

SAINT JOSEPH
Foster father of the Son of God

A few years ago, I wrote about the Quiet man, Saint Joseph. He was indeed quiet. There is not a single word recorded in the gospels spoken by him even though he played such an important part in Jesus' life. Silence is often seen to be a sign of weakness but it can also be a sign of immense power. Elijah, as he sheltered in a cave, did not become aware of the Almighty God in an earthquake nor in thunder and lightning but in a soft and gentle breeze. Saint Joseph was a quiet and gentle man. He was obviously a very holy man for he lived with, loved and watched over the Son of God for nearly thirty years. With Mary he brought Jesus up. He taught him his trade and worked with him.

Recently, I have been thinking about him and praying to him a lot for after Mary he is the greatest of all the saints; a faithful and loving husband and a wonderful head of the Holy Family and an obedient servant of God. He was honourable and discrete. When he found out that Mary was with child, he must have been shocked but he did not scandalise her but decided to separate quietly. When the angel asked him in a dream to marry Mary and take the child as his own, he did not question but quietly obeyed the will of God. When they arrived at Bethlehem and were refused accommodation, he did not rant and rave, but simply managed to find some shelter, humble though it was, and made it as comfortable as possible for Mary and her newborn baby. When shepherds and foreign men came to find the child, Joseph did not bar them nor chase them away. He simply stood with his staff watching, guarding and ready to defend his charges. When he was directed to take his family to Egypt, he did not complain that he would have to leave his home in Nazareth and all he owned and face a long and hazardous journey to another country, a different language, and a different culture where he would find it hard to set up a new home and to find work to support his family. When Jesus was about twelve and went missing for three days, Mary and Joseph were desperately worried but it was not Joseph who chastised him. Saint Joseph did all these things obediently not because he was weak but because he was so strong and had great faith and such an awareness of God.

At Christmas we lost our elder sister which means that all my elder siblings have now gone before us and I am now the most senior of those still alive. My younger brother playfully refers to me as the Dom. I am not sure I can live up to that title but I will ask Saint Joseph to help me. I will try hard to be like him, kind and gentle, loving and caring, considerate and discrete and as good an example to those around me as I can be.

Prayer to Saint Joseph recommended by Pope Francis which he has recited every day for more than forty years: -

Glorious Saint Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that I commend to you, that they may have a happy outcome. My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.