would not cause them any inconvenience. The tempest soon increased in violence, the rain fell in torrents, but the women did not feel a drop of it, and their feet were not even wetted.

Seeing this miracle, Jane felt convinced that there was something supernatural about her guide, and, looking at him closely, she recognized him as St. Joseph, her patron and beloved protector. To increase their consolation, he entered into conversation with them, pointing out the vanity of the things of this world, and the inestimable price of grace and love of God. Having reached the end of their journey, Jane and her companion saw the saint disappear from

before their eyes, like a flash of lightning. (Franciscan Legend, Aug. 21.)

Father Jerome Pistoja, a Capuchin and Apostolic Missionary, went, by order of the Sovereign Pontiff, to Venice, whence he was to embark with a travelling companion for the Isle of Candia. At a short distance from the city, the two Fathers, who were walking during the night, lost their way. Worn out by fatigue, and deprived of every resource, they knelt down and implored Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to aid them. Such a prayer could not fail to be heard, as Father Jerome was one of the most devout servants of St. Joseph. The two religious perceived, at some distance, a light resembling that of a lamp. They walked towards it, and soon reached a little hut inhabited by three persons, an old man, a woman, and a young child, who received them with every mark of charity. Upon awaking the next morning, the two religious found themselves in the middle of a prairie, and, looking around, could see no signs of the house where they had received hospitality. Then, no longer doubting that those who had received and entertained them so kindly were the three holy personages whom they had invoked, they offered up a thousand thanks for that great favor. (Franciscan Legend.)

We draw from the events related in this chapter, the same conclusion as that of the learned Eckius, who says, in one of his homilies on St. Joseph, "Let all those who undertake dangerous journeys, or traverse inhospitable countries, confide in St. Joseph, and beg from him the protection, security, and assistance they need."





CHAPTER VI.

PROTECTION GRANTED BY ST. JOSEPH TO HIS DEVOUT CLIENTS AT
THE HOUR OF DEATH.



F it be true that St. Joseph is the protector of all the agonizing, it is still truer that he reserves his most tender care for those who, during their lives, have distinguished themselves by their fervor in his service. The first Joseph aided the Egyptians during their years of famine, distributing to them the corn which he had gathered up; but when there was question of assisting his own brethren, not content with having filled their sacks with wheat, he added, as a gift, the same sum they had paid for the price of their purchase. Our glorious St. Joseph will treat his devout servants still more generously; he will know how to recompense them, in their utmost need, at the moment of death, by the most loving and tender attentions for the pious homages they have rendered him. Ex

amples will be more efficacious than reasoning, to prove so consoling a truth. We give the following.

The venerable sister Prudentiana Jaqueoni, celebrated throughout the Franciscan Order for her eminent virtue, had, during her whole life, a tender devotion to St. Joseph, for which she was recompensed, at the hour of her death, by an unusual favor. The saint appeared to her and assisted her in her last moments. To increase her consolation, he then held in his arms Him who is the joy of angels, the delight of paradise, the life of innocent souls—the Infant Jesus. Words cannot express the sweetness and tenderness of the affections which filled the heart of the dying nun at the sight of this vision : suffice it to say, that the religious who assisted her were filled with joy when they heard her sometimes addressing St. Joseph and sometimes the Divine Infant ; thanking the former for paying her a visit which gave her a foretaste of the joys of paradise, and blessing the latter for coming in so sweet a form, to invite her to the nuptial feast which He has prepared in Heaven for His virgin spouses. The looks and gestures of the invalid clearly indicated that St. Joseph crowned his favors by placing the Infant God in her arms, and

permitting her to press Him to her heart before yielding the last sigh. (Franciscan Legend, February 14.)

The venerable servant of God, Alexis de Vigerano, a Capuchin monk, crowned a meritorious life by a sweet and holy death. Shortly before he expired, he begged one of his brethren who was attending him to light several torches. Astonished at so extraordinary a request, he inquired his reasons. "Because," answered the monk, "our Lady, with her spouse St. Joseph, will shortly come to visit me, and it is fitting that they be received with all possible respect." A moment after, it was evident the expected visitors had arrived, for the dying man joyfully exclaimed : "Here is the Queen of Heaven ! here is St. Joseph ! kneel down, dear fathers, and receive them properly." He gathered the first fruits of the presence of Mary and Joseph, for at the same moment he yielded up his soul into their hands. It was the 19th of March, the day consecrated to the triumph of St. Joseph. Thus did the holy patriarch recompense his servant for his tender devotion to him during life, by coming on his own feast to terminate his exile, and introduce him into the abode of eternal happiness.

St. Vincent Ferrer relates a wonderful story of

a gentleman of Valencia in Spain, who was yearly accustomed, on Christmas Day, to invite an old man, a woman, and a nursing child to dine with him, in honor of the Holy Family, to whom he had great devotion. This charity and devotion were so pleasing to God, that on his death-bed he had the comfort to see them, who, as he departed, gave him the following invitation to Paradise: "Friend, you have every year invited us to a feast in your house; come now, and we will receive you to our feast, and into a dwelling-place of the blessed, there to reign with us and them in every species of delight throughout a happy eternity." Happy merchant, in having learned to place his funds to so advantageous a use, in the hands of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

One of the most illustrious daughters of the Carmelite Reform, the venerable Sister Anne of St. Augustine, had the happiness, at the hour of her death, of receiving a visit from St. Joseph, accompanied by several others of the Blessed. Some religious, who were assisting the sick person, had a share in this favor, and saw with their own eyes the celestial train sent by the Lord to lead his faithful spouse into the eternal Tabernacles. Amidst them they recognized St. Joseph and St. Teresa. At the sight of the illustrious visitors, the dying woman

gave signs of great joy, seeming, by her looks and gestures, to welcome the heavenly guests who came to visit her. In her delight, she cried out, "Fathers ! Fathers ! Fathers !" thus inviting, by her last words, all the monks who were present, to consider the heavenly vision, and to venerate the august saint, who, with his beloved daughter, St. Teresa, came to conduct her soul to Paradise. A virtuous Carmelite, dwelling in a different monastery from that in which the aforementioned died, praying for her recovery at that very moment, saw her soul entering heaven between St. Joseph and St. Teresa, and followed by the angels and saints who composed their train. (Carmelite Annals.)

An Augustinian appeared several months after his death to a religious of his order, and told him that he was suffering horrible torments in purgatory, and had with difficulty escaped the flames of hell, but God had deigned to show him mercy through the intercession of St. Joseph, whose faithful servant he had been.

Permit us to add to the foregoing examples, given by our pious author, a signal favor accorded by St. Joseph, only a few years since, to a person well known to us.

John Grange, a Brother Coadjutor of the Society of Jesus, had a truly filial devotion to St Joseph.

One of his habitual practices was that of reciting daily his litany and some prayers in his honor. Under the direction of this great saint he applied himself especially to the interior life, and in order to avoid distractions in his office as cook, he preferred, although naturally weak, to do his work alone, than to have others as assistants, since it would force him to break silence. His health being sensibly affected in the winter of 1834, his superiors sent him to St. Acheul, to repose a little. Instead of recovering his strength, he fell into so weak a state, that his death seemed near. Although he felt his end was at hand, he was no less faithful to his religious exercises, and as long as his strength permitted he unceasingly invoked, both by lips and heart, him whom he had so long honored as the patron of the agonizing. Those who assisted him during his sickness noticed that every time that the invocation of the sacred names of Jesus and Mary was suggested to him, he never failed to add to them the name of Joseph, his dear protector. He was abundantly recompensed for so lively and constant a devotion.

Shortly before his death the infirmarian remarked that he kept his eyes turned, with a smiling expression, towards a certain part of

the room. He asked him what he was looking at so attentively and joyously. "St. Joseph!" he answered. "St. Joseph!" replied the infirmarian; "doubtless he has come to fetch you." "Yes; and I shall soon follow him," answered the sick man. A moment after he expired, leaving his brethren with the consoling conviction that St. Joseph had received his last sigh, and led to Heaven that soul which had been so faithful to him. His happy death took place September 20th, 1834.


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CHAPTER VII.

PROTECTION GRANTED BY ST. JOSEPH TO HIS SERVANTS IN ALL
THEIR CORPORAL OR SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES.

 I WILL collect in this chapter a certain number of examples of all kinds. This assemblage will, perhaps, form a bouquet similar to those which gardeners sometimes make of the different flowers upon which they have bestowed great care. Art is wanting, yet they form a pleasing whole, either from their variety of colors or from their different perfumes. This spiritual bouquet will, I hope, please our great saint, because it will fully convince my readers of the truth of the testimony rendered to him by one of his devoted servants—namely, that St. Joseph is sensible to all our necessities, and can assist us in all our wants, if we have recourse to him with confidence.

Quiroga, a celebrated Spanish captain, was very devout to St. Joseph. In the different wars

which he had to sustain against the inhabitants of the Ladrone Islands, he had constant recourse to his protection, and this protection was an impenetrable shield for him. He especially experienced this in one of those islands, where he had several battles with the savages, and, notwithstanding the inferiority of his forces, he nevertheless always obtained marvellous success, none of his soldiers being ever wounded. He gave all the glory of his victories to St. Joseph, and, indeed, he saw very clearly with what care his heavenly protector guarded his little army. One day it was furiously attacked by a large body of islanders, who showered upon it poisoned arrows; the army would have entirely perished if St. Joseph, whom Quiroga had invoked, had not come to its relief. The saint appeared in the air; the Christians saw him break the murderous arrows and throw them under the feet of the soldiers against whom they were directed.

Father Anthony Natalis, a celebrated Jesuit missionary, had a great attraction for the interior life, and consequently a special devotion to St. Joseph, whom he honored on every occasion. Among other things, he published a work in which he engaged all Christians to venerate him. He was preparing a second volume upon his virtues

and prerogatives, when death put a stop to his project. He had watered with his sweat the third part of Sicily, and, to assure the success of his labors, he put every one of his missions under the protection of St. Joseph. Among other homages he offered him, he daily recited a rosary of prayers which he had himself composed in his honor. Although the beads were of an extremely common material, he looked upon it as something very precious, "because," said he, "it is St. Joseph's rosary." One day he lost it, and he experienced as much pain at the loss as a miser would have felt on losing a treasure. He begged the assistance of the saint to enable him to find it. His request was granted. One morning, while making his thanksgiving after Mass, a charming little child approached him with a smile of recognition, and handed him the rosary.

We have already, in the ninth chapter of the first book, cited the venerable Sister Clara Mary among those souls that were most distinguished by their devotion towards St. Joseph; we will now mention some of the favors which he bestowed upon her. But, first, let us remark the confidence placed by this worthy daughter of St. Teresa in her beloved patron. Once, giving an account of her conscience to her director, she

wrote thus : "The day of St. Joseph's feast was one of the happiest of my life ; my devotion towards this great saint seemed to become more lively and affectionate. I presented myself to him with all my miseries, and prayed him to obtain for me from God a great love of His Divine Majesty." The confidence of Clara Mary was repaid by so many graces and benefits, that she could assert equally with St. Teresa that she had never asked any thing of St. Joseph without obtaining it. St. Joseph was her refuge in all the wants of her monastery. Here is a striking example of the protection which the saint granted to that house : a sister, who had accompanied Clara Mary to Rome to assist her in the foundation of the monastery named *Regina Cœli*, was about to return to the one whence she came ; Clara Mary feared that this departure, the cause of which was ignored abroad, might injure the reputation of the new monastery. In her perplexity she addressed herself to St. Joseph, saying to him : "O my beloved protector, you see to what a state of abjection this poor little house of the Queen of Heaven, your spouse, will be reduced." At the same moment she heard, interiorly, these words : "*Tertiâ die resurget. The third day it will rise again.*" The event proved the truth of this prediction.

The holy nun adds : " The promise of St. Joseph filled me with joy in the hope that, as the passion of Jesus Christ had commenced by opprobrium and ended in the resurrection, so also this house, after some days of humiliation, would also have its glorious resurrection. This actually happened, and through means which I could never have imagined."

At the request of his devout servant, St. Joseph delivered Sister Anne Teresa of the Incarnation from a disease as painful as it was incurable. It was a polypus in the nose. According to the physicians, its branches extended into her eye, and would eventually cause her death. The venerable Clara Mary visited the invalid one day, and said to her : " Take courage, dear sister ; St. Joseph will cure you." Then, turning towards an image of the saint, " Glorious patron," said she, " by the joy which you experienced in holding the Infant Jesus in your arms, by the love you bore the Blessed Virgin, your spouse, I beseech you to obtain me this cure." Then, on leaving the sick Sister, she promised her that she would offer her communion for her the next morning.

The following day, after having communicated, she returned to Anne Teresa and found her suffering from a terrible headache, and her nose all

swollen, and of a color threatening gangrene. The faithful servant of St. Joseph was not disconcerted, but, with a more confident air than ever, said to Anne Teresa : " Have confidence, my dear sister ; you will recover ; St. Joseph will grant you this favor. To obtain it I have promised to have three Masses said, and to clothe a poor person in his honor." Then she told her to blow her nose ; the sister had great repugnance to do so, by reason of the pain she felt. " Obey, my dear sister," answered the venerable Clara Mary ; " you will feel the better for it." She obeyed, but experienced so violent pain that she thought her head would split. But soon she sneezed, and her brain was cleared of the elements of her painful malady. The germ of the polypus once removed, the sick person was soon cured, to the great astonishment of the doctors, who assembled to verify the reality of the prodigy.

Sister Jane of the Angels, of whom we have already spoken (Book I., c. xi.), was, by God's permission, long possessed by a devil. To obtain her deliverance, she made a vow to recite every day, during a year, the Office of St. Joseph ; to practise, every week, some corporal mortification, and to communicate nine successive days. On the ninth day, whilst the priest was exorcising

her, the demon exclaimed aloud that St. Joseph ordered him to quit Jane of the Angels, and that the name of Joseph, engraven on the hand of Jane, would be the sign which would mark the moment of her deliverance. The name of the saint soon appeared in the manner indicated, and the religious was entirely freed from her spiritual enemy.

St. Catherine of Bologna, so called from the name of the city in which her body has been preserved for some centuries, in an entire and uncorrupted state, dwelt for some time in a monastery at Ferrara, where she filled the office of portress. An old man, clothed as a pilgrim, came several times to ask alms. Catherine always gave him something, and the more willingly as he always talked with her about his journeys to Jerusalem, and of the happiness he had experienced in seeing all the places in the Holy Land. One day the pilgrim, after having received his customary alms, presented Catherine with a little earthen vase, of some unknown composition, telling her that the Blessed Virgin had made use of that vase to give drink to her Divine Son, during His infancy. Catherine accepted the sacred relic with as much joy as reverence, thanking the generous pilgrim, who recommended her to keep the

vase till he should come back and reclaim it. The pilgrim never reappeared, and the holy religious remained convinced that she had received it from the glorious spouse of Mary, and ever after carefully preserved it. Some time after, being made Superioress of a convent at Bologna, she presented the vase to the monastery of Ferrara, on condition that every year, on the Feast of St. Joseph, it should be exposed to public veneration. Her pious wishes were carried into effect, and the holy relic verified its authenticity by the numerous miraculous cures operated by its means. (Franciscan Legend, March 2d.)

The first Joseph, as St. Augustine writes, showed forth his power and glory in Egypt alone, but the second of that name has had the privilege of extending his throughout the whole world. Look at the progress made by the Catholic faith since St. Joseph has been appointed protector of the missions, in most parts of the East and West Indies, and those of the great Chinese Empire, of which he is the special patron! The people of those countries, and the missionaries who evangelize them, have frequently experienced his paternal assistance, and have fully understood that the glorious saint who was the generous defender and faithful guardian of Jesus Christ

during His infancy, is still, at this day, one of the firmest supporters of His cause.

Although devoted to St. Joseph, let us beware of believing that he will obtain all our requests, indiscriminately ; since, if the charity of a physician require him sometimes to resist the inclinations of his patients, the affection St. Joseph bears us will often oblige him to shut his ears to our supplications, as the following example proves.

A nobleman, greatly devoted to St. Joseph, was accustomed to celebrate his feast yearly, with great zeal. He had three children : one of them died on the very day of the saint's feast ; the next year, on the same day, a second one died also. This double loss so disconcerted the good father, that he formed the resolution not to celebrate the feast on the following year, fearing lest his last remaining child might die in his turn. A short time before the feast, either to dispel his grief, or from the effects of fear, he undertook a journey. One day, as he walked along buried in thought, his eyes fell upon the bodies of two young men which were hanging from a tree. At the same moment an angel appeared to him and said : "Dost thou see those two young men ? Know then, that thy two sons, had they lived,

would have ended like them, but, because of thy devotion to St. Joseph, he obtained from God that they should die in their infancy, in order to spare the dishonor to thy house, and to assure to themselves the happiness of heaven. Go then and celebrate the saint's feast, and fear nothing for thy remaining son; he will become a bishop and enjoy a long life." The events proved the truth of the prediction.

