

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



"The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins...when Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home." (Matthew 1:18-25).

In an interview several years ago, Pope Francis spoke of his devotion to the "sleeping St. Joseph." The Holy Father explained that the image of St. Joseph reminded him that the Lord communicated to the saint while he slept. It was in the depth of restful sleep, when the heart is quiet and the mind silent, that Saint Joseph heard the voice of the Lord. Pope Francis went on to explain that it is at such moments in our lives, when we are restful, quiet and silent that we too hear the precious voice of the Lord speak to us. In his devotion to St. Joseph, Pope Francis quietly slips intentions under the sleeping Saint Joseph, asking the saint to remember him and his prayers while the saint sleeps. What a wonderful idea to remember that in life's moment when we are restful, quiet and silent, the Lord communicates to us.

The month of March is traditionally dedicated to prayerfully remembering the

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Vocation Newsletter



life example of Saint Joseph. Little is known about St. Joseph. The sacred scriptures say little about him and the saint speaks no recorded words. But, the sacred texts do indicate the St. Joseph was a man of courageous faith. While silent within the narrative of salvation unfolding around him, St. Joseph courageously follows the Lord's command to care for Mary and her child. St. Joseph never shows frustration, only trust. He did so because in the silence of his sleep and prayer, St. Joseph heard the Lord speak words of love, blessings and protection. The saint trusted that the Lord would give him the strength to fulfill his part of the story. St. Joseph stands before Christ's faithful as the example of obedient trust to the movement of the Lord in life's journey. Obedient trust is how St. Joseph understood his place in God's story. It is how he was able to give himself to the Lord's work. It was what the Lord invited him to in the quiet of prayer and in the silence of sleep.

In writing on St. Joseph, Pope Francis states "Joseph found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift. In him, we never



see frustration but only trust. His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust” (*Patris corde*). It must have been difficult for Joseph to understand all that was happening in his life. From his fiancée being pregnant with a child other than his, to hurriedly leaving his home for Egypt to protect the baby Jesus from Herod, Joseph’s life was most probably far from what he wanted or expected. Yet, as a deep man of faith, Joseph trusted God’s promise to bless and protect him and his family as a member of God’s chosen people.

and toward God. But, we know that in the midst of scandal, pain and confusion, the Lord is using His Church to bring hope to a suffering, troubled world. Answering the Lord’s call to serve Him as a priest or brother is never easy in light of the suspicions and questions. Doing so brings peace as we participate in the joy of seeing lives changed by the ministry done in the Lord’s name. St. Joseph knew this same joy as he put aside the expectations for his life and followed what God planned for him. While there was suffering and concern, St. Joseph’s trust in the Lord brought hope, courage and joy to the saint’s life.

Prayer to St. Joseph

Dear St. Joseph,
the Lord called you to share the adventurous journey of His Son becoming incarnate in human history.
God asked you to marry the Holy Virgin, pregnant with His child, and to become this child’s father.
This adventure included fleeing from an angry King, hazardous travel to a foreign land, and the loss of the child Jesus in the Temple.
The adventure also included the love shared between husband and wife; father and child.
Your loving concern for Jesus and Mary, your faith in God and your dedication to your craft as a carpenter influenced Jesus as He prepared for public ministry.
Like you St. Joseph, I find myself in the midst of life’s adventure with its blessings and perils.
Pray that I may trust the Lord’s direction for my life, his love and mercy as I try to live as Jesus taught, and his healing upon the ills of my mind, body and soul.
St. Joseph, pray for me. Amen.

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follow



Like St. Joseph, we often find life to be full of many unexpected moments that are not what we planned. These can cause us dismay, fear and unsettle us. Even hearing the Lord’s call to a vocation as a priest or brother can unsettle us when we are contemplating another path for our lives. It is difficult to deny or bypass the gnawing at our hearts that this call creates. In such moments we need to trust the blessing and protection of the Lord. Like St. Joseph, we need to quiet ourselves, rest in the Lord’s loving embrace and hear the Lord speak words of reassurance, blessing and protection. Following the Lord today is never easy. There is so much suspicion and questions and mistrust in the Church

Courageously following the Lord’s call for our lives will bring the same hope, courage and joy to us as well. As you continue to discern the Lord’s call, be honest with your questions, doubts and fears. Place these before the Lord when you are quiet and let Jesus help you to know that answer you need to give to His request of following after Him. Pray to the sleeping St. Joseph to find the hope and trust in the Lord that you need in searching for your vocation. We Servite Friars are praying for you.

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