

St Joseph- Discussion Sheet

[Slide 1] Who is St Joseph? [these are, of course, only my opinions]

Prior to beginning I need to identify the three major players, Jesus Mary and Joseph. I will refrain from discussion the hypostatic union (Jesus' **two natures in one person and Mary's similar situation with the angels and God the Father. We had a discussion on this several years ago and** maybe someone can refresh our memory as to the highlights? Volunteers? This does play a role in this story.

I hope to encourage everyone here to have a new perspective on St Joseph, not only as to who he is literally, but in prayer to him. Overall, I think he gets a bad rap!

Birth and Lineage

We begin with the lineage of St Joseph. Around Christmas time I begin to wait for "THAT" day or days when the genealogy is read - good luck to that reader! But it always struck me odd that after reading a hundred or so names with the title of "father" we end with "stepfather" and the reading ends almost immediately. You should note that all the "bad guys" names are excluded from the list and not mentioned. They are in the blood line but their names are not read. So here we have Joseph recounted as "stepfather". Now at the time of the bible being written the use of "stepfather" indicates to me that the author, St Matthew in this case, accepts the "Virgin Birth". [Some say this is a mistranslation – to me unlikely] This seems like a giant leap for those living around 100 A.D. I will credit that to the "Descent of the Holy Spirit" on Pentecost and believers taking Gods promise literally when he promised "the Virgin shall bear a Son". But back to Joseph and my annual interest in the genealogy. You see there is this pesky "curse of Jeconiah", whereby God promises that no descendant of Jeconiah (he is in the family of David) will ever inherit the throne. But as "fate" would have it Mary is related to David through another different line, that of Nathan. So, Jesus can inherit (blood line) the throne through Mary. In ancient cultures, however, you could only be "crowned" by a previous king. In this case, that is Joseph, as he is a male heir to David and a king in those days could pass the crown to whomever he wished (Jesus), obviously leading to many wars. It is interesting to note that there is another genealogy in Luke which works backwards from Jesus toward Abraham. Luke, however, follows Mary's relatives until he gets to David then follows similarly the genealogy of Matthew. As a footnote here about the Virgin Birth, almost 2000 years later, St Bernadette appears on the scene and suddenly blurts out "Immaculate Conception". (We just covered that in the last discussion on apparitions) I always was curious about why there was no significant push back. Everyone was shocked but no denunciation to speak off. This would seem to be a very big claim. Typically you would need at least a few "Councils" to argue it out. But the fact that the virgin birth was already accepted made the "Immaculate Conception" quite understandable. The miracle of the Immaculate Conception followed by another miracle of a Virgin Birth seemed to fit well.

Other popular claims about St Joseph which I hope to dismiss in this discussion.

Little is known of St Joseph, he says nothing in the bible and his words are not recorded.

The bible is the story of God, not the chosen people and not about the apostles and not even about Mary. It is about God working in those lives. It is God's story. If a lot is said about a person (other than Mary) it usually means they messed up and God had to intervene again in their life.

Can you think of examples? Moses, King David, Peter, Thomas

Also, St Joseph's holiness is often in question. -- Some theologians claim he was married before, had other children, had original sin removed so he could be with Mary etc. Let's be clear that these are suppositions to make us feel good about ourselves. I believe he was just plain HOLY, REALLY HOLY. No sins after birth would not be an outrageous belief. Why Not? Yes, he had original sin. But after that. God knows all people and all sins. So there has to be one person who has sinned the least. Why not? [exclude babies and those incapable mentally of sin]. I believe it is St Joseph. We know of his holiness even as he was selected as husband of Mary from the lilies on his staff. I doubt if there were any sins as he lived with Jesus and Mary. He was also the only person [if any] ever allowed to touch Mary. Any alternative views n this?

[Slide 2] His Earthly Life [handout square]

The term a "simple carpenter", I think, is misleading. In biblical days, the Hebrew translation for his occupation of carpenter was "architect" but it is a rather general word (from the same root that gives us "technical", "technology"). He may have worked with wood, masonry or steel because in those days a man of great intellect would have mastery in all those materials.

In the movie the Ten Commandments Charlton Heston, as Moses refers to the head of work at the city of Giza as "the master builder" then disparagingly as the "master butcher". That man, in charge of building the city, was a carpenter. Today, even high rise buildings towering above our cities, have two men in charge of construction. A project manager who manages the financial books and a construction superintendent. That superintendent is almost always a carpenter. He would have deep knowledge of materials and construction "methods" along with acute mathematical abilities. This was St Joseph for sure.