Though the following example seemingly belongs more to Mary than to Joseph, I cannot refrain from relating it, in order that the servants of our saint may attach themselves more and more to his service, seeing the pleasure such devotion gives his holy spouse. In the year 1648, there dwelt in Naples a Moorish slave, who adhered so obstinately to his false religion, that he would not even hear the dogmas of the Christian faith explained. What added to the difficulties of his conversion were the counsels and example of another slave still more headstrong in his infidelity, who ceased not to strengthen his bitter prejudices against Christianity. The miserable wretch, abandoning himself entirely to his seducer, hardened himself against all the efforts that were made to enlighten him upon the absurdity of Mahomedanism. Through all this blindness he,

however, remained faithful to a practice he had observed for the space of two years, of lighting every evening a lamp before the image of the Blessed Virgin, painted upon the wall of his master's garden ; to meet which expense he regularly laid aside a certain portion of his wages. His master, a fervent Christian, having observed this act of piety, inquired his motive in performing it. "I wish," he replied, "to place myself under the protection of the Virgin Mary, because she appears to me to be a very amiable lady, although the darkness of the night prevents me from seeing her features." The pious nobleman, thinking to have found a favorable occasion of converting him, sent immediately to the Jesuit college, to seek the Father who was specially charged with the slaves. The latter, repairing to the palace, had the Moor and his companion brought before him, and earnestly exhorted them to become Christians, but met with only mockery and obstinate refusal. These were repeated whenever he addressed the unhappy infidels. He then turned his thoughts and prayers towards Heaven, and begged God to soften those obdurate hearts. The prayers of the missionary were heard. The night of the Assumption, the Moor was sleeping soundly in a stable, when he heard a voice which called him by

his name, saying, "Abel, Abel, awake and listen." He awoke, opened his eyes, saw the stable filled with a shining light, and, in the midst of the brightness, a lady of majestic appearance, clothed in white, and accompanied by a venerable old man, holding a silver vase full of water. Abel, filled with respect and fear at so extraordinary a sight, cried out, "Who are you? How did you come in here, as the doors are shut?" The lady answered, "I am Mary, whose image you venerate in the garden; and he who accompanies me is my spouse Joseph. I have come from Heaven to urge you to become a Christian, and to take the name of Joseph." "Madam," answered the Moor, "command whatever you like, I will obey you; but as for embracing Christianity, I cannot do it." The holy Virgin, not offended by so disobliging an answer, approached the slave with a caressing air, and, putting her hand on his shoulder, said to him sweetly, "Now, Abel, resist me no longer, become a Christian." At these words Abel, till then so inflexible, was vanquished. "Your sacred hand," cried he, "has moved and inflamed my heart; I will obey you and become a Christian. I consent to be called Joseph, but how can I learn the Christian prayers, I who am so ignorant?" "I will teach them to you myself," re-

plied the Mother of Mercy. And taking the right hand of the Moor, as a mother would do to her child, she taught him to make the sign of the Cross, promising him that he would never forget it. She added that the other prayers would be taught him by the Father who had already exhorted him to embrace Christianity. The Moor, reassured by so much goodness, asked her how he should become a Christian. Then the Mother of God, taking the vase which St. Joseph carried, poured some water on his head, saying, "Behold what the priest will do to baptize you, and your soul at the same instant will become as white as the robe in which you see me clothed." At these words, the Blessed Virgin seemed to withdraw. The Moor, not being able to detain her, notwithstanding all his efforts, said to her, "Holy Virgin, promise to return to console me, if ever I am in affliction." She promised him, and disappeared. Abel, left alone, ran to his master to acquaint him with what had transpired. The next morning they informed the Father who was charged with the congregation of the slaves, who immediately repaired to the house, and the Moor hastened to ask baptism at his hands. His companion in slavery, who had so long detained him in infidelity, became himself convinced upon hearing of the miraculous vision,

and both, after a few days of instruction, were pronounced sufficiently prepared for baptism. They received it in company with ten other slaves who had embraced the truth by means of their example. The ceremony was performed with pious magnificence, Abel, who was the principal character, taking the name of Joseph, conformably to the wishes of the Blessed Virgin, and ever after proved himself worthy of such high patronage. The Mother of Mercy did not fail to load her adopted son, as he might truly be called, with fresh marks of favor. Abel one day, devoured with melancholy, said to his protectress, "Holy Virgin, now is the time to fulfil your promise." At that very moment she appeared to him, and said, "Joseph, have patience." These words were so sweet and salutary a balm for his heart, that, as he said himself, he seemed to be already in Paradise. (Father Segneri.)

The following facts are not taken from Father Patriguani; they are furnished us by other writers, eye-witnesses of the miraculous graces due to the intercession of St. Joseph.

Sister Maria Teresa Nicoli, a professed nun of the monastery of St. Mary of Prayer, at Mala-

mozzo, in Italy, was, for ten years, a prey to divers maladies. Her illness began by a violent attack of apoplexy, which only yielded to the most severe remedies. Soon after she was seized with epileptic fits, accompanied by such terrible nervous attacks that her limbs, becoming strained, lost all feeling for whole hours together. Next followed a universal paralysis, with acute pains in different parts of the body. Palpitations of the heart and deadly fevers brought her to the verge of the tomb ; and, finally, a contraction of the muscles considerably shortened her right leg. Add to all these maladies, the bitter and violent remedies prescribed by the physicians during those long weary years, and you may form some idea of her sufferings. God finally deemed it time to put an end to the trials of His faithful servant, and permitted her to hear an account of a miraculous cure wrought at Venice, through St. Joseph's intercession. The news induced her to seek, at the saint's hands, that solace which no remedies could obtain for her. She resolved, therefore, to perform the pious exercise of the Seven Wednesdays in his honor, in union with several of her sisters. The first Wednesday fell that year, 1710, on the 26th of May ; on that very day, after communion, Maria Teresa expe-

rienced one of the terrible fits we have mentioned above; she lost, at once, speech, feeling, and motion, and remained as if dead for the space of one quarter of an hour. When she was restored to consciousness, her sisters begged her to have recourse with faith to her holy protector. She did so, and also begged three threads from the vestment on the statue which was in the church dedicated to him at Venice. After she had swallowed them, it seemed as if an invisible hand drew down her right leg and restored it to its natural length. Then, finding her strength restored, she rose, unassisted, and began to walk, thanking God and St. Joseph. All her infirmities and maladies had disappeared: still her leg caused her some uneasiness, and she was advised to use the aid of a crutch in walking, until St. Joseph should complete her cure. Filled with confidence at so prompt an answer to her prayers, she made a vow to continue every year the exercise of the Seven Wednesdays. This vow merited for her the grace she begged. On the last Wednesday of the year 1711, during her thanksgiving, she was surprised by a similar accident as in the preceding year, without, however, losing speech or feeling; which enabled her to reclaim the aid of St. Joseph, and to beg for two threads

of his vestment, which she swallowed with lively faith. She then felt, as before, an invisible hand, which strengthened her leg ; she rose, unaided, and walked, from that time forth, with as great ease and facility as if she had never been ill ; immediately resumed all her former occupations, acquitting herself of them without the slightest inconvenience. All this contributed greatly to the glory of God and St. Joseph, and to the consolation of His devoted clients.

The following fact belongs to a much later date, 1834. It took place in one of the houses of the little Seminary of St. Acheul, known under the name of St. Joseph of Blamont. A chapel had just been erected, which was to be dedicated to the holy protector of the house. The ceremony was fixed for the third Sunday after Easter, the day on which the church celebrated the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph ; and it was thought fit to prepare for it by a novena, in which all the pupils joined with true piety. The first day of the novena the Superior of the house met a gardener, who lived in the neighborhood. Having remarked that he was sad, he asked him the cause. "I have," replied he, "two children who have been sick for a long time ; all the remedies are useless ; the doctor declares that they will

never be cured if I do not change my residence ; even then he cannot assure me that it will benefit them. But where can I go ? Here we have bread ; elsewhere shall I be able to support my mother, my wife, and six children ?” The Superior endeavored to console him, and recommended him to have recourse to the sovereign Physician, by means of the intercession of St. Joseph, not knowing that several members of the family bore the name of the holy patriarch. “I was about to propose to my family to begin a novena to St. Joseph,” replied the gardener : “please recommend us to his protection.” The good gardener, upon his return home, set aside all remedies, and began the novena. On the same day the fever and swelling began to diminish ; the following days all the humors with which these poor children were tormented, visibly disappeared, and the fever soon ceased. At last, on the ninth day—which was that of the Feast of the Patronage—the good man repaired to Blamont, with his two children completely cured, and asked permission to assist at the offices of the day, in order to thank their celestial benefactor. “I hope,” said the Superior, congratulating him, “that you will give them the name of Joseph in Confirmation.” “Why, Father, they already bear

it, their mother also, and another of my children." At his request the Superior wrote, upon a large sheet of paper, a detailed account of the two cures. The gardener had the sheet framed, to preserve it in his family, and to transmit it to his descendants as a proof of gratitude towards St. Joseph. To this double prodigy we will add a third, which took place in the soul of one of these children. Till then his character had been extremely difficult and odd ; but after the novena no child could have been more gentle or docile to his duties ; and this moral cure was no less perfect and durable than that of the body.

The College of the *Passage*, near St. Sebastian, in Spain, founded by the Jesuit Fathers in 1829, ever preserved the traditions of the piety and devotion towards St. Joseph, which were always remarkable in the colleges of the same company in France. That great saint was declared its patron ; and he soon proved, by his extraordinary favors, how sensible he was to their devotedness. In 1831 they redoubled their homage to him, during the month consecrated to his honor : six candles, provided by the scholars, burned from morning till night before the statue of the holy patriarch. Every day, during Mass, his altar was covered with letters and notes, in which each pupil ex-

posed his spiritual wants and desires. So lively and universal a devotion produced abundant fruits of grace and salvation. Some pupils, whose conduct had been irregular, were converted before the end of the month : nearly all the others strove to correct their faults, and made visible progress in all virtues suited to their age and condition of life. In the month of April, they made, as was customary in the college, a public proclamation of the notes gained by each pupil under these three heads : *Application, Progress, Conduct*. The result of the proclamation was a striking testimony of the assistance given by St. Joseph to enable even children to make the sacrifices virtue requires. Among the fifty pupils composing the youngest class, only *one* had a *bad* note, and very few *indifferent* ones ; sixteen obtained *very good* for their notes.

From that time, St. Joseph's month, several among them contracted the habit of making their regular nightly examination of conscience, and preparing their meditation. In order to make it, they rose before the others. There were even some among them, who, carried away by their fervor, practised austerities far beyond their age. After the Feast of St. Joseph, each one spoke gratefully of the graces that he believed he had

received through the saint's intercession. One declared that his powers of memory were greatly strengthened ; another had been enabled to perform his duties with greater facility ; a third no longer found either difficulty or repugnance in observing the rule which had previously been irksome to him ; others received similar marks of the saint's protection.





CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS OF THE DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.—PILGRIMAGES OF ST. JOSEPH OF THE FIELDS, IN THE DIOCESE OF LAVAL, AND OF ST. JOSEPH OF THE OAK, DIOCESE OF ANGERS.

FROM the earliest ages of Christianity, numerous sanctuaries were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin: many of those sanctuaries, favored by Heaven, became celebrated pilgrimages. It was the same, though in a more limited manner, with the tombs wherein reposed the bodies of the saints, especially those of the martyrs. Heaven seemed desirous that the memory of those intrepid champions, who had not feared to die for their faith, should ever live in the memory of Christians. The most signal graces were showered upon earth by the intercession of the martyrs, which, keeping alive the confidence of the faithful, naturally contributed to extend the devotion towards their memory.

Considering his virtues, and the high dignity to

which he had been called, St. Joseph undoubtedly possessed just claim to the homage of all men ; but, as grave theologians teach, his body having left the tomb, fully endowed with life, at the moment of our Lord's resurrection, nothing remained of him here below calculated to recall his memory or favor devotion towards him. Besides, Divine Providence, as we have before stated (B. I., ch. 4), had His wise designs in permitting the momentary forgetfulness. But at last the veil which hid from this earth this masterpiece of the Almighty, has fallen before us ; for some centuries past theology has spoken by her wisest doctors, art has produced masterpieces in honor of St. Joseph, and the Church, ever attentive to second the action of her Head, has instituted festivals and opened her treasury to the faithful who are devoted to him.

During late years especially, the glory of St. Joseph shines with renewed lustre ; far from suffering from the rising devotions towards the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Conception, that towards St. Joseph seems rather increased thereby. To judge by its rapid progress, and by the great favors granted to those who invoke him, it is evidently the intention of Heaven that we should unite in our love and veneration these three august persons, who were joined together

when on earth, to serve as the most perfect instruments of God's glory and our sanctification.

France had numbered many of her children among the most devoted servants of St. Joseph : St. Bernard, Gerson, Father Flœur, of the Oratory ; Fathers de Barry, Binet, and Jacquinot, of the Society of Jesus, and many others, have left us incontestable proofs of their zeal and devotion. The echo of their voices had long resounded among our ancestors ; altars, sanctuaries, chapels, had been raised on all sides to prove their veneration. But the revolutionary torrent which overwhelmed the country, carried away the greater part of these monuments, and seemed for a time to have annihilated the traditions of faith which united us to the past. Only a few years back, St. Joseph was looked upon as an ordinary saint, and could count but few devotees ; but in our days an extraordinary fervor draws all towards the great foster-father of Jesus. Pious orators proclaim his praises, priests establish his confraternities, reunite the faithful at the foot of his altars, on the Wednesdays and during the month of March consecrated to his honor. Under the patronage of this holy patriarch, splendid temples are built, pilgrimages established, and religious congregations founded, with the Church's approbation.

We will confine our attention merely to the pilgrimages, in the hope of favoring their increase among those people who are so happy as to be enabled to make them.

ST. JOSEPH OF THE FIELDS.

Such is the name of the first pilgrimage, which, so far as we can learn, was established in honor of St. Joseph. It owes its existence to a Jesuit Father, named Debrosse, a zealous servant of the saint. One day, as the fervent religious was pondering the means best calculated to awaken his favorite devotion in the hearts of others, the thought came into his mind to establish this pilgrimage, and, aided by the benevolence of pious friends, he was enabled to carry out his idea. On the 19th of March, 1840, the elegant chapel, now to be seen on the road to Chateau Goutier, about a mile and a half from Laval, was blessed under the name of *St. Joseph of the Fields*. The altar, of peculiar beauty, is surmounted by a statue of St. Joseph holding the Infant Jesus in his arms. Two reliquaries have been placed in that holy spot, presented by the Marquis and Marchioness of Ambray on their return from Rome ; they contain a piece of the cloak of St. Joseph, and of the veil of the Blessed Virgin.

His Holiness Pope Gregory XVI., by his bulls, dated 1840 and 1842, deigned to grant numerous indulgences to those pilgrims who went thither. On Wednesdays, especially, the affluence of persons is so great that the chapel can hardly contain them. In order to further the devotion, some pious souls have founded Masses for all the Wednesdays throughout the year, which are always numerously attended.

St. Joseph has testified his pleasure by some striking favors, such as the following.

A trustworthy governess of the Community of Mercy at Laval was attacked with sudden illness, of which no one knew the cause, and was wasted by a slow fever which threatened her life. After three months of useless remedies, the physicians despaired of her cure. The invalid then had recourse to Heaven, was led to the Chapel of St. Joseph of the Fields, and there prayed either for a complete cure, or the grace of a happy death. She heard Mass there and received communion, and found herself perfectly cured. The next day her strength was so completely restored that she was enabled to resume her ordinary occupations.

The Superioress of the hospital at Laval had fallen dangerously ill; the physicians assembled in consultation, with only one exception, declared

that she could not possibly recover. The Community, alarmed at this news, began a novena in honor of St. Joseph, and made a vow to receive a postulant gratuitously, should their Superioress recover. From that very day the Superioress began to improve, and in a short time was completely cured. In thanksgiving for her recovery, forty persons, nearly all belonging to the house, made a pilgrimage to St. Joseph of the Fields. Their chaplain celebrated Mass there, and pronounced a discourse upon the immense influence St. Joseph possesses with God, and upon the numerous favors he obtains for his devoted clients. The postulant whom they received gratuitously, in accordance with their vow, has since been professed.

A seamstress of Laval was attacked by a nervous affection which caused her violent convulsions for the space of a year, the fits taking place seven or eight times a day. Having made a novena to St. Joseph, she was cured on the ninth day. During the two years which have elapsed since she obtained this signal favor, she has lost no occasion of testifying her gratitude towards her powerful protector.

The Reverend Abbot of La Trappe had asked St. Joseph to obtain for him several important

graces, as well for himself as for his monastery, and had promised, if they were granted, to contribute towards the decoration of his chapel as far as his poverty would permit. All his requests were granted, and the saintly Abbot gilded the altar of St. Joseph of the Fields with his own hands, thus fulfilling his vow. Numerous *ex-votos* surround the altar, placed there by those who have obtained favors at the hands of the holy patriarch.

PILGRIMAGE OF ST. JOSEPH OF THE OAK.

A religious of the Society of Jesus having arrived at Viré in the beginning of Lent, 1854, to give a mission there, saw himself unexpectedly deprived of the three Fathers who were to assist him in that important duty. Viré contained 10,000 inhabitants, and scarcely had the missionary begun his sermons than an immense crowd flocked to listen to them. The exercises of a mission were impossible, a single evangelical laborer could not suffice for all the work required. However, it became evident that among so well-disposed an audience, success would be certain. The religious wrote to his superiors, imploring help, but in vain. The eve of St. Joseph's Feast, while preparing his meditation, the Father met

with these words of St. Teresa : " I do not remember ever to have asked any favor of St. Joseph which I have not obtained, and for many years, during which I have always asked some particular grace on the day of his feast, I have always been heard." These words were as a ray of light for him : scarcely had he finished his prayer, of the following morning, when he wrote three letters, which he handed to the parish priest, saying : " Our mission will take place. Here are three letters I place under the protection of St. Joseph. I have asked him for some missionaries. He will assist us : St. Teresa assures us that she has never failed to obtain whatever she asked of him on his feast."

The clergy and people of Viré had long desired a mission, but, finding so many obstacles in the way, despaired of obtaining it, and looked upon this last act of the Jesuit Father as bordering upon simplicity. " How," said they to him, " you have moved heaven and earth to no purpose, and yet you still have hope ? All the saints whom you have hitherto invoked have been deaf to your entreaties, and will St. Joseph be more powerful ? Has he missionaries ready to start off at the first sign from him ?" Humanly speaking, the difficulties were great, we must allow ; but

Divine Providence wished to glorify St. Joseph, and the greatness of the obstacles only served to show forth the power of his intercession. For some days the efforts of the missionary seemed quite fruitless ; but, at the very moment when least expected, a Father arrived from Belgium, having travelled one hundred and fifty leagues. Two others came on the following day, who had been sent from the House of Angers. Thus, we see, each letter had brought a missionary ; and, what was more striking, one of the Fathers, not knowing if it were best to leave an important occupation, in which he was engaged, to go to Viré, had besought St. Joseph to inspire him as to the course to pursue. The citizens had been made aware of the design of the religious, and this speedy answer to his prayer had opened their hearts to grace, and paved the way for success to the evangelical laborers.

