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THE

LIFE AND GLORIES

OF

ST. JOSEPH.
THE LIFE AND GLORIES
OF
ST. JOSEPH,
HUSBAND OF MARY, FOSTER-FATHER OF JESUS, AND
PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

GROUND ON THE DISSENTIONS OF CANON ANTONIO VITALI,
FATHER JOSÉ MORENO, AND OTHER WRITERS.

BY
EDWARD HEALY THOMPSON, M.A.

"Nam inhirci poterimus talem virum, qui Spiritu Dei plenus sit?... Sem-
quid sapientiorem et consilium tui inhirci potero? Tu eris super hominem
mam, et ad tui oris imperium cunctus populus obedient."—GEN. XLI. 38-40.

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1888.

ST. BASIL'S SCHOLASTICATE
"Spend your life in honouring St. Joseph, and your love and homage will never equal the love and homage paid to him by Mary; it will approach never so distantly to the obedience, the love, the homage paid to him for thirty years on earth by the Son of God. But in proportion as your heart grows towards him in the reverence and unbounded confidence of a son will you trace in your soul a more faithful copy of the Incarnate Word."—Letter on Devotion to St. Joseph, by Herbert, Bishop of Salford, 1877.
PREFACE.

This is a composite work, constructed with materials gathered from various quarters, principally from the dissertation of Don Antonio Vitali, Canon of the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Damaso at Rome, entitled *Vita e Glorie del Gran Patriarca S. Giuseppe, Sposo Purissimo di Maria, Padre Putativo di Gesù, e Patrono Potentissimo della Cattolica Chiesa*, 1883. To him, therefore, special acknowledgments are due, not only for the valuable contributions to the present work which his volume has supplied, but for the permission to make free use of the product of his labours. The early chapters, extending to the birth of Joseph, are, indeed, almost a literal translation of his work. Subsequently, his materials have been largely used, sometimes verbally, at other times only substantially, but with frequent omissions and retrenchments.

Much use has also been made of a Spanish work by P. José Moreno, of the Minor Clergy of the House of the Holy Spirit at Seville, entitled *Discursos sobre las Virtudes y Privilegios de S. José*, 1788. It professes to be taken from the French; but, if the idea or the groundwork of the compila-
tion be as represented, its genius and spirit are indubitably Spanish; being characterised throughout by that gravity, solidity, and depth which so especially distinguishes the theologians of Spain. To this work, which is both highly instructive and eminently suggestive, the present writer is indebted, not only for large portions of several chapters of the book, but for eight of the more important among them, including those on the Subjection of Jesus, the Paternity and Offices of Joseph, his Interior Life, and the Glory of his Soul and Body in Heaven; all which are especially calculated to deepen our conceptions of the dignity and sanctity of the great Patriarch. But here, as generally throughout the volume, he has not always adopted the author’s language or the form in which he expresses himself, but has rather digested and developed the truths he has propounded.

Occasional recourse has likewise been had to the *Vita di S. Giuseppe* by the Rev. Vincenzo de Vit, 1868, which is valuable for the general justness and discrimination of its views.

Passages from the visions and revelations of saints and holy contemplatives—St. Bridget, Sister Maria de Agreda, and others—have been interwoven with the narrative, simply in the way of illustration, and not as being invested with authority, except in the sense in which, after due examination, they have been favoured with ecclesiastical approval: namely, as containing nothing contrary to faith and morals,
and affording pious and profitable helps to medita-
tion.

Finally, observations and reflections have been introduced as occasion offered which were suggested by various authors whose works have been consulted, or which occurred to the writer's own mind from consideration of the materials before him.

It is no uncommon idea, even among Catholics, that the devotion paid to St. Joseph and the lofty estimate of his prerogatives now prevailing in the Church are innovations of comparatively modern date, and that they have no precedent or sanction in antiquity. But this is far from being the case. In the writings of the ancient Fathers are to be found, not only what may be called prolific germs, but also positive and explicit statements of doctrine, which sufficiently show how deep in the consciousness of the Church lay the belief of Joseph's exalted dignity and sanctity, and how definite a shape it had assumed even in the early ages. The devotion paid to him has, it is true, been much more distinctly formulated in later centuries, when his place in the celestial hierarchy came to be more fully recognised; but from the first this great Saint had a peculiar attraction for many holy and gifted souls, who regarded him with singular veneration and affection, as the citations given abundantly testify.