Many statues and icons depict St Joseph with a "square". This would also indicate that Joseph had some advanced mathematical capabilities including the "Pythagorean principle" [1900 B.C.] method of computing distances and angles. One biblical scholar has suggested that the house where the roof was opened to lower the paralytic for Jesus to cure was actually Jesus' home. It would have had a roof built on the same concept as the roof framing used today and in the slide. (slide 4)

[Slide 5,6,7] His movements

So if we were to speculate on Joseph's talents, we could also evaluate his constant relocation. Before Jesus' birth he travels, with Mary and Jesus from Nazareth to Bethlehem, 80 miles. This is a four day trip, walking 8 hours per day at full speed. He must have had great stamina. He could not just haul 30 -40 tools with him on a donkey.

Then there was the flight into Egypt - three years. In all, some scholars estimate they traveled over 1800 miles – [about 50 miles every month on foot]. The idea that he carried his tools, I guess on a team of donkeys or wagons, seems unlikely. He did carry his "abilities" which he sold and bartered along the way. He may have offered his talents as construction supervisor, or picked up assignments. This indicates a strong confidence in God acting in his life. He never broke ranks "requiring some mention and correction of him in the Gospel".

[Slide 8,9]

Keeping in mind the date all of this takes place, we know that the world was basically agrarian, meaning cultivating the land is the primary source of wealth. St Justyn Martyr (150 A.D.) mentions that plows made by Joseph and Jesus were still being used in his day [uncorroborated]. He also mentions "yokes".

Plows, yokes and, by the way "ship's rudders", are tremendously complex objects to construct "CORRECTLY". Understanding the grain and strength of wood is indispensable. Anyone can build a yoke. Just tie a board across an ox's neck and let him go. NO WAY. How are they made? Carpenters would use an adz.

His spiritual Life

St Joseph is a man of great, great courage a virtual superman. A man of ACTION ! He has dream after dream and keeps going' starting with wrestling with the "astonishing motherhood of Mary. Joseph was a man of God's word. So he sets aside his own plan to put God's word first. So that when Joseph awoke from sleep he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife. In all of this he never falters or stumbles [again, thereby requiring so mention of the error in the gospel]

The four dreams are as follows:

- First dream: In Matthew 1:20–21, Joseph is told not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, because she has conceived by the Holy Spirit. (See also the Annunciation in Luke 1:26–38, when an angel visits Mary and she agrees to conceive "through the power of the Most High".)
- Second dream: In Matthew 2:13, Joseph is warned to leave Bethlehem and flee to Egypt.
- Third dream: In Matthew 2:19–20, while in Egypt, Joseph is told that it is safe to go back to Israel.
- Fourth dream: In Matthew 2:22, because he had been warned in a dream, Joseph awakens to depart for the region of Galilee instead of going to Judea.

I have dreams but they are more horrific and I never follow any ideas I have in the middle of the night!

Joseph accepts them all, over and over again. This guy is good.

To these we can add the travels through Egypt and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple. Here I can tell a fictional story similar to this and we can speculate about the results. But Joseph aces this situation. How do we know that? Because nothing is written about a failure. Remember it is God's story not Joseph's story. If God had to intervene because of Joseph's failure then it probably would have been related to us. This is an important point as it emphasizes again that "little is more".

When the elders remark about Jesus that "Isn't he the carpenter's son?" you can take that several ways. First as an insult to carpenters. But alternately, if you remember that this culture was a caste system, so a religious teacher would only be found in the family of other religious teachers.

Earlier was mentioned the statue of St Joseph "sleeping". In the mystic's writings, this is recounted in detail. First St Joseph was already familiar with the cave of Jesus birth. He often went there to pray. The "sleeping" was suggested to him by Mary because of the preparations he had been working on in the cave as she prepared for childbirth. "She requested Joseph to rest and sleep as the night was already far advanced. Joseph yielded to the request of his Spouse and urged Her to do the same. He arranged and prepared a place for Her with clothing they had brought. Leaving most holy Mary in the portion of the cave thus furnished, saint Joseph retired to a corner of the entrance, where he began to pray. He was immediately visited by the divine Spirit and felt a most sweet and extraordinary influence, by which he was overwhelmed with peace and joy. During this sleep, Joseph was shown all that passed during that night in this blessed cave; for he did not return to consciousness until his heavenly Spouse called him. Such was the sleep which saint Joseph enjoyed in that night, more exalted and blessed than that of Adam in paradise". And THAT is the rest of the story!

His Death

His death before the crucifixion was obviously part of God's plan. If he were alive he could not have stood idly by, watching Mary and his Son suffer. She had no original sin and was in constant communion with God and His plan. Joseph would not have had "that" to rely on during a crucifixion.