The four religious had experienced far too signal proofs of St. Joseph's protection ever to forget it ; they never after ceased to inculcate a tender devotion to him. The one who first reached Viré immediately published a picture of St. Joseph as a testimony of gratitude for the loving protection he had received at his hands, and added to it some motives for honoring the

saint. This homage, dictated by gratitude, was graciously received by the holy patriarch : a new favor was its recompense ; a new pilgrimage was established in his honor. The missionary was chosen as its founder, and the picture which he had published was its origin, after the following manner.

The Abbé Peltier, pastor of Villedieu, had formerly been an intimate friend of the missionary, they having been fellow-students at the College of Combrée, in the diocese of Angers. Divine Providence arranged that, after having spent many years at a distance from Anjou, the Father should be sent to the house of Poitiers. He was engaged at the time in preparing his work upon St. Joseph, a copy of which he sent to his friend, who, pleased by the attention, invited him to visit him in his parish. To this the latter willingly consented, but only in his missionary character. Villedieu is a small town of La Vendée Militaire, situated between Beaupréau and Montfaucon. It is not necessary to enter into a detailed description either of the country or its inhabitants ; it suffices to state that, though deorganized by the horrors of the French Revolution, the traditions of faith are as flourishing there as formerly ; the Vendean of to-day, like the Ven-

dean of old times, is strongly attached both to his duty and to his religion, and La Vendée is yet the abode of simplicity and hospitality.

Immediately upon his arrival at Villedieu, the Father began his work ; he exposed the Blessed Sacrament, then prepared a retreat for the first communicants. He was just about quitting a country where nothing further offered to exercise his zeal, when Mr. Peltier took him to see the Oak of the Grange, so justly celebrated throughout the country for its colossal proportions. The sight of this giant of the forests astounded the religious, and whilst measuring the circumference—not less than twenty yards—and admiring the dimensions of a cavity hollowed out in the trunk, he conceived the idea of dedicating it to St. Joseph.

“Your parish,” said he to the good curate, “is composed of mechanics : let us place here their holy patron ; they will come and honor him. Then, too, strangers who visit this oak, through curiosity, will find food for devotion.” The two priests agreed upon it, and all the inhabitants of Villedieu applauded. On the Feast of Pentecost, May 11th, 1856, the two families of Massé and Pohu made a donation of their gigantic tree, and on the 24th of the following August

St. Joseph took possession of his sanctuary, the only one of its kind in existence.

Such is the origin of the Sanctuary of St. Joseph of the Oak. All the inhabitants of La Vendée flock in crowds to worship there, and zealous ministers are happy to contribute, by all means in their power, to the honor of a saint who has but preceded them in their career of sacrifice and devotion to the cause of God.

In the interior of the oak, a granite altar was raised : a statue of St. Joseph was placed upon a pedestal above it. It is of stone, and the size of life. The Divine Infant, who seems sweetly sleeping, reposes upon the heart of Joseph, and the holy patriarch watches the august Child confided to his care with an indescribable look of respect and affection.

The dedication made great noise throughout the country, to which the celebrity of the oak, and the great pomp and magnificence with which the feast was celebrated, greatly contributed. From that day it became a place of general resort, and within three years after its erection, it was the favorite pilgrimage for all persons of piety ; and although no miraculous apparitions nor extraordinary facts attested its existence, still the numerous graces there obtained have clearly shown it to be in pos-

session of the seal of Divine approval. Monseigneur Angebault had encouraged the enterprise from the first, and granted forty days of indulgence to those who repaired to the new sanctuary to offer their prayers. Pope Pius IX. joined his approval to that of the Bishop of Angers, and, opening the treasury of the Church, issued a Bull, dated, Rome, June 21st, 1857, conferring numerous indulgences upon the Sanctuary.

Pilgrims from all parts flocked thither. Colleges, schools, and religious communities were frequently to be seen there. Numerous convents and pious establishments placed themselves under his invocation. Societies of ladies and working-women were established under his protection. Altars and statues were everywhere raised in his honor, under the above-named title. And St. Joseph did not remain insensible to their devotion, but rewarded their confidence by numerous favors.

A pious lady had earnestly solicited the conversion of her husband, who had, during forty years, ceased entirely to practise his religion. After a novena, made in honor of St. Joseph of the Oak, he himself asked for a confessor, and ever after led a most Christian life. His wife sent a golden heart to the shrine, in testimony of gratitude.

A little boy, eight years of age, cut off his thumb and forefinger. The physicians pronounced him maimed for life. His poor mother had instant recourse to St. Joseph of the Oak, and the child's hand was perfectly healed, not without leaving large scars to testify to the reality of the cure; his mother brought him to the shrine on the anniversary of its dedication, August 24th, 1858, and gave oral testimony of the fact to the priests assembled there.

A religious community of Paris, hearing, from a Jesuit Father, of the new pilgrimage, conceived great devotion towards it, and one of the nuns wrote him some time after, sending him a sum of money to be employed in a novena of Masses in honor of St. Joseph, to thank him for some favors he had granted them, which she did not specify.

A priest came there for the first time, to pray in the sanctuary of Villedieu, in August, 1858, having travelled fifty leagues. A few months later, he returned and begged permission to hang a lamp before the altar of St. Joseph, and to furnish oil for it during the remainder of his life. His prayers had been granted.

A young girl had vainly solicited permission from her family to enter a convent; nothing could induce them to consent, until she confided her cause

to St. Joseph of the Oak, promising to send a golden heart to his altar, in case of success. Her prayer was heard, and she was enabled to carry out her pious desires.

Besides the two sanctuaries of St. Joseph of the Oak and St. Joseph of the Fields, for the inhabitants of Maine and Anjou, a third shrine will soon be raised among them, that of St. Joseph of Segré. This latter sanctuary, to judge from present appearances, will far surpass the other two, and will be, we hope, a source of graces and benedictions for the good inhabitants of Segré.

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Book Third.

PRACTICES OF DEVOTION IN HONOR OF ST. JOSEPH.

CHAPTER I.

PRACTICES THAT CAN BE MADE USE OF EVERY DAY.

THE holy patriarch Jacob, wishing to give his young son, Joseph, a pledge of tenderness and predilection, presented him with a tunic of divers colors, and of great beauty. It was, in my idea, a figure of this variety of privileges, virtues, and homage which distinguish St. Joseph among all the saints. This illustrious patriarch, by the lustre of his merits and prerogatives, has a great resemblance to the Queen of Heaven; ought not his devotion, like hers, to unite an agreeable variety to the multiplicity of feasts and practices? I will then place before you, pious reader, this mys-

terious tunic, by acquainting you of the different devotions by which you can express to him your respect and love.

I.

Picture of St. Joseph.

Honor this picture by carrying it respectfully about with you, or by giving it a distinguished place in your house ; it is customary to act thus with the portraits of the most honorable benefactors and parents. St. Francis of Sales had but one picture in his breviary, that of St. Joseph. Father Louis Lalemant, S. J., kept the picture of St. Joseph even to his tomb, in which he wished it to be placed.

II.

Prayer at Mass.

If you are a priest, you can, by a general permission given you by the Congregation of Rites, when the prayer, "*A cunctis*," is recited, add to it the name of Joseph, and place it before those of Saints Peter and Paul.

III.

Patronage of St. Joseph.

Father of a family, or Superior of a house, confide those who are intrusted to your charge to

the saint whom the Eternal Father established to guard what was dearest to Him in the world, Jesus and Mary. It was thus that St. Teresa acted, who, when she founded a new monastery, took for its guardian and patron St. Joseph, constituted by Heaven itself to be chief head of the Holy Family. The king of Egypt, when he exalted the ancient Joseph, said to him : "You will be at the head of my house." Speak thus to St. Joseph.

IV.

Remember St. Joseph.

Think often of St. Joseph during the day, salute him affectionately, especially when the sound of the bell reminds you to honor the great mystery of the Incarnation, operated in the chaste womb of Mary, his spouse. Also, when the bell rings for the dying, as is the custom in Catholic countries, remember him who is the patron of the dying, and say to him : "Saint Joseph, worthy spouse of the Mother of Life, remember me during my agony."

V.

Invoke the Holy Names, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi said, after an ecstasy, that Joseph, united to Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, is in Heaven like a resplendent star, and that

he grants a special protection to souls who combat under the banner of Mary. Your devotion, to be complete, ought to include at the same time Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, since all three were so intimately united by the ties of family, by the affections of the heart, and by sanctity. Unite yourself to them by a great love of the holy infancy of Jesus, to which Mary and Joseph devoted all their love and all their services. Frequently invoke these three sweet names, in imitation of blessed Gaspar Bon, who lived and died with the sacred names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in his heart and on his lips. (See Book I., ch. xi.)

VI.

Imitation of St. Joseph.

The most excellent devotion towards our holy patrons consists in imitating their virtues : endeavor, each day, to practise some of those which shone in St. Joseph ; for example, vigilance over your inferiors, and conformity to the holy will of God.

Father Louis Lalemant, of whom we spoke in ch. xi., B. I., having chosen St. Joseph for model of the interior life, practised, each day, in his honor, the following exercises, two in the morning and two in the evening.

The *first* was to raise his mind towards the heart of St. Joseph, and consider how docile he had been to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost : then, examining his own heart, he humbled himself for his resistance, and animated himself to follow more faithfully the inspirations of grace.

The *second* was to consider with what perfection St. Joseph united the interior life to the occupations of his state : then, reflecting on his own life, he examined if there were some defects to correct. Father Lalemant attained, by this holy practice, to a great union with God, and he knew how to preserve it in the midst of occupations which seemed the most distracting.

The *third* was to unite himself spiritually to St. Joseph, as spouse of the Mother of God ; and, considering the admirable lights which the saint had on the virginity and maternity of Mary, he encouraged himself to love this holy patriarch for the love of his holy spouse.

The *fourth* was to represent to himself the profound adoration and the paternal services which St. Joseph had rendered to the Child Jesus : he asked to be permitted to join with him in adoring, loving, and serving this Divine Infant with the tenderest affection and the profoundest veneration.

VII.

Honor the Seven Privileges of St. Joseph.

Each day of the week honor, in particular, one of his privileges.

The first day, honor him as spouse of Mary.

The second, as adopted father of Jesus.

The third, as a pure virgin.

The fourth, as representative of the Eternal Father.

The fifth, as head and guardian of the Holy Family.

The sixth, as the most fortunate of men in his life and in his death.

The seventh, as the most elevated of all the saints in Heaven.

VIII.

Honor the Seven Dolors and the Seven Joys of St. Joseph.

Having himself taught this practice to the Franciscan religious, of whom we have spoken, it cannot fail to be pleasing to him. The Church, besides, approves of the exercise by the indulgences attached thereto.

His Holiness Pius VII., in a rescript of the 9th December, 1819, grants to each of the faithful, who shall, with a contrite heart, practise the fol-

lowing exercise in honor of the seven dolours and seven joys of St. Joseph :

1st. A hundred days' indulgence, once a day.

2dly. Three hundred days, every Wednesday of the year, and each of the nine days preceding the Feast of St. Joseph and that of his patronage.

3dly. Plenary indulgence for each of these two feasts, if, after having confessed and communicated, we recite the following prayers. To those who recite these prayers during the entire month, a plenary indulgence is granted on the day chosen by them, during the month, to confess, communicate, and pray for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Gregory XVI., by a rescript of the 22d January, 1836, granted to the faithful, who should recite these prayers during seven successive Sundays, the following favors: three hundred days' indulgence, every Sunday, and a plenary indulgence on the seventh, on condition that, having confessed and communicated, they pray for the intention of the Holy Father.

Pius IX., by two decrees of the Congregation of Indulgences, one of the 1st February, and the other of the 22d March, 1847, granted a plenary indulgence for each of the seven Sundays, and on the same conditions; he adds, however, to the

recitation of the prescribed prayers, a visit to some church or public oratory where the prayers for the intention of His Holiness may be said.

By the decree of the 22d March, His Holiness grants these plenary indulgences to persons who, not knowing how to read or not having these prayers, will recite seven Paters, Aves, and Gloria Patris. (Raccolta, page 180.)

THE SEVEN DOLORS AND SEVEN JOYS.

1. Pure husband of most holy Mary, glorious Joseph, great was the travail and anguish of thy heart when, in sore perplexity, thou wast minded to put away thy stainless spouse ; yet thy joy was unspeakable when the archangel revealed to thee the high mystery of the incarnation.

Then by this, thy sorrow and thy joy, we pray thee comfort our souls, now and in their dying agony, with the sweet consolation of a well-spent life and a death like unto thine own, in the embrace of Jesus and Mary.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

2. Thrice happy patriarch, glorious Joseph, chosen father of the Word made Man, keen was the pain that thou didst feel when thou didst see the Infant Jesus born in abject poverty ; yet was thy pain no more remembered for the celestial bliss which filled thy heart when upon thee burst

the harmony of angel-choirs, and thou didst behold the glory of that refulgent night.

Then, by this thy sorrow and thy joy, we pray thee obtain for us that, when the journey of our life is done, we, too, may pass to that blessed land where we shall hear the angel-chants and enjoy the brightness of celestial glory.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

3. O thou who wast ever most obedient to execute the law of God, glorious Joseph, when at His circumcision the Infant Saviour's Precious Blood was shed, thy heart was pierced through and through ; yet with the name of Jesus came again to thee new life and heavenly joy.

Then, by this thy sorrow and thy joy, obtain for us that, freed in life from the vile yoke of sin, we may die with joy, with the sweet Name of Jesus in our hearts and on our lips.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

4. Faithful saint, who wast admitted to take part in man's redemption, glorious Joseph, old Simeon's prophecy of the coming woes of Jesus and Mary shot through thy soul with agony like death ; yet did he fill thy spirit to the brim with blessedness, when he foretold salvation to innumerable souls in ages yet unborn.

Then, by this thy sorrow and thy joy, O help us

with thy prayers to be of those who, by the merits of Jesus and His Virgin Mother, shall be partakers of the glorious Resurrection.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

5. Watchful guardian, bosom-friend of the Incarnate Son of God, glorious Joseph, how didst thou toil to nurture and serve the Son of the Most High, then too especially in the flight thou madest with Him into Egypt ! yet didst thou rejoice ever to have with thee God Himself, and to see the headlong downfall of Egypt's idol gods.

Then, by this thy sorrow and thy joy, oh obtain for us to keep aloof from the infernal tyrant, quitting all dangerous occasions, that so all earthly sensual idols may be cast down from our heart's throne, and we all, wrapt in the sweet service of Jesus and Mary, may ever live for them alone, and with them calmly die.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

6. Angel on earth, all-glorious Joseph, who didst so marvel to see the King of Heaven obedient to thy bidding—when thou didst bring Him back from Egypt, fear of the tyrant chilled thy joy ; yet did the angel cheer thee, and then afterwards thou didst dwell at Nazareth with glad heart, in the sweet company of Jesus and Mary.

Then, by this thy sorrow and thy joy, obtain for us that, with heart set free from every idle, lox-

ious fear, we too may taste the quiet of a tranquil conscience, safely dwelling with Jesus and with Mary, and one day to die within their loving arms.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

7. Pattern of all holiness, glorious Joseph, when blamelessly thou didst lose Jesus, the Holy Child, to thy great sorrow thou for three long days didst search for Him, until with joy unspeakable thou didst find thy Life amidst the doctors in the Temple.

Then, by this thy sorrow and thy joy, we pray thee, heart and voice, stand betwixt us and danger, that so we lose not Jesus by any mortal sin ; and if (which God avert) we ever be so wretched as to lose Him, then by thy aid, with such ceaseless sorrow, grant us to seek Him, till we find Him, and see again His gracious countenance ; and this especially when death draws nigh, that when we go hence we may enjoy Him forever in the heavens, and with thee sing His heavenly mercies without end.—(*Pater, Ave, Gloria.*)

Ant. "Jesus was about thirty years old, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph."

V. Pray for us, blessed Joseph.

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

Let us Pray.

O God, who in Thine ineffable providence didst vouchsafe to choose blessed Joseph to be the husband of Thy most holy Mother ; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be made worthy to receive Him for our intercessor, whom on earth we venerate as our holy protector. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Prayers to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Jesus, our adorable Saviour, who for the love of us didst deign to be born of a Virgin, grant that we may honor, by a perpetual worship, the sweet mysteries of thy infancy, and that we may become spiritually like little children ; make us worthy to imitate the humility, purity, innocence, and all the virtues of which Thou hast given us the example, O Divine Infant, in that state of weakness and humiliation.

Jesus, who wast born of a Virgin, glory to Thee, to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, world without end.

How happy art thou, and how thou meritest our homage, O Mary, for having given to the world the Sun of Justice, Jesus our Saviour and our God ! By the services thou didst render to His sacred humanity in the form of a child, teach us

to honor Him like thee upon earth, and thus merit to be admitted to enjoy His glory in heaven.

Show that thou art our Mother ; present our prayers to Him who for us deigned to be born thy Son. Amen.

Hail, immaculate spouse of Mary ! Hail, happy head of the Holy Family ! Thou didst nourish by thy labors the Incarnate Word. Thou didst save him from the hands of the impious Herod. Thou wert as guardian, guide, and father, at Bethlehem, in Egypt, and at Nazareth, by the paternal care thou didst bestow on Him : obtain for us the grace to serve Him worthily in this life, and that of a happy death, that we may have the happiness of enjoying Him with thee in heaven.

Hail, spouse of the Mother of God ; hail, father of my Jesus, admirable Joseph, thrice admirable Joseph. Amen.

IX.

