

21 March: St Joseph—Graces Attached to the Devotion to him

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow upon the special graces attached to the devotion to St Joseph; and taking our stand upon the pious belief of the Church, that God, in order to recompense the saints who have excelled in a certain grace or a virtue, grants them in heaven a special power to obtain for their clients the same grace or the same virtue, we shall see that to the devotion to St Joseph are attached, on this account, four principal graces: first, a grace of love towards Jesus and Mary; second, a grace of purity and innocence; third, a grace of interior life; fourth, the grace of a holy death. We will then make the resolution: first, often to ask, through St Joseph, for the holy graces in which he himself so greatly excelled; second, to exercise ourselves, by means of the example of St Joseph, in the practice of the love of Jesus and Mary, of purity, and of the interior life. Our spiritual nosegay shall once more be, "*Go to Joseph.*"

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore the Spirit of God communicating to St Joseph special graces, in order to render him apt for his sublime vocation. Let us congratulate this great saint on the precious gifts which he received from God and on his fidelity in corresponding with them. Let us honour him as the friend of God and privileged above all men who have ever been or ever will be.

THE LOVE OF JESUS AND MARY, THE FIRST GRACE ATTACHED TO THE DEVOTION TO ST JOSEPH

If, according to the pious belief of the Church, the saints in heaven have a special power of obtaining for those who invoke them the graces in which they have most excelled, what power does not St Joseph possess of obtaining the love of Jesus and Mary? For how greatly he loved both the one and the other! Alas, without St Joseph, what would have become of the Child Jesus? Not having a father in this world, and forsaken by His true Father who was in heaven, He was about to become an orphan amongst men. Without Joseph, what would have become of Mary? A butt to calumny, without a consoler in her afflictions, without a guide in her travels, without a helper to share with her in the charge of providing for the subsistence of the Child, she was about to experience all the anguish of unhappiness. But, Joseph! thy love took care of Jesus and Mary; thou wert their guardian, their tutelary angel. When Mary carried in her womb the Incarnate God, thou didst protect the living tabernacle filled with the glory of the Most High; when she had troubles, thou didst console her; when she had needs, thou didst solace them; and when the Word made flesh appeared upon earth, thou didst become by affection that which thou wert not by nature; and thou didst lavish on Him the tenderness and the care of the best of fathers. On the day of the Circumcision thou didst give Him the name of Jesus; on the day of the Presentation thou didst take Him to the temple and didst place Him on the altar; in the days of His infancy thou didst receive His sighs, dry His tears, lovingly caress Him; thou didst shelter Him from the rage of Herod, thou didst feed Him at the cost of thy labours, and thou didst

provide for all His wants. O most blessed Joseph, how thou didst love Jesus and Mary! How powerful must thou be to obtain for us this double love! Beg earnestly that we may have it, we conjure thee with all the fervour of our soul.

THE GIFT OF PURITY AND OF INNOCENCE, THE SECOND GRACE ATTACHED TO THE DEVOTION TO ST JOSEPH

What in fact can we conceive purer than St Joseph? Would Mary have ever consented to live with a man, to associate her life with his, to exchange with him her words and her feelings, to allow him to carry in his arms the thrice-holy God, if that man had not been an angel of purity? Oh, how chaste and modest he must have been in his thoughts and affections, in his looks and in his senses, to be able to be admitted to live in the company of her who was purer than all the angels and all the saints put together, to be constituted the guardian of her purity and to partake with her in the care to be taken of the Infant-God. These are lofty mysteries which surpass the intelligence of even the seraphim; whence we must conclude that St Joseph is the true patron of purity, and that whoever desires to lead in a body of flesh a life which has nothing in common with the flesh, ought to place himself under his protection. Are we faithful in recommending to St Joseph our purity and our innocence, in invoking him in temptations, in proposing him to ourselves as our model in guarding this holy virtue, in keeping our senses, our mind, and our imagination in restraint?

THE INTERIOR LIFE, THE THIRD GRACE ATTACHED TO THE DEVOTION TO ST JOSEPH

What saint, in fact, has excelled St Joseph in the interior life? His life had nothing outwardly brilliant in it; all its beauty, all its glory was within (Ps. XLIV:14). Dead to the world and its vanities, to its novelties and its pleasures, he occupies himself solely in adoring, contemplating, and enjoying God in the secret of his heart. To love Jesus and Mary, to converse with Jesus and Mary, that was his whole happiness, the whole of his glory, and, apart from that, the whole world is nothing to him. Oh, how powerful St Joseph must be to obtain for his clients the grace of the interior life! Do we often ask it of him? Do we keep ourselves on our guard against dissipation of thought, and do we aspire after becoming really interior?

THE GIFT OF A HOLY DEATH, THE FOURTH GRACE ATTACHED TO THE DEVOTION TO ST JOSEPH

St Joseph died in the arms of Jesus and Mary; how ravishing must it have been thus to die! and how such a holy end must have enabled St Joseph to obtain great power in gaining for his clients the grace of a holy death! How consoling a thought, and how well suited to inspire us with a tender devotion towards St Joseph, for the grace of a good death is the grace of graces; it is the grace which decides whether we shall enjoy eternal happiness or be condemned to eternal woe, heaven or hell; it is, consequently, the grace which we should have it most at heart to obtain, that we ought to ask for every day, with more and more earnestness; and, if it were for this reason alone, it would be enough to attach our hearts to the devotion to St Joseph, as patron of a good death.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.