St Joseph suffered seven years before entering a final ecstasy where upon he did in fact die a mortal death.(original sin) Herein lies a secret: In the old, forgotten visions of Bl Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) – a controversial German mystic, stigmatist, and one of the greatest visionaries in the history of the Church. Her visions on the most intimate parts of the lives of Jesus, Mary and the Saints. "Only a few men followed the coffin with Jesus and Mary; but I saw it accompanied by angels and environed with light. Joseph's remains were afterward removed by the Christians to Bethlehem, and interred. I think I can still see him lying there incorrupt."

If this is indeed true, in a world covered with dark ashes of doubt, faithlessness and immorality, this tremendous discovery might just be our phoenix. But whence do the clues to unearthing this hidden gem come?

Narrative of his death (per Mary Agreda)

Already eight years old, Saint Joseph had been exercised by his infirmities and sufferings,One day before he died, being wholly inflamed with divine love on account of these blessings, he was wrapped in an ecstasy which lasted twenty-four hours. The Redeemer of the world gave him his benediction, saying: "My father, rest in peace and in the grace of my eternal Father and mine; and to the Prophets and Saints, who await thee **in limbo**, bring the joyful news of the approach of their redemption." At these words of Jesus, and reclining in his arms, the most fortunate Saint Joseph expired and the Lord himself closed his eyes. [Again, in a previous discussion we covered why some mystics and saints are discounted by the official church. As their thoughts become written sometimes there are inconsistencies. This is not a big issue. Here the eighty years old is suspect to me because if Jesus' ministry started when he was 30 then Joseph wandered Egypt at 50.]

Fr Paul of Mill (1824-1896) once said, "in an ecstasy, a saint has seen the body of St. Joseph preserved intact in a tomb, the site of which is yet unknown. The more the glorious spouse of the most Blessed Virgin is honored, the sooner will the finding of his body take place, which will be a day of great joy for the Church."

A 16th-century prophecy by Isidore of Isolani a pious **Dominican**, prophesied that "the sound of victory" will be heard in the Church Militant "when the faithful recognize the sanctity of St. Joseph." He continues: "The Lord will let His light shine, He will lift the veil, and great men will search out the interior gifts of God that are hidden in St. Joseph; they will find in him priceless treasure, the like of which they have never found in other saints of the Old Testament. [Could this mean St Joseph is the greatest of all the Old Testament Saints?] We are inclined to believe that toward the end of time God will overwhelm St. Joseph with glorious honors. If in the past ages, during the storms of persecution, these honors could not be shown to St. Joseph, we must conclude that they have been reserved for later times. At some future time the feast of St. Joseph will be celebrated as one of the greatest feasts. The Vicar of Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit, will order this feast to be celebrated in the Universal Church." [The pope has done this]

If Anne's visions have led to such mind-blowing breakthroughs, what makes us think the incorrupt body of St. Joseph – one of the greatest saints of all time – isn't waiting to be found?

Sainthood

Theologians attribute to God the cult of *Latria*—that of adoration. Then to Mary that of *Hyperdulia*—the highest veneration. To the saints is attributed *Dulia*—the cult of veneration. Finally, good Saint Joseph has the special class of homage and veneration titled that of *Protodulia*—this means, the first in the cult of veneration! In a certain sense, Saint Joseph is in a class by himself, due to his holiness, his greatness, and his sublime mission!

St Joseph appeared in the apparition at Knock Ireland [Last discussion]. Obviously Mary is there. Could St Joseph represent he who will stand at my right and St John he who will stand at my left. They would be the greatest and last of the old testament and the first and greatest of the New testament. Could these two represent the two greatest companions in Mary's life? Why is St Joseph an Old Testament Figure. Did the apostles ever get baptism? Joseph and John are also two key figures in the life of Mary.

Relics of St Joseph

- Cloak and Veil - The holy cloak of St. Joseph, a unique relic of the foster father of Jesus, has traveled from church to church in Rome this year after spending 16 centuries in an ancient Roman basilica. The cloak, which tradition says was brought from the Holy Land to Rome by St. Jerome in the 4th century, is accompanied by a still-colorful veil held to have belonged to the Virgin Mary. Both relics were hidden in Rome's Basilica of St Anastasia for more than 1,600 years, until 2020. It is believed that St. Jerome may have celebrated Mass in the basilica, located close to the Circus Maximus. There is also an old story that claims to reveal the origin of the sacred cloak as a relic. According to the tale, St. Joseph went to Mount Hebron, where he intended to buy lumber for his carpentry work, but he only had about half of the money he needed. His wife, the Virgin Mary, had suggested that Joseph give the mantle she had gifted him on their wedding day of the lumber seller as a pledge to pay the rest of the money he owed. The seller, named Ishmael, was a stingy fellow, and he protested at first, but eventually decided to accept the cloak. It turned out that Ishmael had been suffering for some time from ulcers in his eyes, and had not been able to find a cure. But the day after St. Joseph gave him the mantle, he woke up healed. Ishmael's wife, who was a hard woman with a difficult temperament, also woke that morning transformed into a mild person. The lumber seller's best cow was also cured of illness when the cloak was held over him, and after receiving these gifts,