In fine, have the pious custom of reciting, each day, in honor of St. Joseph, some of the prayers you will find in this work.



CHAPTER II.

DEVOTIONS FOR DIFFERENT EPOCHS OF THE YEAR.



MONG these devotions, some serve as a preparation for the feasts, the others regard the celebration of the feasts themselves ; there are also some for no particular intention.

§ I. *Practice as a Preparation for Feasts.*

It has always been the custom of pious souls to prepare themselves for great solemnities by practices of devotion, because they know that divine favors are bestowed with more abundance upon hearts well prepared—like the dew of heaven, which, though it falls indifferently everywhere, yet fertilizes cultivated land in a more especial manner.

One of the preparations most frequently adopt

ed is that of Novenas and Triduums. This manner of disposing yourself for the feasts of St. Joseph, will be singularly agreeable to him, and oblige him to grant you some of those extraordinary favors which he reserves for his faithful servants, as is shown by experience. We have seen examples in the Second Book. I will only mention here that of an old man, who lived in a village near Lyons. Being attacked by the plague, which desolated that town in 1738, he asked the vicar of the place if, independently of human remedies, there were not some means of saving his life. "You have nothing to do," replied the clergyman, "but to make a vow of celebrating, every year, the Feast of St. Joseph, by a confession and communion, and to prepare yourself for it by a Novena, in which you will recite seven Paters and seven Aves, invoking as many times the sacred names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph." The good old man made the vow proposed to him, and he was cured.

With a model of Novenas, by way of preparation for the feasts of St. Joseph, we shall give indications, by the help of which, exercises for a preparatory Triduum will be found in this volume.



NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH.

FIRST DAY.

St. Joseph, Spouse of Mary.

"She was espoused to a man whose name was Joseph." (St. Luke, i. 27.)

1st. He was the true and worthy spouse of Mary, especially predestined to so noble an alliance by the Almighty, who adorned him with all the virtues required for so glorious a destiny.

2dly. He was a virgin, and his virginity became the faithful copy of Mary's, because, like her, he had made the vow of chastity.

3dly. He was the cherub to whom was confided the guard of the new terrestrial paradise, of the true propitiatory which contains the price of the reconciliation of Heaven with earth.

Virtues to be imitated in St. Joseph.

1st. His love of purity. 2d. The guard of his senses. 3d. His mortification in what concerns the labors of the body and mind.

Prayers.

Blessed Joseph, thou, whom the august Trinity has chosen to be the spouse of the Mother of God, art worthy that angels and men should honor, revere, and congratulate thee on the incomparable dignity that thou possessest among all the inhabitants of Heaven and earth. I am the most unworthy of all creatures ; notwithstanding, I venture to offer to-day, at thy feet, all the affectionate sentiments of my heart, and repeat, with the angels and saints : Long live the worthy spouse of Mary ! Live the lily of virginity inseparably united to the mystical rose — to the incorruptible rose ! Live the cherub, faithful guardian of the Paradise in which the Word Incarnate found his delights ! Ah ! most chaste and happy spouse, obtain for me, I beseech thee, the grace to imitate thy love of purity, and the strength to vanquish all the temptations from which thou hast been preserved by the privilege of thy election, by the sublimity of thy virtues.

Practices during the Day.

1. Practise some corporal austerity or penance, if your health permit.

2 Avoid looking at any curious or useless object.

3. Speak little, to honor the silence and recollection of St. Joseph, of whom the Gospel has not preserved a single word.

4. Address to him, from time to time, an aspiration during the day.

Spiritual Reading.—Read chapter ii., of Book First of this work, and learn of Mary to honor St. Joseph. Take some examples from Book Second. Finish your reading by the following prayer :

Ant. "The Angel Gabriel was sent to a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin's name was Mary."

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

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

Let us Pray.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of thy most holy Virgin Mother, and that what we cannot obtain through our own weakness, may be granted to us by his prayers. Who livest, etc.

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

The Holy Ghost honored him with the name of father. (Gerson.)

Joseph, the purest among men, was like to the glorious Virgin Mary. (Id.)

It is conformable to the faith of the Church to honor as virgin, not only the Mother of God, but also his reputed father and guardian. (St. Peter Damian.)

In this man, as just as he was chaste, the fire of concupiscence, arising from original sin, was extinct or smothered. (Gerson.)

SECOND DAY.

St. Joseph, Father of Our Lord.

“We have found . . . Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth.” (St. John, i. 45.)

He merited to be called the father of the Son of God—

1. Because he was, on earth, the representative of God the Father. He alone, among all creatures, had this honor, and could exercise those rights over the person of the Saviour.

2. On account of the choice made of him, and

by the right he drew from the alliance contracted with his Mother.

3. By the choice Mary had made of him as spouse ; by the right he had received from Heaven to give to the Saviour the glorious name of Jesus ; by all the fatigue he endured to nourish, save him, etc.

Virtues to be imitated in St. Joseph.

1. His humility, united to so much greatness.
2. His entire dependence on the will of the Eternal Father.
3. His fatherly love of Jesus.

Prayer.

I desire extremely to honor and glorify thee, O blessed Joseph ! But what title more honorable, more glorious, dearer even to thy heart, than that which the Gospel gives thee ? " We have found Jesus, the Son of Joseph of Nazareth." It is the first disciples of Jesus who speak thus. Mary herself says to Jesus : " Thy father and I have sought Thee." Thou canst, thou oughtest, O great saint, to be called the father of Jesus. The Eternal Father chose thee, from among all others, to be, in His place, the Father of His only Son, upon earth. He, in some way, communicated

to thee His Divine paternity. I rejoice that this divine character should throw over thee so much lustre, O generous saint! But I rejoice still more that He gave thee grace proportioned to so high a title. Oh, what paternal sentiments for His only Son, who became also thine, did He put in thy heart! He made thee love Him with a stronger and nobler love than that of fathers according to nature. The love of the most tender fathers is but a spark compared to thine. By the immense love with which thou didst burn for Jesus, grant, I pray thee, that, after thy example, I may begin to love Him myself. Thou art a father; by this title deign to exercise towards me thy paternal benevolence, for, from this moment, I regard and honor thee as my father Amen.

Practices during the Day.

1. Animate our love for Jesus Christ by the renunciation of the voluntary faults and defects which withdraw us from Him.
2. Impose upon ourselves some penance, to make amends for the misfortune of having loved Him so little.
3. Make a visit to our Saviour to ask Him his love, and offer Him that which Joseph bore Him.

Spiritual Reading.—Read ch. i. of Book I., and some examples of Book II. Conclude by the following prayer :

Ant. “Son, why hast thou done so to us ? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” (St. Luke, ii. 48.)

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

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

Let us Pray

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of thy most holy Virgin Mother, and that what we cannot obtain through our own weakness may be granted us by his prayers. Who livest, &c.

Sentences relative to the titles and virtues of St. Joseph.

Joseph had over Jesus the right of paternity, that is to say, all the rights that parents have over their children. (Cornelius-à-Lapide.)

Among the heavenly spirits there is not one who would dare call Jesus Christ his son. (St. Cyprian.)

Joseph has merited to be called the father of the Lord. (St. Jerome.)

He was father of Jesus by right of marriage and by affinity. If he is the spouse of Mary, he is also the father of the Lord. (Rupert.)

Thou shalt call His name Jesus. Thou shalt call Him so, in quality of father. (Theod.)

THIRD DAY.

Our Lord obeys St. Joseph.

"Jesus was subject to them." (St. Luke, ii. 51.)

1. How glorious to Joseph is this dignity of father of Jesus Christ! By it he is constituted master of the Saviour, and allowed to dispose of Him as a father disposes of his son.

2. Jesus was the King of Heaven, and yet Joseph had full authority over Him. He had a right to command Him, because Jesus by becoming his son had voluntarily ceded His liberty to him.

3. St. Joseph was served about thirty years by Jesus Christ; he employed Him in his workshop just as a workman employs his assistant, making Him share in his labors and fatigues.

Virtues to be imitated in St. Joseph.

1. His respect towards Jesus, even in the exercise of his authority.
2. The mildness of his commands.
3. His faith at the sight of Jesus reduced to the condition of child and servant.

Prayer.

O blessed Joseph, would that I had the wisdom of the cherubim, and the zeal of the seraphim, to celebrate worthily the dignity which gives thee the right of commanding Him whom the angels adore with respect and trembling ! I honor and revere this incomparable dignity. I rejoice to see the Son of God attentive and submissive to thy least signs. At the sight of an incarnate God, who places all His liberty in thy hands, I cannot withhold offering thee the homage of mine ; dispose of it as thou wilt. In consideration of the humble obedience and the divine services Jesus rendered thee as thy son, during so many years, in the house of Nazareth, or as a workman in thy workshop, obtain that my will, henceforth docile, may resist God no longer, nor those who take His place towards me here on earth. Grant that, after thy example, I may command my inferiors

with humility, and seeing in them the person of Jesus Christ, that I may treat them with charitable respect and attention. Amen.

Practices during the Day.

1. Practise some act of humility towards your inferiors.

2. Command with mildness.

3. Call to mind, on one hand, the acts of haughtiness and impatience committed in commanding ; on the other, the interior murmurs and revolts of which you are guilty in obeying. Say five times the *Gloria Patri*.

Spiritual Reading.—Read ch. iii. of Book I., and some examples of Book II. Terminate by the following prayer :

Ant. He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

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

Let us Pray.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Virgin Mother, and that what we cannot obtain through our own weakness, may

be granted to us by his prayers. Who livest etc.

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

Joseph had all the rights of master and father over the person of Jesus, considered in his humanity. (Tirin, in St. Matth.)

If the dependence of Jesus reveals in Him a boundless humility, it shows also an incomparable dignity in Joseph. (Gerson.)

To Joseph belonged the government of the family. (St. Thomas.)

Jesus, obeying, partook cheerfully of all their labors. (St. Justinus.)

He hastened to kindle the fire, and prepare the food. (Gerson.)

FOURTH DAY.

Sanctity of St. Joseph.

Joseph, her husband, was a just man. (St. Matthew, i. 19.)

1. According to the opinion of a great many doctors, he was sanctified from the womb of his mother; and he is the first saint to whom the Holy Ghost gave, in the Gospel, the name of Just, wishing to make us understand that he possessed the plenitude of all virtues.

2. His sanctity was proportioned to his dignity of spouse of Mary, of representative of the Eternal Father, guardian and foster-father of God made man.

3. No other saint approached so near, and for so long a time, to the Source of all sanctity. He advanced always from virtue to virtue, under the eyes of Jesus and Mary, his models.

Virtues to imitate in St. Joseph.

1. His purity of heart, which was never sullied by sin.

2. His detachment from all created objects.

3. His continual desire to increase in sanctity.

Prayer.

How admirably does the title of Just suit thee, O blessed Joseph, since thou didst receive it from the Holy Ghost Himself, who can neither be deceived nor deceive ! Yes, thou art just, because grace and sanctity met and were united in thee, even before thy birth. Thou art just by excellence, because God gave thee sanctity proportioned to the eminence of thy dignity, that thou mightest suitably represent the Eternal Father in the care thou wouldst take of His Son, and the Holy Ghost in the alliance which would unite

thee to the Immaculate Virgin. But how much more worthy didst thou not become of so glorious a charge by adding unceasingly to the primitive sanctity with which God had favored thee, and by enriching thyself, each day, with new merits, by the exercise of all virtues ! Thou hadst constantly before thee the two models of perfect sanctity, Jesus and Mary. Couldst thou do otherwise than study them unceasingly and retrace them in thy actions ? I honor and revere that eminent sanctity which distinguishes thee among all the saints ; but that my homage may contribute at the same time to thy glory and my spiritual good, obtain, O my protector and father, that from to-day I may truly dispose myself to receive of God that precious gift of sanctity without which I can neither be pleasing in His eyes nor in thine. Amen.

Devotions during the Day.

1. Examine your conscience more exactly, to discover the defects in you opposed to sanctity.
2. Frequent acts of contrition to purify your heart.
3. Some salutary penance to punish yourself for the little desire you have had till now of your perfection.

Spiritual Reading.—Ch. iv. of Book I. Some examples from Book II. Conclude with the following prayer :

Ant. "Joseph being a just man, and not willing to expose her, was minded to put her away privately." (St. Matth. i. 19.)

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph

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

Let us Pray.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Virgin Mother, and that what we cannot obtain through our own weakness, may be granted to us by his prayers. Who livest, etc.

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

1. Joseph was sanctified from his mother's womb by the baptism of the Spirit, like John the Baptist. (Gerson.)

2. Observe that Joseph is called the Just, because he possessed all virtues in perfection. (SS. Jer. and Chrysost., in Matth. i.)

3. Those destined by God to some function, He prepares beforehand, that they may be fit to fulfil it. (St. Thomas.)

I would not consider as rash or improbable, but rather as pious and probable, the opinion of him who would believe that this saint surpasses all others in merit and felicity. (Suarez.)

FIFTH DAY.

St. Joseph, Model of Justice.

"Joseph, her spouse, was a just man." (St. Matth. i. 19.)

1. He was a model of the justice one owes to God. He obeyed His commandments and inspirations in every thing. His will tended continually to the perfect accomplishment of the Divine will.

2. He was a model of the justice we owe our neighbor in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Seeing the pregnancy of the Blessed Virgin, and not knowing the mystery, he judged as favorably as he could. Accordingly, not the least complaint escaped him against Herod, who sought the life of the Divine Infant.

3. He was a model of the justice we owe to ourselves. He never flattered his senses in any thing. He knew no other interest than that of perfectly imitating the Incarnate God. We may then consider him as the first disciple of Jesus Christ—also as the first Christian.

Virtues to imitate in St. Joseph.

1. The exact observation of the law of God, and a perfect docility to His inspirations.
2. The love of the neighbor, and the desire of assisting him in every thing.
3. Imitation of Jesus Christ, our model, in His mortified and laborious life.

Prayer.

I rejoice with thee, O my glorious protector, at the sight of thy indefatigable ardor to advance in the path of perfection. Thou hast been just towards God in devoting thyself, with all thy mind, with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, to the accomplishment of His holy will. Thou wert just towards thy neighbor in loving all creatures in God, and God in all creatures ; thou wert just towards thyself, in desiring only those advantages which concerned thy greatest perfection, and the exact imitation of the virtues of humility, obedience, poverty, mortification, and charity, which thou didst see practised by Jesus and Mary.

I beseech thee, O Joseph, thrice just, to teach me to accomplish justice in every point ; but I conjure thee, especially, by the plenitude of thy

virtues, and by thy immense credit with God, obtain for me the grace of commencing to become a perfect Christian; that is to say, a true imitator of God in His poverty, in His humility, in His patience. I acknowledge I have been but little so till now, but I propose to be more so in future, by thy assistance and that of thy holy spouse. Amen.

Devotions during the Day.

1. To expiate your injustice towards God, you will make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and ask pardon humbly of Jesus Christ for your sins, which have been so many acts of injustice against His divine will.

2. To expiate your injustice towards your neighbor, you will commence to-day to do him good by thought, in esteeming him better than yourself; by word, in treating him with fraternal meekness; by works, in assisting him in his spiritual and corporal necessities.

3. To expiate the injustice committed towards yourself, when you have flattered your senses at the expense of your soul, you will impose upon yourself some abstinence of your own choice.

Spiritual Reading.—Ch. v. and vi. of Book I. Some examples from Book II. Conclude with the following prayer :

Ant. "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son : and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (St. Matth. i. 20.)

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

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

Let us pray. (Grant us, &c., p. 262.)

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

Joseph was just in his words and actions, just in the accomplishment of the law, and according to the measure of grace. (Origen, Hom. I.)

The only desire of Joseph was to accomplish the will of God. (St. Brig. Rev., B. VI.)

In his old age he observed inviolably all the law. He was so dead to the world and to the flesh, that he sighed only after heavenly things. (St. Brig. Rev., B. VI.)

He lived content in poverty. (St. Bonav Life of Christ.)

SIXTH DAY.

St. Joseph surpasses all the other Saints.

1. He was the crown of the patriarchs and of the ancestors of the Messiah announced to the world ; he inherited all their benedictions, and saw them accomplished.

2. He was the crown of the saints of the Old Testament ; their prerogatives, their wishes were united and perfected in his person.

3. He is the crown of the saints of the New Testament : in his quality as head of the Holy Family, of whom a Man-God was a member, he surpasses them all in dignity ; and as he was in this charge the wise and faithful servant by excellence, he must surpass them all in glory.

Virtues to be imitated in St. Joseph.

1. His faith, which was very lively and fruitful in good works.

2. His self-possession in adversity as in prosperity.

3. His zeal for the honor of God and the salvation of men.

Prayer.

Blessed Joseph, to whom alone was reserved

the happiness of inheriting all the benedictions of the other patriarchs, and of seeing them accomplished in that which raised thee to the dignity of father of the Messiah, in whom all nations were to be blessed; let all the patriarchs come now, and place on thy head a crown of glory as to their king: let all the other saints of the Old Testament come also and crown thee as their chief with as many stars as there are degrees of sanctity by which thou hast surpassed them, by uniting in thee and by perfecting all their virtues. Lastly, let all the saints of the New Testament, the apostles, the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins, come in their turn, and, with their palms mingled with lilies and roses, crown the head of the family of God, the first disciple of Jesus Christ, the first imitator of His divine examples, the first confidant of the hearts of Jesus and Mary, the first saint of the law of grace—proclaimed thus by the Sacred Books. Be blessed, holy patriarch, by all the saints; but raised to the height of felicity, do not forget to let thy poor servant participate in some of the abundant benedictions which enrich thee in eternity. What I desire above all others is, that thou wouldst make the salutary fruits of the passion of my Saviour descend upon me. If I obtain these fruits of bene-

dictum upon earth, I hope to arrive at the enjoyment of the fruits of glory with which the elect are satiated in Heaven. Amen.

Practice during the Day.

