

Encouragement Encouragement

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The Holy Spirit and The Holy Family

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We start May off with the wonderful feast of 'St Joseph the Worker', in the year dedicated to him. This year has been especially dedicated to St Joseph as Pope Francis' letter *Patris Corde*, 'With a Father's Heart' indicates. This feast is a relatively new one inaugurated by Pope Pius XII in 1955 in response to the Communist inspired 'Worker's day.' St Joseph had two major feasts in his honour as well as those associated with the Holy Family. This feast seems particularly fitting as 'May' is also the Month of Mary and we celebrate not only who she was, but also the apparition on Fatima on the thirteenth of the month. But, by even more interesting 'God incidence' the thirteenth is also, this year, the feast of the Ascension (England and Wales). Furthermore, it is followed by Pentecost nine days later. These feasts co-relate in an incredibly special way, this year in particular, with the feast of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Family of Nazareth, in the marriage of Mary and Joseph, always had the 'Third' in their relationship, and that is with the Holy Spirit. Many great Saints who extolled the virtues of Marriage pointed out that this 'Third Member' is very important to the understanding of marriage as a bond with the Blessed Trinity. 'There is nothing unreal about the marriage of Mary and Joseph. Never has there been a more perfect union, a love so deep, so glorious. For they love each other in God. It is this that made the strength and beauty of their marriage' (Michel Glasnier O.P.) Now if this is true, if we then add the presence of Jesus, that bond between them is magnified, for they had God among them in a very real and natural way. The day-to-day activities which in many ways were ordinary and mundane, work, making meals, travelling and praying, tell us that their lives were that of any ordinary Jewish families at the time. Yet how blessed were they in the way that they carried this out. Is it not true that it is in the

'ordinary' that we become holy, as our lives become fused and infused with that of the ways of the presence of God? Mary and Joseph's task was to nurture and teach Jesus the ordinary life. St Joseph had the task of teaching him the value of work and there must have been many a time spent in the carpenter's shop working together.

This union with the Holy Spirit is a special gift to us both at Baptism and with the Sacrament of Confirmation, but indeed it is given through all the Sacraments. The gift that ultimately produces the



**All of them were
filled with
the Holy Spirit!**
Acts 2.4

fruits such as kindness, goodness, prudence, joy etc. to name but a few, depends on us recognising the power of the Holy Spirit as well as using the gifts given to us, and the seven-fold gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge and fear or awe of the Lord. Openness to the Holy Spirit is a key element in both using the gift, but also allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and instruct.

How clearly, we see this in the life of St Joseph. His obedience is exemplary in the way that, perhaps not understanding, he simply did as he was told. He took Mary to be his wife, in spite of the difficulties. He went to Egypt, in spite of the additional worries. He returned to Nazareth by the prompting of the same Spirit, given through the Angel in those dreams. His life was one of repeated obedience.

Yet in this month can we omit the absolutely crucial rôle of Mary and her abundant grace in her response to being asked to be the mother of the Messiah. The words that we all remember are that of the Angel Gabriel explaining that all that was to happen to her would be by the action of the Holy Spirit. 'The Holy Spirit will overshadow you and you will conceive a child and you will name Him Jesus'. Has there even been more significant words of such majesty and

"The soul is in God and God is in the soul. God is closer to us than water is to a fish."

St. Catherine of Siena

awe spoken to anyone. Even the thought of them should make us quake. Yet what did Mary do but simply said 'yes', let it be done to me according to your word. This bond with the Holy Spirit sealed not only her relationship with the Holy Trinity, and especially her Son, but also with the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. She is known as the spouse of the Holy Spirit and rightly, as her 'yes' allowed the Holy Spirit to make 'His' home in her in a wonderful way. Her 'Magnificat' said to her cousin Elizabeth exemplifies her heart.

While we do not hear too much about them after the return from Egypt, save when they go to look for Jesus whom they 'lost in Jerusalem' and then in a reference to 'looking' for Him again... during Jesus' Ministry, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to You."(Matthew 12:47). The next time is at the foot of the Cross with a mother's pain and distress. Faithful to the last, in her love for Jesus she probably too, went to the tomb, and it is possible that she saw Jesus Risen. We are not told this, but it would seem more than likely. But we do know that she was in the room with the Apostles and Disciples when her unity with the Holy Spirit was reaffirmed with the descent of that same Spirit upon all of them..It would have been strange had she not been there. As she gave her assent, so too, was she now at the 'birth of the Church's Mission'. So too it is likely that she was at the Ascension, as were so many disciples.



We know from the 'Little Saints of Fatima' that in one of the Apparitions, St Joseph appeared with Mary, with the Child Jesus in his arms. Could they ever be really separated as it was the Holy Spirit who bound them in love. On the thirteenth of May, there is therefore much to ponder as all these things come

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together on the feast of the Ascension and then at Pentecost. Perhaps with these wonderful reminders of the action of the Holy Spirit, we can pray about the rôle that The Spirit plays in our lives and whether we use these gifts for the up-building of the Church in our lives and our mission as Christians.

Halina Holman

Pope Francis

Let us begin anew from here; let us look at the Church with the eyes of the Spirit and not as the world does. The world sees us only as on the right or left, with this ideology, with that one; the Spirit sees us as sons and daughters of the Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus. The world sees conservatives and progressives; the Spirit sees children of God. A worldly gaze sees structures to be made more efficient; a spiritual gaze sees brothers and sisters pleading for mercy. The Spirit loves us and knows everyone's place in the grand scheme of things: for Him, we are not bits of confetti blown about by the wind, rather we are irreplaceable fragments in His mosaic. If we go back to the day of Pentecost, we discover that the first task of the church is Proclamation.

Rome 2020

Novena

For nine days before Pentecost from 14th May... (Day after Ascension and Fatima feast).

'Come Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle them with the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and You shall renew the face of the earth.'

Feast Days in May

1st St. Joseph the Worker

2nd Fifth Sunday of Easter

3rd Ss. Philp & James, Apostles

4th The English Martyrs

7th St. John of Beverly

9th Sixth Sunday of Easter

13th Ascension of the Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)

14th St. Matthias, Apostle

16th Seventh Sunday of Easter

21st St. Godric of Finchale

22nd St. Rita of Cascia

23rd Pentecost Sunday

24th Mary, Mother of the Church

25th St. The Venerable Bede

27th Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest

30th Sun. The Most Holy Trinity

31st The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

URGENT APPEAL FOR ROSARIES FOR OUR PROJECTS!