Ishmael refused to part with it. He forgave the debt and provided Joseph and Mary with all the free wood they needed from that point onward.

- Ring - A quartz ring (the Santo Anello) is said to have served as the wedding ring given by Good St Joseph to the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to an 11th century account, a Jewish dealer in precious stones in Rome gave it to a jeweler from Chiusi called Ainerio in the late 10th century. He doubted its authenticity until his newly deceased young son was temporarily restored to life in order to vouch for it. It was then transferred to the Basilica di Santa Mustiola, outside the walls of Chiusi. In 1251, it was moved for greater security to the Duomo of Chiusi, which was administered by the canons of Santa Mustiola. It was moved again, this time to San Francesco, Chiusi in 1420.
- Cinture of St Joseph- In 1254, one of the great chroniclers of medieval France, Jean de Joinville (France), brought in from Jerusalem the belt of St. Joseph, for which a chapel was built in the Church of Notre-Dame de Joinville-sur-Marne. A part of the relic was donated in 1649 to the church of the Order of the Feuillants in Paris and elsewhere, in 1662, to Bishop F. Vialart, bishop of Chalons-sur-Marne, for its cathedral. The Holy Cinture is roughly one and a half meters long, greyish in color. The ends attach with an ivory clasp – yellowed by time. After St Joseph's entry to the next life, it remained with the Virgin Mary as a memorial of her husband. Today you can still see that noble and most holy belt in a reliquary in the church of Notre-Dame de Joinville. In the 13th century the belt was embroidered with Fleur de Lis emblems and verses from the Litany of St Joseph.

Praying to St Joseph

“There are many saints to whom God has given the power to assist us in the necessities of life, but the power given to St. Joseph is unlimited! It extends to all our needs and all those who invoke him with confidence are sure to be heard.” **St. Thomas Aquinas**

“In virtue of these special privileges the intercession of St. Joseph is most powerful:
First, for attaining the virtue of purity and overcoming the sensual inclinations of the flesh;
Second, for procuring powerful help to escape sin and return to the friendship of God;
Third, for increasing the love and devotion to most holy Mary;
Fourth, for securing the grace of a happy death and protection against the demons in that hour;
Fifth, for filling the demons with terror at the main mention of his name by his clients;
Sixth, for gaining health of body and assistance in all kinds of difficulties;
Seventh, for securing the issue of children in families.” Venerable Mary Agreda

St. Teresa confirmed by her own experience: she says: “It would seem that to other saints our Lord has granted power to succour in some particular necessity; but experience proves that St. Joseph succors in all.”

“On the last day, when all men shall be judged, the damned will bitterly bewail their sins, which prevented them from appreciating this powerful means of salvation and availing themselves, as they easily could have, of this intercessor to gain the friendship of the Just Judge. The whole human race has much undervalued the privileges and prerogatives conceded to my blessed spouse and they do not realize what his intercession with God is able to do. I assure you, my dear child, that he is a greatly favored personage in the divine presence and has immense power to stay the arms of the divine vengeance.” *The Blessed Mother to Ven Mary Agreda*

From the vaults:

Saint Joseph had urged St. Faustina to have a constant devotion to him. He himself told her to recite three prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be) and the Memorare once a day. He looked at her with great kindness and gave her to know how much he is supporting this work (of mercy). He has promised her this special help and protection. She recited the requested prayers every day and felt his special protection. The memorare is a prayer that is said by the whole Congregation (St. Faustina's religious community).

MEMORARE TO ST. JOSEPH

Remember, O most pure spouse of Mary, and my dearly beloved guardian, St. Joseph, that never was it known that anyone who invoked your care and requested your help was left without consolation.

Inspired with this confidence, I come to you, and with all the ardor of my spirit I commend myself to you. Do not reject my prayer, O Foster Father of the Savior, but graciously receive and answer it. Amen.

[Slide 10,11,12] Saint Joseph Today

The stairway

St Joseph is the Patron of our Dominican Province

Conclusion