1. A more rigorous fast than ordinary.
2. A work of mercy, spiritual or corporal.
3. A visit to our Lord, to ask Him to make us participate in the benedictions of St. Joseph. Recite, for this intention, the *Te Deum*.

Spiritual Reading.—Ch. vii. of Book I, and some examples of Book II. Conclude with the following prayer :

Ant. They found Mary, Joseph, and the Infant Jesus lying in the manger.

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

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

Let us pray. (p. 262.)

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

Jacob was great by the eminence of his virtues and piety ; but how much greater was that of our holy patriarch Joseph !

He was greater than Noah and the other patriarchs.

He is blessed among all men, for the same

reason that the Blessed Virgin is blessed among all women. (Navæus, sec. 2, in St. Joseph.)

He excels all the other patriarchs and prophets by two privileges ; namely, as spouse of Mary, and as father of Christ. (Tolet.)

He is the first, in the law of grace, who suffered persecution for justice, so that the sword also pierced his soul. (Rupert.)

Joseph was so much the more excellent as he belonged to a higher order. (St. Thom.)

SEVENTH DAY.

Favors granted to St. Joseph.

1. He was singularly favored, assisted, and honored by the angels ; he received consolation from them in his anguish, light in his perplexities, relief in his fatigues. He was truly an angelical man ; his office was to serve as a guardian angel to Jesus and to Mary.

2. No saint has ever enjoyed Jesus as much as Joseph, who had the happiness of caressing Him, and carrying Him a thousand times in his arms. Also, no saint has received from Jesus as many caresses and favors.

3. The life he led with Jesus and Mary was more heavenly than terrestrial, more divine than

human ; it was full of simplicity, innocence, and fervor ; it was a foretaste of the life of the blessed in Heaven.

Virtues to imitate in St. Joseph.

1. His respect for the ministers of God.
2. The peace and tranquillity of his soul.
3. The sincerity of his words and the modesty of his manners.

Prayer.

I am not astonished, O glorious Joseph, that the angels favored thee singularly, since thou didst resemble them so well by thy angelical purity. I do not wonder, either, that they had a kind of ambition to serve thee, since they saw thee superior to them in dignity. Ah ! if envy could have entered into their hearts, doubtless they would have envied the happiness thou didst enjoy, that of living so familiarly with the Divine Infant, prodigy of love, centre of all joy, source of all sweetness. I bless, O happy saint, that mouth, which has praised and glorified Him so often ; I bless those hands, which have so lovingly caressed Him ; I bless that heart, upon which He has reposed so sweetly a thousand times. In conversing day and night with the

Infant God, thou hast learnt to become little and childlike as he was ; thou hast learnt to imitate the innocence, simplicity, the purity, and all the amiable virtues of the Incarnate Word. Ah ! thou didst know the desire he had even then to see every Christian become children again, to pass the narrow gate to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And I also desire to become like the Child Jesus. Obtain for me, then, the virtues suitable to Christian infancy ; may my heart be exempt from malice, my thoughts pure, my intentions upright, my words innocent, all my conduct conformable to simplicity and humility. In fine, grant that by penance I may return to that happy state of Christian infancy in which the sacrament of regeneration had placed me, and whence my iniquities made me fall. Amen.

Devotions during the Day.

1. Weep for your past sins with pure contrition before the image of the Child Jesus, and offer Him the innocence, simplicity, and purity of St. Joseph.

2. Visit the Blessed Sacrament, with the desire of conversing with Jesus, and offer Him the caresses of St. Joseph.

3 Give alms to some poor child, considering in him the image of the Child Jesus.

Spiritual Reading.—Chapters iii. and iv. of Book First, and some example of Book Second. Conclude with the following prayer :

Ant. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying : Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth peace to men of good-will.” (St. Luke, ii. 13.)

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

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

Let us pray. (p. 262.)

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

Among the heavenly spirits there is not one who can call Jesus by the name of Son. (St. Cyp.)

Joseph is as much raised above the angels as he possesses a name different from theirs. (St. Paul, ad Heb.)

Jesus needed the paternal assistance of Joseph and his pious attention, in carrying Him in his arms. (Rupert.)

Oh, how sweet it was for Joseph to hear the

Child Jesus give him the name of father ! (St. Bernardin.)

The house of Nazareth was truly heaven. (Rupert.)

The other saints enter after death in possession of glory ; thou, O Joseph, even in this life art equal to the inhabitants of Heaven, for thou enjoyest God already. (Hymn, St. Joseph.)

EIGHTH DAY.

Life of St. Joseph.

1. He was the model of the contemplative life, by his interior spirit, by his love of silence, retreat, and prayer. His soul was consumed with love ; his sleep was rather an ecstasy than a time of repose.

2. He was a model of the active life, by the assiduous care he took of the Holy Family. Labor and poverty did not disturb the serenity of his soul.

3. He was the model of the mixed or apostolical life, never wearied of assisting his neighbor, of consoling him in his pains, of enlightening him in his doubts, of instructing him in the law of God, as often as Providence presented him the occasion.

Virtues to imitate in St. Joseph.

1. His recollection, and his aversion to all useless conversations.
2. His vigilance and exactitude in acquitting himself of the charge confided to him by God.
3. His zeal in assisting his neighbor, according to the means and opportunities given him by God.

Prayer.

Let all the contemplative saints, all the solitaires, all the anchorets learn of thee, O glorious patriarch, the art of leading a heavenly life on earth—a life of contemplation, of silence, of love, of union with God. Who among them had as lively a faith as thyself, as ardent a charity, and as clear and extensive a knowledge of the mysteries of the redemption? St. John and St. Paul were great contemplatives: the first, because, permitted to repose on the heart of Jesus, he entered into a profound and sweet ecstasy; the second, because he was raised to the third heaven, and there discovered ineffable mysteries. But, O glorious Joseph, who could count the ecstasies, the secrets with which thou wast favored—thou,

who, during so many years, hadst beneath thy eyes and in thy possession the true Paradise in the person of Jesus—thou, who didst taste so many times the double happiness of reposing in His heart, true sanctuary of the Divinity, and of making Him repose on thine? What sweet sleep He took within thy arms, and what sweet repose thou didst enjoy when thou didst press Him to thy heart! It is, indeed, from thee that the most perfect souls should learn to direct their flight towards Heaven, and to contemplate the Sun of Justice. But is it not thou, also, who will give to other saints useful lessons on the active and apostolic lives? Thou hadst been for them an accomplished model in the painful labors of thy profession; in thy care of the Holy Family, and thy journeys and pilgrimages; in the instructions, consolations, and the relief thou didst procure for thy neighbor with so much zeal in Egypt and in Nazareth. O, thou most perfect of saints! obtain for me the grace to imitate thee in the interior life. I need more recollection, to pray with more faith and fervor. Thou art, as says St. Teresa, a great master of prayer; deign to admit me among thy disciples, and direct me in the science of the saints, that I may learn upon earth to converse with God, and that I may be thus prepared to

glorify Him eternally with thee and all the other blessed in Heaven. Amen.

Practices during the Day.

1. In prayer, overcome spiritual idleness, combat against sleep.

2. Persevere in it, notwithstanding aridities, dryness, and distractions.

3. Form the resolution to apply yourself more to the interior life and mental prayer, taking St. Joseph, model of the interior life, for patron.

Spiritual Reading.—Read ch. x. of Book I., and some examples of Book II. Conclude with the following prayer :

Ant. "His father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him." (St. Luke, ii. 33.)

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph (p. 262).

Sentences relating to St. Joseph.

All the life of St. Joseph was a continual prayer. (Marcel.)

We often saw him surrounded with a marvellous light. (St. Bridget.)

Could it be possible for Joseph not to meditate continually on the things of Heaven? (St. Athan.)

He had the gift of contemplation in the highest degree. (St. Bernard, S.)

He employed himself with joy in all that concerned the care of Jesus Christ. (St. Jerome.)

Joseph resembled the apostles, to whom was confided the care of carrying Jesus all over the world. (St. Hilary.)

We must believe that Joseph discoursed on the true religion with the sages of Egypt. (Gerson.)

NINTH DAY.

His Happiness, even in this Life.

1. Holy Church compares the happiness of St. Joseph in this life to that of the saints in Heaven, because upon earth he was permitted to see the Man-God face to face, during thirty years, and the glory of His divinity, which, as we are permitted to believe, was from time to time manifested to him.

2. Joseph was blessed, because he learned from the examples of Jesus Christ the eight beatitudes, infallible pledges of eternal beatitude.

3. He was blessed, because he practised them all in great perfection and to the end, under the eyes of Him who was to recompense them.

Virtues to imitate in St. Joseph.

1. Choose one of the beatitudes to practise, in imitation of St. Joseph.
2. Animate yourself to the practise of the others according to circumstances.
3. See which it is, one is in most need of.

Prayer.

To thee alone, O blessed Joseph, does the Church address these words : "Equal in this life to the inhabitants of heaven, thou sharest in their happiness, thou enjoyest God." No one, here on earth, ever enjoyed God as thou, who, day and night, hadst Him before thy eyes, or pressed Him in thy arms ; who received from the Infant Jesus so many caresses, lights, and consolations. I rejoice, I congratulate thee on this foretaste of happiness. Doubtless it was due to thee in preference to all others, since thou hadst imbibed at the eight beatitudes, during the many years that Jesus held them open to thee by the examples of His life. Thou knowest, great saint, that Jesus has shown me them also, that I may draw thence sanctity and happiness ; yet, till now I have profited but little. Obtain me the grace to attach myself henceforth to His doctrine, and to com-

mence to reproduce it in my works. I know I cannot be happy unless I become poor in spirit, meek and humble of heart, pacific, merciful, hungering after justice, and disposed to suffer persecution for it. But, accustomed to flatter my senses, to follow my inclinations, how can I raise myself above nature, how apply my mind and attach my heart to spiritual and heavenly habits? I need for that a lively faith, to raise me above all sensible and earthly objects. Do thou, amiable saint, obtain for me this faith : it will give life to my works, and, in the practise of the beatitudes, I shall find here below that happiness which is a foretaste of the felicity of the elect. Amen.

Practices during the Day.

1. More rigorous fast, as an immediate preparation for the feast of the saint.

2. Some other corporal austerity, if you can.

3. Invite to your table, if it be possible, three poor persons, an old man, a woman, and a child, or at least give to each one of them an alms in honor of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Spiritual Reading.—Ch. xi. of Book I., and some examples of Book II. Conclude with the following prayer :

“ Well done, good and faithful servant ; because

thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things ; enter into the joy of thy Lord." (St. Matth. xxv. 23.)

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph (p. 262).

Sentences relative to St. Joseph.

The Infant Jesus made St. Joseph taste ineffable sweetness by His looks, His embraces, and all the marks of truly filial tenderness. (St. Bernard, S.)

My Son so well hid the power of His divinity, that Joseph and I alone could recognize it.

Joseph was most patient in poverty, assiduous in laboring, mild towards those who reproached him, and most zealous in my service. (St. Bridg.)

TRIDUUM IN HONOR OF ST. JOSEPH.

For a preparatory triduum to one of the feasts of St. Joseph, one may choose, among the considerations indicated below, whichever answer the best to one's wants or the object of the feast.

1st Consideration : St. Joseph, spouse of Mary. See the 1st day of the preparatory Novena, p. 249, or the meditation for the feast of the marriage of St. Joseph with the Blessed Virgin, p. 298.

2d Consideration : St. Joseph, father of Jesus. See the 2d or 3d day of the Novena, p. 252 or 256

3d Consideration : Life of St. Joseph. It offers to us a model of justice. See the 5th day of the Novena, p. 263.

It exhibits a model of the contemplative, active, and mixed or apostolical life. See the 8th day of the Novena, p. 274.

It was poor, laborious, meritorious. See the meditation of St. Joseph of the Oak, p. 310.

It was favored with many graces. See the 7th day of the Novena, p. 270.

It was most happy. See the 9th day of the Novena, p. 278.

4th Consideration : Sanctity of St. Joseph. See the 4th day of the Novena, p. 259.

5th Consideration : St. Joseph surpasses all the other saints. See the 6th day of the Novena, p. 267.

6th Consideration : Death of St. Joseph. See the first exercise of the feast of the 19th of March, p. 287.

7th Consideration : St. Joseph in Heaven. See second exercise of the feast of the 19th of March, p. 181, or the first and second points of the Meditation on the Patronage, pp. 304 and 306.

His protection. See p. 294.

§ II.

Practices for the Feasts themselves.

The saints were upon earth the friends of God, whose cause they defended. The Divine munificence united in them the precious gifts of grace. To honor the saints is to honor God Himself. Such are the teachings of our holy faith ; but if they be true regarding a saint, whatever be the degree of perfection he has attained, with how much more reason can they be applied to St. Joseph, whom the Lord deigned to enrich with so much liberality, and who, all his life, was a victim of immolation for the cause of his God !

Besides, the Church, in multiplying the feasts in honor of the glorious patriarch, invites us to multiply our marks of respect : we would not be following his spirit to remain cold and indifferent, when she gives us the example of an ever increasing devotion and a more zealous worship.

In all St. Joseph's feasts, whatever may be their object, you will contribute, rendering him honors by meditation, the reception of the sacraments, by alms, and the consecration of yourself to his service.

Meditation.

The subject may be chosen in the preparatory Novena given above, if the one given for each feast does not correspond with your wants. Let not the difficulties you meet with in this exercise discourage you. Have recourse rather to St. Joseph. Under the guidance of this clever master, in a little time one is formed to prayer and contemplation. St. Teresa assures us of this.

Confession.

Place also your confession under the protection of St. Joseph, and bring with it a stronger will to correct your defects. This saint delights in seeing souls devoted to him acquire more and more that purity of heart whose effect is to bring closer one's union with God, according to the promise of the Holy Ghost: "He that loveth cleanness of heart, shall have the King for his friend." (Prov. xxii. 11.)

The venerable Sister Agatha of the Cross, preparing one day for confession, was visited by the Blessed Virgin carrying her Divine Son, and accompanied by her chaste spouse. Full of confusion at this sight, because she had just reprimanded some one too severely, she asked pardon

of the three holy visitors. It was granted her with a heavenly goodness and sweetness. Since then she felt inflamed with love for St. Joseph.

Communion.

At this so precious moment, take for practice to invite Mary and Joseph to come and keep company with Jesus in your heart. Tell them affectionately that to-day is for you the Feast of the Presentation, and that their Divine Infant, having been given you by the Eternal Father, it belongs to His parents to redeem Him, in bringing you, as price of his ransom, the purity of the dove.

Alms.

This act of mercy may follow the Holy Communion. Invite to your table St. Joseph, and with him the Divine Infant and his Mother, imitating in this the pious merchant whose holy practice I have already named. If indigence or some other obstacle should hinder your inviting them in the persons of three poor, try, at least, to make a slight alms, to an old man, a woman, and a child.

Offering of Yourself.

This is a holy manner of terminating the day. To choose St. Joseph as first protector under Mary,

cannot fail to draw upon you the favors of Heaven. If you be at the head of a family or community, imitate the college of Sienna, which, in 1707, the day of the feast of the holy patriarch, placed itself solemnly under his protection, and offered him the names of all the pupils enclosed in a silver heart, which has since remained suspended in its chapel, as an eternal monument of love. Consecrate to him, in like manner, your heart, and in your heart the hearts of your whole family. To render your offering more agreeable in his eyes, make it at the foot of his altar or statue, reciting the formula found at the end of the third subject of meditation for the feast of the 19th of March. And because the feasts of Jesus and Mary are also the feasts of Joseph, particularly in the first mysteries of our redemption, where he always occupies his place, honor him in these circumstances. Hear St. Teresa: "I know not," says she, "how one can think of the care taken by Mary of the Infant God, without returning thanks to St. Joseph for the services he rendered to the Son and the Mother."

Besides those precious souvenirs of devotion, celebrate the following feasts, which are his.

Feast of St. Joseph, 19th March.

Of all the feasts instituted in honor of St. Jo-

seph, that of the 19th of March is the principal, and the most ancient. We find traces of it in the eighth century, in different parts of the Christian world. Under Gregory XV., a decree of the Congregation of Rites extended it to all the Church.

The liturgy, which elsewhere honors the patronage and the marriage of St. Joseph, has now for object to celebrate his grandeurs. Could it initiate us more suitably to the thought of the august mystery of the Incarnation, which in some days will be presented to our adoration, than in proposing to our homage him who was at the same time the confidant of the sublimest of secrets, the guardian and the defender of the Son and of the Mother?

You will contribute to the triumph of St. Joseph by meditation, by the reception of the sacraments, by an alms, and by the consecration of your person to his service, as has been said above.

EXERCISE DURING THE DAY.

First Exercise.—Death of St. Joseph.

The death of the saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord—as it is said, Psalm cxv.

That of St. Joseph, 1, was precious by the immense merits his virtues had acquired ; by the perfection with which he accomplished the office confided to his care ; by the hope of the recompense he had a right to expect.

2. It was happy by the presence of the holy angels ; by that of Jesus and Mary, who assisted him to his last breath.

3. It was sweet by the peace he enjoyed ; by the tenderness of his affections ; by the ineffable consolation he found in the sight, in the words, of Jesus and Mary. It may well be said of him, that he died in the embrace of the Lord.

Virtues to imitate to honor the Death of St. Joseph.

1. The care of forming one's self more and more to the interior life.

2. An entire conformity to the will of God.

3. A strict union of confidence and love with Jesus and Mary, all the days of our life, that we may find them both propitious at the hour of death.

Graces to be asked for.

Blessed Joseph, it is not without reason, etc.
(Page 142.)

Practices during the Day.

1. Keep a guard upon your eyes, and mortify the vain curiosity of seeing every thing,—to imitate St. Joseph, who, content with the sight of Jesus Christ, lived as a stranger to the things of the earth.

2. Mortify your taste in something, to honor the poverty of St. Joseph.

3. Practise mortification in your words, in imitation of St. Joseph. The Blessed Virgin said to St. Bridget, that never had an impatient or trivial word escaped him.

Spiritual Reading.—Ch. xii. of Book I., and some examples of Book II., as 1st day of Novena.

Let us pray.—Pray for us, St. Joseph. (Page 262.)

Sentences relative to the Death of St. Joseph.

Blessed are those who die in the Lord. (Apoc.)

God willed that Joseph should die before the passion of the Saviour, to spare him the immense sorrow it would have caused him. (St. Bern., S.)

What consolations and promises, what lights and flames of love, what knowledge of eternal things, Joseph at his last moments received from his holy spouse, and from the Son of God, the sweet Jesus! (Id.)

Second Exercise.—Glory of St. Joseph.

Joseph is the ornament and the glory of Heaven. (Hymn.)

1. How sublime is his glory, when we consider the eminence of his sanctity and the greatness of his merits !

2. How sublime is it, if we consider the eminence of his titles ! Legitimate Spouse of the Queen of Heaven, he is also the adopted Father of the King of Heaven !

3. How sublime is it, if we consider that God has promised a reward for a glass of cold water : for Joseph labored till the last day of his life to provide for Jesus !

Virtues to be practised to honor St. Joseph's Glory.

1. Desire more and more to be united to God by love.

2. Perform perfectly your employment, as imposed by God Himself.

3. Aspire unceasingly for the glory of paradise, to see and love God forever.

Graces to be asked of St. Joseph.

Prostrate at thy feet, O glorious St. Joseph ! I humbly revere thee. I congratulate thee that the

holy Trinity, after having crowned thee with the crown of Virgins, seated thee beside their Queen. How brightly shines to-day the title thou didst bear here below, that of Father of Jesus Christ ! The court of Pharaoh was seized with astonishment when it beheld the ancient Joseph clothed in purple, the royal ring upon his finger, a golden crown upon his head, and seated in the same chariot as the monarch. But these honors were but the shadow of those which the Most High decreed to thee. All the inhabitants of Heaven, ravished with admiration, will bless the Lord for having raised thee to such sublime glory. I think I hear the angels repeating in their concerts : Glory to the faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord has established chief of His family ! How rich the recompense with which the Eternal Father has repaid the services thou didst render to His Son on earth ! and what gifts has not the Holy Ghost conferred on thee in exchange for thy vigilant solicitude in guarding his holy spouse ! and what honors has not the Son of God given to him whom He styled father here on earth ! Father, said the young Tobias, speaking of the angel who had conducted him, can we ever do enough to acknowledge his benefits ? the half of our goods would not suffice to pay them. And yet it only

regarded services rendered by his guide during a short journey. Ah ! doubtless Jesus Christ, who infinitely surpasses the young Tobias in riches and in generosity, has magnificently recompensed the care which your paternal tenderness lavished on Him. Doubtless, for thy sake, O blessed Joseph, He deviated from the ordinary laws, in resuscitating, on the day of his own resurrection, that body which thou didst consume in the service of his person, and making it already share the glory of thy soul. I rejoice in this double glory with which thy servants love to think thee clothed, and I entreat thee to obtain for me an ardent desire of my heavenly country. I hope one day to be witness of thy triumph, and to thank Jesus, thy son, for having glorified thee so admirably. Amen.

Practices of Devotion and Mortification.

1. Patience in the tribulations of this life, since they prepare me for the consolations of Heaven.
2. Fidelity not to pass any day without making some act of mortification.
3. Ask pardon of God for the inordinate attachment one has for the earth.

Spiritual Reading.—Chapter iii., Book Second.

Prayer.

Pray for us (p. 262).

Sentences relative to the Glory of St. Joseph.

To the Blessed Virgin we owe the worship of hyperdulia, and to Joseph the highest degree of the worship of dulia. (Corn.-à-Lap.)

It cannot be doubted that Jesus Christ, who, during his mortal life, had raised Joseph to so sublime a dignity, who had shown him the affection, the respect that a son owes to his father, not only has not refused him in heaven those marks of affection and respect, but has rather completed and perfected them. (St. Bern., S.)

Since Jesus Christ has said, "Where I am there also shall my servants be," without doubt the nearest to Him in heaven will be he who, upon earth, exhibited himself, after Mary, the most intimate and the most faithful. (Gerson.)

We may piously believe that, if Jesus Christ, in his filial piety, has raised and glorified in heaven the body as well as the soul of his Mother, he did it also for St. Joseph on the day of His resurrection. (St. Bernard, S.)

Third Exercise.—Protection of St. Joseph.

1. The protection of St. Joseph is *powerful* with Jesus, towards whom he occupied the position of father: with Mary, whose spouse he was. He had authority over both one and the other.

2. It is *charitable*, and is inclined to assist the devout servants who invoke it. Joseph is, after Mary, the principal instrument of salvation for men, and he has a truly paternal heart for them.

3. It is *universal and liberal*. It extends to all sorts of persons, without distinction of age and condition; there is no want of body or soul which he cannot relieve.

Virtues to practise to merit this Protection.

1. Choose him as special protector in life and at the hour of death.

2. Invoke him sometimes during the day.

3. Endeavor to extend devotion towards him. The Blessed Virgin congratulated St. Teresa for the zeal she had displayed in exciting devotion to her holy spouse.

Graces to be asked of St. Joseph, taking him as Protector.

O great saint, worthy among all the saints to be venerated, loved, and invoked for the excellence

of thy virtues, the eminence of thy glory, and the power of thy intercession, I, N. . . , in presence of Jesus, who chose thee for father, and of Mary, who accepted thee for spouse, take thee to-day for my advocate with both, for my protector and my father : I propose firmly to honor thee all the days of my life. Deign, then, I conjure thee, to grant me thy special protection, and number me among thy devoted servants. Assist me in all my actions, befriend me with Jesus and Mary, and abandon me not at the hour of death. Amen.

Practice as a preparation for his Feast.

1. Prepare yourself by a more exact examination, and a more lively sorrow for your sins, for the communion on the coming feast.

2. Fast, or at least practise some privation.

3. Pray more, and give more abundant alms.

Spiritual Reading.—Book Second, chapter vii.

Let us pray. Grant us, &c. (p. 262).

Sentences relating to St. Joseph.

When a spouse or a father begs his spouse or his son, it is a kind of command he addresses them. Take, therefore, St. Joseph as your first patron, your most intimate friend, for your most powerful protector. (Gerson.)

Alone, among all men, he was here below the most faithful co-operator of the greatest work of God. (St. Bernard.)

Go to Joseph, and do all he will tell you. (Genesis.)

Feast of the Marriage of St. Joseph, 23d January.

The holy marriage of Joseph and Mary, under whose shadow the august mystery of the incarnation was accomplished, has an intimate connection with the work of our salvation. It is, therefore, not astonishing that we should celebrate the feast; we owe the idea to the pious Gerson. The following circumstances led to its establishment.

A canon of Chartres, very devoted to St. Joseph, and with whom Gerson became acquainted at the Council of Constance, being on the point of death, wished to give a last proof of affection for him whom he had honored all the days of his life. He, therefore, willed a considerable sum to his sanctuary, and forgetting, as it were, himself, that he might only think on his illustrious patron, instead of founding an anniversary for the repose of his soul, he desired that, every year, on the day of his death, a commemoration should be made of St. Joseph in his church, and that holy Mass

should be offered in his honor. Gerson being consulted on the manner of executing the will of the defunct, proposed three means, insisting, nevertheless, upon the institution of a feast in honor of the holy alliance of Joseph and Mary. The Chapter approved of this idea, and the Pope's legate ordered that, in future, this feast should be celebrated every year in the church of Chartres. Later, Paul III. authorized the religious of St. Francis, then those of St. Dominic, to solemnize also this feast, and he had an Office composed which was soon spread among many churches. An indult of Benedict XIII. approved of it in 1725, for all Catholicity. It was at the solicitation of the Dominicans that this feast was fixed by Paul III. for the 23d of January. (See the Bollandists, 19 March, and Benedict XIV., Canon. Sanct.)

EXERCISES DURING THIS DAY.

They will be those of the first day of the Novena. You can, in your meditation, take the titles which are offered there to your consideration ; or, if you like it better, make use of the following thoughts and considerations.

St. Joseph, Spouse of Mary.

Meditation.—1. What glory, what happiness for St. Joseph, to have been chosen by God to be the spouse of Mary ! What treasures of merits he must have amassed, to have been found worthy of such an alliance, of so close a union with the Queen of Heaven ! The principal motive to which he owed the preference was undoubtedly his incomparable virginity, which was to serve as guardian and witness to the incomprehensible purity of Mary. Behold how the Lord confides his treasures to the purest hands ; how he loves to feed among lilies ; behold, also, how he who would please Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, ought to dedicate to them all the affections of his heart.

2. What must have been the joy of the holy patriarch when he learned that he was to be the spouse of a virgin purer than the angels ! But at the same time how he humbled himself in the sentiment of his nothingness, so as to think himself entirely unworthy of such an alliance ! Oh, what a combat took place in his heart—on one side, joy at the sight of his happiness, and on the other, fear not to correspond fully with it ! And I, can I be astonished that the Lord is not prodigal in his graces towards me ? I am wanting in humility.

3. The joy of the Blessed Virgin was not less lively in receiving as spouse a man so innocent and pure of heart. Thence began their reciprocal affection, but more disengaged from the senses, purer than that which unites the seraphim. Blind and senseless as I am, why seek enjoyments in this world? True joys are only found in purity of heart. "Blessed are the clean of heart!" My consolations and joys shall henceforth consist in being with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Graces to be asked of St. Joseph.

I congratulate thee, O my glorious protector, for having deserved, by the excellence of thy virtues, and especially by thy love of virginity, to be chosen as the spouse of that incomparable Virgin, of whom the King of grace, of innocence, and sanctity was to be born. I congratulate thee for so much greatness and happiness, and rejoice thereat with thee. Thou art the zealous cherub to whom was intrusted the care of that ark of the New Covenant; thou art the seraph, burning with love, to whom it was given to defend that virginal throne whereon rested the King of Heaven. Raised as thou art to the sublime dignity of Mary's spouse, deign to look down with kindness

on thy unworthy servant. And, as at the occasion of the marriage of a great prince it is customary to grant extraordinary favors, even to such as deserve them the least, remember, O chaste spouse of Mary, to pour out on my poor soul some drops of the heavenly consolations with which thine was inundated in that blessed union. Be not repelled at the stains which have defiled my heart; but obtain of God for me sufficient tears to blot them out entirely. Obtain for me the gift of a more perfect purity, in order that I may become more agreeable in thy eyes and in those of thy admirable spouse, my protectress and my mother, so that my soul, being entirely purified, may deserve to be admitted to the banquet of the eternal marriage-feast. Amen.

Virtues to imitate in St. Joseph.

In his honor and after his example, I will mortify my eyes, never raising them to look at a dangerous object, or even an object merely curious, but useless.

Spiritual Reading.—Ch. ii., B. I. Terminate by the following prayer:

Ant. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was

Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." (St. Luke, i. 26.)

V. Pray for us (p. 262).

In your exercises of piety, during this day, ask the grace to know your vocation; or if it be decided, ask, by the intercession of St. Joseph, fidelity to the duties of your state, by reciting the prayer :

"Father and guardian of virgins" (p. 352).

Patronage of St. Joseph.—Third Sunday after Easter.

The Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, which a decree of the Congregation of Rites has fixed on the third Sunday after Easter, originated among the Carmelites in 1680. A general chapter of the Carmelites had already, in 1621, solemnly recognized St. Joseph as patron and father of all the order. Some churches soon adopted the Feast of the Patronage. At present, in virtue of a decree of the 10th September, it extends to all Catholicity. Among the Redemptorists and Passionists, in the Society of Mary and the Society of Jesus, it is celebrated with its own octave and office, with the double rite of first class.

We will here give the decree of the Sovereign Pontiff : the servants of St. Joseph will be happy

to find traced, by the pen of Cardinal Patrizzi, a magnificent eulogy of their holy patron.

“ To the City and the World :

“The glorious Patriarch Joseph, whom the Almighty Father enriched with singular graces, and loaded with the abundance of heavenly gifts, that he might be worthy to appear, in the eyes of men, the father of His only Son, and to be the true spouse of the Queen of the world, and the Sovereign of the Angels, performed so perfectly all the functions and charges of so sublime a vocation, that he merited the glory and recompense of a good and faithful servant. In fact, having always present in his mind the thought of his eminent dignity and the sanctity of the noble functions confided to him by divine wisdom, he obeyed, unceasingly and in all things, the designs and will of God with a promptitude and joy which can scarcely be expressed. In endeavoring to please God, he became agreeable to Him : in fine, crowned with glory and honor in Heaven, he has received a new charge, that of succoring, by his abundant merits and the assistance of his prayers, wretched human nature, and of obtaining for the world, by his powerful intercession, what man of himself would be incapable of obtaining. There-

fore is he everywhere honored as a merciful mediator with our Lord, as a powerful patron; and the feast of his patronage, with its own Office and Mass, is established, in many places, the third Sunday which follows the Paschal feasts. There remained, however, one thing to be desired, which is, that the Office of St. Joseph should be imposed on the whole Church. The very Eminent and very Reverend Lord Cardinal Constantine Patrizzi has humbly asked and solicited this favor of our most Holy Prince and Lord, Pope Pius IX., not only in his name, but also in the name of the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and of a great number of the faithful, even outside of Italy. The same most Holy Lord, receiving with apostolical goodness these supplications so conformable to his singular piety towards St. Joseph, on the report of the undersigned Secretary of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, has graciously consented to all, and commanded that henceforth the proper Office, with the Mass of the Patronage of St. Joseph, should be celebrated by the clergy of Rome and by all the universe, under the rite of double of the second class, the third Sunday after Easter ; and if this should be prevented by the occurrence of an office of superior rite or a greater dignity, he has granted that the

Office of the Patronage should be transferred to the first unoccupied day, conformably to the rubrics, whatever else to the contrary notwithstanding."

EXERCISES DURING THIS DAY.

You can take the second and the third of those which are indicated for the Feast of St. Joseph, and make use of the following reflections, as subjects for meditation :

Exaltation of St. Joseph.

The exaltation of St. Joseph is worthy of Jesus ; it is glorious for himself and advantageous for us

1. *Worthy of Jesus.*

Suarez and other theologians think that the glorious patriarch rose with our Divine Saviour, as did the just, who, to honor his triumph, entered into Heaven body and soul. (Suarez de Myst. quæst. 29.) Without doubt none had greater titles to this favor. "It was just," says St. Bernardin of Sienna, "that, after having lived so familiarly on earth with Jesus and Mary, he should reign with them eternally in Heaven, in body and soul. Would our Divine Saviour have left, in the ignominy of the tomb, those arms

which had carried Him, those limbs and that body which were worn out defending and supporting Him? The mere thought of such indifference is revolting, so contrary is it to the idea we have of the heart of Jesus. Listen to St. Francis of Sales, who, rejecting the least doubt concerning it, in his Nineteenth Conversation, makes St. Joseph speak thus to our Saviour visiting Limbo : "Remember, that when thou didst come from Heaven to earth, I received thee into my house, into my family, and that, as soon as thou wast born, I received thee into my arms. Now that thou art going to Heaven, take me with thee. I received thee into my family—receive me to-day into thine, since thou art going there. I carried thee in my arms—now carry me in thine ; and, as I took care to nourish and protect thee during the course of thy mortal life, take care of me, and deign to lead me to immortal life." It is the language of a saint, and, without doubt, that of truth. It was worthy of the Saviour that His foster-father should receive this supreme honor, which alone could render his exaltation perfect : let us follow him with our looks and rejoice in his triumph.

2. Glorious for Himself.

Pharaoh had said to the first Joseph: "Thou shalt be over my house, and at the commandment of thy mouth all the people shall obey: only in the kingly throne will I be above thee." And he made him go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should bow their knee before him, and that they should know he was made governor over the whole land of Egypt. . . . The people cried to Pharaoh for food. And he said to them, "Go to Joseph." (Gen. xlv.) Now, according to St. Bernardine of Sienna and other illustrious personages, the triumph of Pharaoh's minister is the image of Joseph, spouse of Mary. What glory then, what power must he have in Heaven! The sun unites the splendor of all the other stars, which disappear when he shines; but, according to St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Joseph is a sun in which God has placed the light of all the other saints. According to Bernardine de Bustis, our Lord gave St. Joseph a key of Paradise, reserving the other for His Mother; willing that, henceforth, we should enter Heaven through their mediation. We may add—such is the faith of the Church, which presents him to us as a prudent and faithful servant,

established here below over the Holy Family, and in Heaven over all the goods of God. "Undoubtedly," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "our Lord, who lived upon earth so intimately with Joseph, and raised him to so high a dignity, has not now changed towards this august patriarch, but, on the contrary, He treats him with greater respect and loads him with favors. Therefore, it is with good cause that the Church makes him say to St. Joseph, 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.' The heavenly beatitude will inundate, it is true, the heart of an ordinary man called to the happiness of Heaven ; but, to mark the abundance of that enjoyed by St. Joseph, not only he is put in possession of interior joy, but he enters into an ocean of happiness, which penetrates and surrounds him on every side, in the midst of which he is submerged as in an abyss."

Let us unite to so much glory ; let us rejoice at such happiness ; and having thanked the Divine Saviour, who is the source of it, let us pray St. Joseph to employ all his power in our favor, for it is for us also that he has received so great credit with God.

3. Advantages for us.

The glory of Joseph was a homage to his merits, a recompense for his services ; the power he enjoys is a resource for our wants. All our interests are confided to him ; his heart compassionates all our sorrows, for he has passed, like us, in the path of tears ; he has experienced all the rigors of exile ; he knows, with the perils of life, the rage of the enemies surrounding us. "With what mercy he receives those who confide their lot to him ! With what zeal he intercedes for them with Jesus and Mary ! Spouse of one, father of the other, he dreads not a refusal ; for, the demand a father addresses to his son, or a spouse who speaks to his spouse, is a command, and not a prayer." (Gerson.)

Also, St. Francis of Sales tells us, in the same discourse : "How happy we shall be if we merit to have a share in his holy intercession ! for nothing will be refused him, either by our Lady or her glorious Son. If we have confidence, he will obtain favors for us, a holy increase of all sorts of virtues, especially those in which he excelled, and which are, holy purity of body and mind, the amiable virtues of humility, constancy, courage, and perseverance ; virtues which will render us

victorious over our enemies in this life, and which will make us merit the grace of going to enjoy in eternal life the recompenses prepared for those who will follow the example St. Joseph has given them in this one—recompense which will be nothing less than eternal felicity, in which we shall enjoy the clear vision of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Thus speaks St. Francis of Sales.

FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH OF THE OAK.

The Wednesday, 24th August, or the 1st Wednesday following.

As we have said in the last chapter of the Second Book, the sanctuary of Villedieu was erected the 24th August. The inhabitants of the country eagerly celebrated the anniversary of its erection. Devotion to St. Joseph, and the plenary indulgence granted by His Holiness Pius IX., draw a great concourse of strangers for this feast. The difficulty of receiving them on a day of abstinence, has prevailed upon the ecclesiastical authority to fix this feast irrevocably on Wednesday. When, therefore, the 24th coincides with this day the feast takes place; if not, it is postponed to the following Wednesday.*

* This day is consecrated to St. Joseph; besides, the

The following exercises may assist to spend worthily this great day.

Considerations on the Life of St. Joseph.

The life of St. Joseph was poor, laborious, and meritorious.

1. *The Life of St. Joseph was Poor.*

Though this holy patriarch was descended from the royal family which for many centuries had reigned over Judea, he was born in poverty ; reverses of fortune had reduced his ancestors, and he, to procure means of subsistence, was obliged to embrace the condition of an artisan. His alliance with Mary did not ameliorate his condition ; she had experienced the same misfortunes in the persons of the same ancestors. The Saviour's presence only aggravated their sufferings. " Being rich, and becoming poor for our sake, that through His poverty we might be rich," He did not bring to His family what He disdained for Himself: on the contrary, He only added a more rigorous

parish clergy are thus at liberty to assist at this feast. His Lordship the Bishop of Angers, using the power conferred on him by the decision given by the Sovereign Pontiff, the 9th August, 1852, transferred to the day of the solemnity the indulgences granted for the 24th.

poverty to what His parents already endured ; for, as Bossuet says in his admirable panegyric of St. Joseph, "When Jesus enters somewhere, He enters with His cross, He brings with Him all its thorns, and gives them to all those He loves. Jesus and Mary were poor, but they had not yet been without a house, they had some place to retire to. As soon as this Child came into the world, no house is offered them, they take shelter in a stable." Joseph by his poverty found himself confounded, in the eyes of the vulgar, with the many unfortunate ones who have no other inheritance but their arms, no other capital but their health, no other resources than their labor ; but his great and generous heart knew how to aspire to more solid goods than those sought after by the majority of men.

"Weak and voluptuous souls," continues Bossuet, "Jesus does not desire to be with you ; his poverty is ashamed of your luxury, and his flesh, destined to torments, cannot bear your extreme delicacy. He seeks strong and generous souls, who refuse not to carry his cross, and blush not to be companions of his indigence and misery. Those poor who are contented with moderate ease acquired with great trouble, are often more grateful towards God than the rich in the midst of the

abundance with which they are loaded. They are more docile to the divine laws than the ostentatious and sensual man, who only thinks of his interests, and abandons the care of his soul, the thought of his eternity, to revel here below in the grossest indulgence."

Be consoled, therefore, O you to whom God has refused the goods of this world ; He treats you as His best friends, and calls you to walk after the Saviour. When you are tempted to complain of the rigors of fortune, look at St. Joseph—are you poorer than he ? Enter Nazareth—it is the abode of an indigent family ; at the sight of the poverty you remark, say at least : " Am I worthy of a better fate than Jesus, Mary, and Joseph ? "

2. *The Life of St. Joseph was laborious.*

The Gospel tells us that St. Joseph was but an artisan, and it is generally believed that he exercised the trade of carpenter, as did also the Divine Saviour. But why were they subjected to so hard a life ? This is what we ask ourselves when we think of the trials of our condition ; let us ask it of ourselves to-day, at the sight of these two poor artisans, bent under the weight of labor, and we shall find a salutary reply to our murmurs and desolation. Jesus and Joseph moisten with their

sweat the bread which nourishes them ; it is because they are the children of Adam, and undergo the decree brought against him and his posterity. Have we not incurred the same disgrace ? Have we not provoked the same sentence in adding to the sin of our first parents much greater faults ? By his voluntary work Jesus expiates the faults we have committed ; should we leave Him all the pain of their expiation, and aspire only to the repose of an idle and useless life ? Jesus and Joseph embrace the condition of artisans, let us learn then not to blush, if we have embraced it ourselves ; not to despise it in others, if we belong to a higher class. The Divine Child is content to learn the trade of his foster-father, by which He condemns those who blush at the humble condition of their parents, and prefer doing nothing, rather than render themselves useful in the employments of an obscure life. Jesus and Joseph descendants of Solomon, remain all their life con-founded with workmen : Mary, equally illustrious by her birth, shares the same humiliations, and serves with happiness these two poor artisans. What eloquent lessons on the distinctions of this world we find at Nazareth ! and also what subject of condemnation against those who, proud of their position, their fortune, or their birth, disdain

labor, think themselves permitted to lead a useless life, and to despise the laborious classes of society!

It is not a man's occupation that degrades him; it is the corruption of his heart, by which he separates himself from the Author of all good to attach himself to sin. Heaven looks with complacency on the humble and submissive heart: His anger pursues the guilty, who resist His orders and despise the dispositions of His providence. Let us examine if our life is an active and laborious one; and, moreover, let us sound the sentiments of our heart. Would we not willingly exchange the labors and pains we meet with here below for the enjoyment of an easy, sensual life, even should it be guilty?

3. *The Life of St. Joseph was meritorious.*

This great saint, condemned by Heaven to a life of privations and labors, submits to the designs of Providence, blesses and conforms himself to them. When he reflected on the condition of his ancestors, so rich and esteemed, a cry of loving resignation immediately escaped from his heart. "The Lord," said he, with the holy man Job, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (i. 21.) Thus did St. Jo-

seph sanctify his indigence and tears, and profit by the trials and contradictions to increase his merits. Happy the poor who takes this great saint for model, and submits like him to the rigors of a painful condition, it is true, for time, but sweet and fruitful for eternity ! Happy the poor man who murmurs not whilst eating the bread watered by his sweat, who bears not with despair the burden and heat of the day ; but who, on the contrary, always humble and submissive, accepts the privations imposed on him, and the sacrifices he meets with, as so many favors of Divine Providence ! The worldly soul, the terrestrial man, is inebriated with the delights of life, he is eager for pleasure, he avoids pain and suffering ; but this life passes like a dream ; at the moment of awaking he will find but regret, bitterness, and deception ; he will have nothing to present to that God who will require an account of him, and place him in eternity conformably to his merits. How different will it be for the resigned poor, for the simple and laborious man ! All his days have been full of merit, because he has seized the numerous occasions he met with of suffering, laboring, and mortifying himself ; already, with the eye of faith, he contemplates that eternity where, for a moment of trial, he receives an eternal weight

of glory ; for a little sacrifice he enjoys an incomparable felicity ; for fidelity of a few years one enters into possession of infinite happiness. These considerations raise his mind, confirm his courage ; he attaches his heart to the humble and laborious condition in which he is placed, not only because he is in the post assigned by God, but also because there is not a more advantageous one for him, nor more profitable to his eternal interests.

If we feel these dispositions of conformity to Divine Providence, let us thank Heaven through the intercession of our holy patron ; but if, on the contrary, we only feel aversion for suffering, dislike for the labors of life, let us throw ourselves at the feet of St. Joseph, begging him to reanimate our courage, and to obtain for us, with detachment from the goods of the world, a holy avidity for the goods of Heaven.





CHAPTER III.

CONFRATERNITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS IN HONOR OF ST. JOSEPH.

THE utility of associations is incontestable : in favor of the same cause, they reunite the forces of those who belong to it, and generally prepare results so much the more important as the number of the associates is greater and their union stronger. Each nation is, we may say, a vast association founded in view of a common interest. Under the protection of this first society, families are formed, the different branches of industry organized ; they are so many new associations, established, it is true, in view of a particular good, but which, in fact, concur in the general good, and entertain in the State, in return for the protection afforded them, opulence and life.

In the Church, which of all societies is the most wisely constituted, since it is the work of God, these associations exist. In all the epochs of

ner history, they appear under the name of confraternities, congregations, societies, etc. Their forms, their means, vary with their particular end; but as long as they persevere in the spirit of their institution, they bear fruits of salvation, and sometimes even give to the Church, in the incessant combat she has to sustain, a powerful succor. Whilst on one side these phalanxes of Christians, strongly united, stop the progress of vice, on the other they lend to the weak a powerful support, and by the lustre of their examples assure the triumph of truth. In protecting these associations, the Church prepares the success of her cause. Among those which in our days have been the object of her favors, many have been established under the patronage of St. Joseph, and endeavor to extend devotion to him. In a work like this they cannot fail to find a place. . . . In making them known, we will indicate to the servants of our holy patron a powerful means of honoring him, and of attaining the end we propose in publishing this book. Of all associations, the confraternity of a Good Death, by its antiquity and importance, still merits the first rank: it will retain the same place it occupied in the preceding editions. As to the others, though we do not speak of them so much at length, what we

shall say will suffice to guide persons who wish to join them. They will obtain from their directors the particulars we regret not being able to give here.

Confraternity of a Good Death.

Erection.—The first thing to be done is to establish the confraternity canonically. For that, the permission of the diocesan bishop must be obtained. Then, to have a right to the indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff, we must write to the Director of the Congregation of a Good Death at the Church of the Gesù at Rome, and ask him for a diploma of affiliation, indicating the Sunday chosen, besides the Friday, or other more convenient day, for the solemn reunion of each month.

Those who desire to enter into the confraternity of the Good Death, thus established, give their names to the director, who inscribes them in a catalogue, and receive a ticket of admission, in which is found a formula of their consecration, as associated to the Congregation of the Good Death.

Here is the formula :

“Most sweet Jesus, adorable Saviour, full of confidence in thy painful passion, and in the cruel

agony Thou didst suffer on the cross, I offer myself to Thee as a sacrifice ; I unite myself with Thee as a victim of gratitude and love. I beseech Thee most humbly, by thy infinite merits and by the intercession of Mary and Joseph, to grant me, and all the members of this congregation, the inestimable grace of a good death, that we may all arrive at the abode of the Blessed, to love Thee with them forever and ever. Amen."

Reunions.—The reunions can take place every Friday of the year, and also one of the Sundays of each month. The reunion of Sunday, particularly in the parishes, is the most solemn.

These are the exercises of the Sunday reunions:

After the prayer *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, instruction or exhortation on death.

Then recitation of the following prayers for all the Associates, being deceased or agonizing :

Lord Jesus, adorable Saviour, we conjure Thee, by Thy sacred wounds, by Thy agony and by Thy death, by the intercession of Mary and Joseph, to grant us and all the members of this congregation, an unconquerable strength against the enemies of our salvation, perfect contrition for all our sins, final perseverance, and a happy death, that we may not lose the price of Thy sufferings. Amen.

Crucified Saviour, sure refuge of the agonizing, we beseech Thee, by the extreme anguish Thou didst suffer for us on the cross, to deign to aid, by Thy grace, all our associates in their last moments, that the enemy of Thy glory and their salvation may not prevail against them, but that they may all be received into the eternal tabernacles, to see Thee and love Thee eternally with the elect. Amen.

Almighty God, who desirest the salvation of all men, we pray Thy infinite goodness, by the merits of the passion of Jesus Christ, by the intercession of Mary and Joseph, to grant all the deceased members of our congregation the happiness of being admitted to the kingdom of eternal felicity, where Thou livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

Then the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, during which the following hymn, to obtain the grace of Holy Viaticum at the hour of death, is sung :

I adore Thee, true body of Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary ; Thou, who hast truly suffered, who hast been immolated on the cross for mankind ; Thou, whose side, pierced with a lance, didst pour out water and blood ; may we receive Thee at the hour of death. O sweet Jesus ! O good

Jesus ! O Jesus, Son of Mary, be merciful to us !

V. Thou hast given us a heavenly bread.

R. Which contains all sweetness.

V. Pray for us, sorrowful Virgin.

R. That we may be found worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Pray for us, St. Joseph.

R. That we may be found worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray.

Lord, who hast left us, in thy wonderful Sacrament, the remembrance of Thy passion, we beseech Thee to grant us such veneration for the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may always feel the fruit of our redemption.

Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech Thee that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, whose holy soul, at the hour of Thy passion, was transpierced with a sword of grief, may implore for us Thy clemency, now and at the hour of our death.

Deign, Lord, to apply to us the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Mother, that what we cannot obtain of ourselves, may be granted us by his intercession. We beseech Thee, who livest, &c.

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Finally, during, or before the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the following hymn is sung:

Good Shepherd, True Bread, Jesus, have pity on us. Be our food and our defence; give us the goods of the land of the living.

Thou, who knowest all and canst do all, who in this land feedest mortals, grant that, admitted here to Thy table, we may become the co-citizens and co-heirs of the saints.

Or—O salutary Victim, who openest the door of Heaven, assist and fortify us against the enemies who surround us.

Eternal glory to the Lord, one God in three persons. May He grant us eternal life in the heavenly country. Amen.

N. B.—From the exercises for the reunion on Sunday, matter may be easily selected suitable to less solemn reunions.

Preparation for a Good Death.

On the same Sunday on which the reunion takes place, each associate can, according to his devotion, prepare for death. Here is a method

that can be followed with fruit; it consists in putting yourself in the same dispositions in which you would wish to be at your last hour, and in practising the acts you should then practise.

1. In the morning, on awaking, imagine that your guardian angel comes to tell you, as the Prophet Isaiah to Ezechias: "Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die and not live." Be occupied with this thought in dressing, and thank God for giving you yet time to dispose yourself for death. Then recite morning prayers, with as much fervor as though they were to be the last of your life; offering to God your heart, your actions, your pains of body and of soul, in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ dying. Beg of Him, by the intercession of Mary and of Joseph, to assist you to prepare well for a good death.

2. Prostrate before a crucifix, or before the Blessed Sacrament, make some reflections on the following truths: I am still alive, but I shall soon die. . . . I shall die like such a one I knew. . . . What shall I then think of the goods, the honors, the pleasures of life? . . . What idea shall I have of Christian virtues? . . . Am I really to appear before God? . . . In what state is my conscience? . . . Will any thing prevent

me from loving God and dying in His love? . . . Is there not some dangerous affection, some secret aversion in my heart? . . . Are my hands free from the goods of others? . . . Have I regulated my affairs, and am I in a state, if I were about to quit the world, to occupy myself solely with my eternity? Answer these and similar questions, and after having discovered what would cost you the most pain if you were to die before the end of the day, take the resolution to remedy it immediately.

3. Penetrated with these sentiments, confess as though it were the last time in your life, and, if some former sin should disquiet you, ease your conscience by confessing it with suitable exactness.

4. Receive holy communion, as in Viaticum, and take the firm resolution to omit nothing that our Saviour will have inspired you to do for the good of your soul. Beseech Jesus crucified to establish and fortify you in the dispositions you ought to be to die well. Conjure Him to grant you a death like unto His.

Address yourself then to Mary as your good mother, your powerful advocate, beseeching her to assist you in your last moments. Have recourse also to the intercession of St. Joseph, as

protector of the agonizing and patron of a good death.

Lastly, terminate these acts of preparation by a spiritual testament, which is almost entirely that of St. Charles Borromeo.

"In the name of the Father. . . I, N. N., poor sinner redeemed by the merits of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, uncertain of my last hour, and moved by the love I have for my Saviour and for the salvation of my soul, am resolved to make the following dispositions, in order that if death should surprise me, it may find me in a state to appear before my Sovereign Judge.

First of all, I protest in presence of Almighty God, and of all the Heavenly Court, that I desire to die a child of the Church, and that my desire is to preserve to my last sigh that same faith of which I now make authentic profession.

Secondly, I pardon, with all my heart, my enemies, whoever they may be, for the love of Jesus Christ; and I firmly hope, that through his infinite mercy, He will also pardon me my sins, of which I sincerely repent, because they have offended His Divine Majesty.

Thirdly, I recommend my soul to the Five wounds of my amiable Saviour. It belongs to Him by many titles; I beseech Him to receive

't as the work of His hands, and the price of His blood, that when it quits this world it may find a shelter in His Sacred Heart. As for my body, which was formed out of earth, I return it to the earth, until my infinitely good God deigns to raise it, reunite it to my soul, and make it enter into eternal repose. I desire also to have a share in all the prayers and good works which will be performed after my decease throughout the Christian world, and particularly in the congregation of a Good Death.

Fourthly, I desire ardently to receive the Holy Viaticum before dying, and I most humbly beg my Saviour not to refuse it to me, that my soul, nourished and fortified by this heavenly bread, may happily perform the voyage of eternity.

Fifthly, I have given my soul to God, and returned my body to the earth : only a few moments remain of a life about to finish ; I consecrate them to thee, O Jesus ! I will no longer live but in Thee and by Thee. Ah ! grant me the grace of loving and serving Thee to the end, and of expiring in pronouncing the sweet name of Jesus.

Sixthly, I choose for my powerful protectress the holy Mother of my Lord and my God. She is the Refuge of Sinners. I recommend myself with

filial confidence to her maternal goodness, now and at the hour of my death. I also recommend myself to her glorious spouse, patron of the agonizing. May I, during my agony, unite to the name of Jesus those of Mary and Joseph, and repeat them a thousand times.

Seventhly, I thank my good guardian angel for all the charitable care he has taken of me till now. I hope he will still assist me, at the end of my life, and defend my soul against the infernal powers.

Finally, I beseech Thee, my divine Saviour, to deign to accept this testament, which includes my last will. I ratify it and confirm it anew ; I entreat Thee to ratify and confirm it Thyself, so that no temptation, no accident, may annul it, or separate me from Thee. In these dispositions I desire to die, at the hour and on the day Thou hast determined, to come and live eternally with Thee in Heaven. Amen.

The evening of this day, you will call to mind Extreme Unction, and receive it spiritually. Thus you will apply the image of the crucified Saviour successively on all the parts where the unction is applied, saying, "Divine Jesus, pardon me the sins I have committed by sight . . . hearing . . . smelling . . . by taste, or by the tongue . . . by

the touch . . . by step. You will finish by applying this holy image to your heart, saying, "Divine Jesus, pardon my miserable heart so many thoughts, affections, and desires which have not been for Thee ; pardon its ingratitude, and deign to apply to it all the merits, all the affections of Thy Sacred Heart.

The last exercise of this day, before going to bed, will be to recite, at least in part, the prayer of the agonizing. On lying down, you will remember that a great number of persons, of whom many are well and think not of death, will die this very night, and that you are, perhaps, of the number of those who will never see the morning. Look then upon your bed in which you enter as your tomb. Say, "I commit my soul into Thy hands," and after having thus prepared yourself the best for death, pronounce, as though it were approaching, these words : "Jesus, Mary, Joseph !"

If you awake during the night, I propose to you a practice worthy of a member of the Congregation of a Good Death, and the fruit of which you will gather in your last moments, if you are faithful to it, the day of your preparation, and, as much as depends on you, each day of the year. It is to quit your bed, and to prostrate yourself

an instant, with your face against the ground, to address this prayer to our Lord : "I adore Thee, true body." (As above, p. 321.)

The demand for Holy Viaticum, so many times renewed during so many years, will perhaps be granted by Heaven, and obtain for you the most precious of graces, after final perseverance—that of a good communion at the approach of the last hour. But is not such a communion, in this decisive moment, the immediate disposition of a good and happy death?

Indulgences granted to the Confraternities of a Good Death affiliated to that of the Gesù at Rome.

Plenary Indulgences.—1. The day of the reception, provided one communicates and recites the ordinary prayers; that is to say, five *Paters*, etc.

2. At the article of death.

3. One Friday of each month, at one's choice.

4. The days of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, Corpus Christi, the Immaculate Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, Assumption. On the feasts of St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles, and All Saints.

Indulgences of seven years and seven quaran-

tines.—Every time that one assists at the exercise of the Good Death, Friday or Sunday.

3. *Indulgences of a year* for the following works :

Following a corpse to the grave.—Visiting the sick poor.—Reciting on one's knees, if one can, a *Pater* and an *Ave* for the sick and dead.—Visiting prisoners.—Hearing Mass.—Making an examen of conscience before retiring to rest.

4. *Indulgences of ten years and ten quarantines*.—Every day in Lent and the days of the Stations of Rome, indicated at the beginning of the Mass in the Roman Missal. By visiting the Church of the Confraternity, and reciting the ordinary prayers, we gain the same indulgences as if we visited the churches of Rome, where the Stations are made ; that is to say, ten years and ten quarantines.

All these indulgences, granted by Benedict XIII. in perpetuity, are applicable to the souls in purgatory.

The associates absent from the place where is the church designed for the Confraternity of a Good Death, may gain these indulgences by visiting the church of the place they inhabit, and by conforming, as nearly as they can, to what is practised in the very Church of the Confraternity.

Extract of the Rules of the Congregation of a Good Death, erected in the Church of Gesù at Rome.

1. Those who desire to honor Jesus dying on the cross, and Mary assisting at the agony of her Divine Son, after having inscribed their names in the catalogue, kneeling before a crucifix, will offer their good works in union with the associates, to obtain for each of them the grace of a happy death.

2. They should have, in their oratory, the image of Jesus crucified and of His Holy Mother, and should recite, each day, five *Paters* and five *Aves* for this intention.

3. They should endeavor to communicate at least one Friday in each month, or every Friday, for the same intention.

4. On Friday they will make some act of mortification, in memory of the agony of Jesus and the dolors of Mary, and will endeavor to perform all their actions, on that day, for the same intention.

5. All will do their best to attend the public exercises of the Congregation: those who are prevented will endeavor to perform them alone.

6. On hearing of the death of an associate,

they will receive holy communion, or at least say some prayers for the repose of his soul.

None of these rules oblige under pain of sin ; but he who neglects them deprives himself of the participation of the good works done in the Confraternity.

CONFRATERNITY OF ST. JOSEPH AT LYONS,

ERECTED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. NAZIER.

The end of this Confraternity is : 1. To honor, in a particular manner, the blessed St. Joseph as head of the Holy Family, and to place this large parish under his special protection. 2. To preserve and strengthen the faith amongst men. 3. To induce spouses to honor one another mutually, and to live holily. 4. In fine, to furnish those who tend to high piety, a perfect model in the meditation of the virtues of St. Joseph.

His Holiness Gregory XVI. has granted this Confraternity the following indulgences, which are applicable to the dead :

Plenary Indulgence : the day of the reception,—at the hour of death,—the first January,—the nineteenth March.

Indulgence of sixty days for every charitable work done devoutly.

His Holiness has besides granted that all the

Masses which will be celebrated at one of the altars of the Church of St. Nizier for the deceased associates, will enjoy the favors attached to privileged altars.

To become a member of this Confraternity, we only need to have our name inscribed on its registers.

ASSOCIATION OF THE PERPETUAL DEVOTION TO ST.
JOSEPH.

The Association of the Perpetual Devotion to St. Joseph, which His Holiness Pius IX., by a rescript of the 20th January, 1856, deigned to authorize and enrich with indulgences, is intended to honor St. Joseph every day of the year. And because the year is composed of 365 days, of the same number of persons thus associated, each one chooses a day to render to the glorious saint a particular homage.

In a register destined for this purpose are written the names of those who wish to enter the Association, also the day they have selected to honor the august saint. They receive a ticket of aggregation, bearing, with their name, the day they have chosen.

When the number of the associates exceeds 365, several persons honor St. Joseph the same

day ; when, on the contrary, the Association counts a lesser number, they take several days each year.

Thirty-one persons would suffice to form an Association, and then each one of them would honor St. Joseph one day in each month.

The Association of the Perpetual Devotion is a new source of benedictions open to the faithful ; to help to extend it, is to assure ourselves of the protection of the great saint in whose honor it is founded.

Exercises of the Association.

The associates of the perpetual devotion, in order to take part in the trials of St. Joseph, can, on the day assigned them—

1. Go to confession and communion. In case of some impediment, they will supply them by an act of contrition and by spiritual communion.

2. Hear with devotion holy Mass in honor of the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

3. Meditate, at least a quarter of an hour, on the pains and sorrows of St. Joseph.

4. Keep one's self recollected, and think quietly of him, during the day.

5. Practise some act of mortification in his honor, or some work of mercy, either corporal or spiritual.

6. Perform the exercise of his Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys, as they are found Book III., page 241.

7. Finish the day by a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and by offering our heart to St. Joseph.

Indulgences granted by His Holiness to all the Members of the Association.

I. *Plenary Indulgences.*—1. On the day of the inscription. 2. The day chosen for the practise of the perpetual devotion. 3. At the hour of death. 4. The 19th of March, feast of St. Joseph; the third Sunday after Easter, feast of his patronage; the 23d of January, feast of the Marriage of St. Joseph and of the Blessed Virgin. 5. The feasts of the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, Nativity, and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

N. B.—To gain these indulgences, we must confess, communicate, and pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

II. *Indulgences of seven years and seven quarantines.*—Once a day, when we perform one of the practices indicated above.

All these indulgences are perpetual and applicable to the dead.

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Ticket of Aggregation.

M—— has chosen to acquit himself (or herself) of the exercises of the Perpetual Devotion to St. Joseph, the day or the days following :

January (15th)	July (15th)
February ———	August ———
March ———	September ———
April ———	October ———
May ———	November ———
June ———	December ———

Inscribed the ——— month of 186—, on the register of the Association.

———, Director.





CHAPTER IV.

MANNER OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE EXTENSION OF THE DEVOTION
TO ST. JOSEPH, AND OF CELEBRATING HIS MONTH.



WE have said that two of the principal means of honoring St. Joseph were to consecrate the month of March to him, and to help to extend the devotion in his honor. Let us give some details on these two practices so worthy of crowning a work undertaken for the glory of this great saint.

§ I. *Month of St. Joseph.*

It is the name given to the month of March, which a good number of Christians now consecrate to the holy patriarch. This devotion dates back but a few years ; already it extends its ramifications everywhere, and bears the most happy fruits.

The end is evident—having for object to honor St. Joseph. The means are easy. At the commencement of the month, we can adopt some

prayers, prescribe to ourselves some practices, erect a throne to St. Joseph. To these means a parish, a community, will add canticles, a consideration under the form of a spiritual reading or meditation,—and behold St. Joseph raised to the same honors as the Blessed Virgin, during the month consecrated to him.

The little work we publish may suffice to honor worthily St. Joseph, during the month of March. The following table will indicate a series of exercises adapted to this devotion :

March 1.

Consideration. First motive, the example of our Lord. Page 15.

Prayer. *Ad libitum*, and the same for every day. Pages 352–360.

We indicate a single prayer only ; any other may be selected.

March 2.

Consideration. Second motive, the example of the Blessed Virgin. Page 27.

March 3.

Consideration. Third motive, the example of the angels. Page 38.

March 4.

Consideration. Fourth motive, the example of Holy Church. Page 52.

March 5.

Consideration. Fifth motive, the fruits of the devotion to St. Joseph in the world. Page 60.

March 6.

Consideration. Sixth motive, power and goodness of St. Joseph. Page 68.

March 7.

Consideration. Seventh motive, our own interest. Page 72.

March 8.

Consideration. Eighth motive, the example of religious orders. Page 83.

March 9.

Consideration. Ninth motive, the examples of princes, kingdoms. Page 90.

March 10.

Consideration. Tenth motive, the example of pious writers. Page 101.

March 11.

Consideration. St. Joseph, spouse of Mary. Page 249.

March 12.

Consideration. St. Joseph, father of our Lord. Page 252.

March 13.

Consideration. Obedience of our Lord. Page 256.

March 14.

Consideration. Sanctity of St. Joseph. Page 259.

March 15.

Consideration. St. Joseph model of justice. Page 263.

March 16.

Consideration. St. Joseph surpasses all other saints. Page 267.

March 17.

Consideration. Favors granted to St. Joseph. Page 270.

March 18.

Consideration. The life of St. Joseph is a model. Page 274.

March 19—Feast of St. Joseph.

Consideration. The happiness of St. Joseph in this life. Page 278.

March 20.

Consideration. The life of St. Joseph was poor, laborious, and meritorious. Page 310.

March 21.

Consideration. Death of St. Joseph. Page 287
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March 22.

Consideration. Glory of St. Joseph. Page 293.

March 23.

Consideration. Protection of St. Joseph. Pages 72, 294.

March 24.

Consideration. The exaltation of St. Joseph is worthy of Jesus, glorious to the holy patriarch, and advantageous to men. Page 304.

March 25.

Consideration. For religious : Protection of St. Joseph. Page 145.

For other persons : Protection of St. Joseph for those who aim at an interior life. Page 156.

March 26.

Consideration. Protection of St. Joseph in spiritual things. Page 162.

March 27

Consideration. Protection of St. Joseph in saving life. Page 169.

March 28.

Consideration. Protection granted by St. Joseph to his servants during their journeys. Page 181.

March 29.

Consideration. Protection of St. Joseph at the hour of death. Page 191.

March 30.

Consideration. Protection of St. Joseph in corporal and spiritual necessities. Page 198.

March 31.

Consideration. Progress of the devotion to St. Joseph. Page 219.

THE PROPAGATING OF THE DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

Should we have, in laboring to propagate the devotion to St. Joseph, no other motive than the desire of pleasing our Lord and His holy Mother, it would be a sufficient one for Christian hearts. But, besides, in making known this great saint, we offer to our brethren an accomplished model for all conditions, we present to them a powerful patron, and we assure to ourselves a generous friend. These are some of the reasons which should induce us to employ ourselves in propagating this devotion.

What Means must be taken?

A devoted soul knows how to avail itself of all

the circumstances which present themselves ; often it gives rise to them, and draws from the energy of a generous heart enough constancy not to leave incomplete the execution of its design. To labor to extend devotion to St. Joseph, is to do the work of God ; therefore it is to expose ourselves to difficulties, to contradictions. Constancy will give us triumph, or at least will call down graces from Heaven upon our work ; it is the happiest thing we can do in his favor.

To make St. Joseph known.

This is the first means to take to make him honored. We shall succeed by circulating around us some good books. The one we publish seems to us to answer to the wants of the greater number. By its solidity it will satisfy educated persons ; and by the interest always attached to historical traits, it will please less cultivated minds : the low price will, besides, render it accessible to all.

To distribute Pictures and Medals of St. Joseph.

Pictures and medals find access with all kinds of persons ; they are as the book of the ignorant. An engraving, with a text sufficiently developed, is a powerful means of action : should it offer but

the attraction which belongs to it, it can still speak to simple hearts and bear fruit. We can say as much of medals. One must therefore not neglect this means ; let us employ it when more efficacious ones are wanting.

Some good words, some examples of the protection of St. Joseph accompanying the distribution of these objects, will double their power, and open the hearts of those to whom we speak.

To erect Altars and Statues.

Have you now the facility of establishing some public practices in honor of the glorious patriarch ? Do not neglect to do it. Encourage at least those which are in vigor around you.

Heads of families, superiors of communities, by erecting in their houses a modest sanctuary to St. Joseph, contenting themselves with placing his statue in an honorable place, have gained to the illustrious saint as many hearts as there are persons in their houses. It is a great good acquired at little cost.

Good priests, in giving to St. Joseph an altar, a statue in their church, a chapel in their parish, have succeeded in making piety flourish ; and often this first germ of devotion has produced, by its development, a confraternity of men. In

a few years, entire parishes have been regenerated.

Confraternities.

All the confraternities established under the patronage of St. Joseph produce happy results. In studying this illustrious patriarch, we discover in him an inexhaustible mine of virtues, an incomparable reunion of qualities of mind and heart. We can say that workmen are generally much attached to this great saint. In assembling them under his banner, the best results will be obtained.

By reading the preceding chapter we become acquainted with the different confraternities formed in honor of St. Joseph.

Month of St. Joseph.

If, by our position, we are enabled to establish, during the month of March, a series of exercises in honor of St. Joseph, let us seize with eagerness this occasion of having him honored. The study of so beautiful a model may offer considerations the most capable of forming to solid virtue a house or parish. A few moments taken from ordinary occupations will be amply repaid by the spiritual advantages one will draw from it.

Consecration of Wednesday to St. Joseph.

The servants of St. Joseph have the pious habit of consecrating Wednesday to him, and on that day they perform some practice in his honor. We have seen, with the greatest edification, what takes place in the parish of Notre Dame at Rennes. The venerable priest of this parish has established in honor of St. Joseph a Mass, which he says for all those who assist at it. A concourse of the faithful, which is always increasing, go there from all the parishes of the city.

At Vitri a society of ladies has founded, on this same day, a Mass for the same intention ; one of the most worthy clergymen of the city has kindly accepted to preside at their reunions, improved by choirs of canticles. Before separating, these fervent Christians recite, in union with the pilgrims of St. Joseph of the Oak, a prayer for the extension of the devotion to the holy patriarch. The curate of Villedieu has adopted the same exercises which are established at Angers, in the chapel of St. Joseph of Mercy, and in many churches of Poitou. A certain number of communities and schools have asked to be united to this association, destined to bear the most abundant fruits. We have heard that many colleges

of France and Belgium honor St. Joseph in a particular manner on Wednesday.

Persons who do not dwell in the places where this association is established, might on Wednesday attend their parish Mass for the same intention ; and if they succeed in inspiring a certain number of persons with the same spirit with which they are animated, they will endeavor to found a Mass, first of all, for the first Wednesday of each month. They will, in the course of time, multiply these pious foundations according as they will be assisted by circumstances.

The following prayer is recited in each reunion at the end of the Mass. Their Lordships the Bishops of Angers, Tours, Beauvais, Rennes, Laval, Poitiers, Nantes, have been pleased to grant an indulgence of forty days to its recitation.

O Joseph ! thou who, by thy fidelity to the inspirations of Heaven, hast merited, amidst the hardest labors, the contempt of the world and the trials of life, that the Holy Ghost should name thee the Just, that God the Father should confide to thee, with Mary the Queen of Virgins, Jesus, His Divine Son, we conjure thee, now that thou art so powerful with God, remember us who still languish in this vale of tears, exposed to the

snare of the most cruel enemies. Obtain for us contempt for the false goods of the world, the victory over our passions, an unbounded zeal in the service of God, and a tender confidence in Jesus thy Son and Mary thy spouse. O Joseph! be our guide, our patron, our protector, at the hour of death, we beseech thee by the love thou hadst for Jesus and Mary. We conjure thee to ask the same graces for those who with us desire to spread the devotion to thee. Listen to their prayers, second their efforts, and obtain that, in reward for their zeal, they may be assembled one day around thy throne, at the feet of Jesus and Mary. Amen.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have pity on us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Then one Pater and one Ave are recited for the different intentions of the associates present.

At the end of this Mass, the associates might assemble and concert together on the means to take to propagate the devotion to St. Joseph. They will be helped, perhaps, with success by those we have indicated above.

There is nothing more powerful than these pious meetings to appease Heaven, and to act

upon men : let us encourage them by all sorts of means. Often persons who enter them would have been carried away by the world : fortified by example and good friendship, they become true apostles.