The Church brings out of her treasury things
both old and new, according as the exigencies of the time require; and this is especially true of the devotions which have arisen from age to age and have received her ready sanction, or, rather, have been joyfully welcomed and embraced as the fulfilment of her heart's desire. Thus, the devotion to our Blessed Lady, though dating from Apostolic times, received a powerful impulse at the Council of Ephesus, where the dogma of the Divine Maternity was proclaimed in opposition to the heresy of Nestorius; and, among other instances, may be mentioned the ardent devotion to the Holy Places, which resulted in the Crusades; the public and solemn adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which found its satisfaction in the Feast of Corpus Christi and the Rite of Benediction; and, at later epochs, the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the several mysteries of the Passion in all their pathetic details: the Five Wounds, the Precious Blood, &c.; and, in our own days, renewed devotion to the Adorable Face of our Lord. But what is most remarkable about the devotion to St. Joseph is that, after centuries of obscurity and apparent oblivion, it received a sudden and mighty impulse, which carried it, as it were, at a bound into the hearts of the Christian populations and disseminated and planted it in every clime. Or, rather, we may say that the breath of God's Holy Spirit quickened into life and energy the devotion which lay, as it were, dormant and passive in the hearts of the faithful, and rapidly stirred
the smouldering fire into a blaze. Some account of this extraordinary movement and expansion is given in the concluding chapters of the work.

If to some it may be matter of surprise that saints and doctors should have written and discoursed so largely and so eloquently respecting one of whom it might appear scant notice is taken in the Gospels, and of whom no single word spoken by him has been recorded; that a voluminous theology should have grouped itself around him; and that he should have been proposed by the Holy See to the veneration and devotion of the faithful as Patron and Guardian of the Universal Church—this can only be because they have never sufficiently considered what was Joseph’s position in the economy of redemption; and it may safely be affirmed that the more they realise that position, and the more they study him in his several aspects, as presented in Holy Writ, the more will his grandeurs open upon them and the deeper and the higher will be their thoughts about him. For who, in fact, was St. Joseph? and what were the offices he filled, and the privileges he enjoyed? He was predestined to be the virgin spouse of the Virgin Mother of the Son of God, and to be His and her guardian and protector; he was the chosen minister of the counsels of the Most High in the mystery of the Incarnation; he was for years the habitual companion both of Mary and of Jesus; he bore the Divine Child constantly in his arms, lovingly caressed Him, and received His
caresses in return; to him, as to His Blessed Mother, Jesus was subject in the house and workshop of Nazareth; he was as a father and a tutor to Him; he was the daily witness of His hidden life, and heard the sacred words that fell from His lips, all through His boyhood, youth, and early manhood; and he had the unspeakable blessedness of dying in His embrace. But further: with this sublime vocation and these incomparable privileges the graces and virtues of Joseph fully corresponded; his merits were commensurate with his dignity; and therefore it is that he ranks next to Mary in the Court of Heaven and is seated in glory so nigh unto the throne of the Incarnate Word.

But again: there is another and a fundamental Christian doctrine, the disregard or imperfect recognition of which lies at the root of the difficulty entertained respecting the position and power of Joseph in Heaven, as also respecting that of his Immaculate Spouse. It is this—that our Blessed Lord is as truly Man now that He is seated in Heaven at the right hand of the Father as He was when He trod the streets of Jerusalem and the ways of Galilee. The Incarnate God, enthroned in His majesty on high, is still our Brother-Man. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable than our Lord's solicitude (so to say) after He had risen from the dead, not only to prove His identity to His disciples, but to convince them of His possession of the full attributes of man. "See My Hands and Feet," He said, "that it is I Myself";
nay more: "handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have"; and then He took and ate before them. But not only so: it seemed as though He wished to impress upon them the fact that the relationship which He had assumed with men remained, not merely unbroken, but, as it were, sealed and enhanced, now that He was about to ascend into the Heaven of Heavens. The words He spoke to St. Mary Magdalen immediately after His Resurrection: "Go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God"—words differing in their solemn emphasis and expression from any which He had heretofore used—seem to have been uttered to this end. Thus, being ever perfect Man as well as perfect God, as He had a mother and a foster-father on earth, so now in Heaven Mary is still His mother and Joseph retains the honoured name of father. The ties of their human relationship still endure, and will endure for ever. Hence the dignity of Joseph and the power of his intercession. His Foster-Child is the Almighty and Adorable God.

Many books of devotion to St. Joseph have been written in many languages; indeed, the literature dedicated to him may be said to form a library of itself. The object of the present work is, not only to increase and stimulate that devotion, but to exhibit the theological basis on which it rests, and to show how great is the amount of authority and how

1 St. Luke xxiv. 39, 42, 43.  
2 St. John xx. 17.
strong are the intrinsic reasons for holding that a profound and solid reality of heavenly origin underlies the dignity and office to which the husband of Mary and foster-father of Jesus was elected. The chapters on the Paternity and Offices of Joseph, which are drawn (as has been said) from P. Moreno's work, may be particularly mentioned as having been composed with this intention.

And now, humbly kneeling at the feet of this great Patriarch and most powerful Saint, solitary in his grandeur as in his endowments, the writer implores his blessing on a work devoted to his honour; not only for the exaltation of that honour among men, but for the glory of his Immaculate Spouse, and, supremely, for the glory of Him the companion and guardian of whose Childhood he was ordained to be, and to whom, indeed, he owes his incomparable dignity and his very being—the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father made Man for us and for our salvation.

For the satisfaction of the reader it is desirable to state that the work has been carefully revised by a most competent theologian in its progress through the press.

Cheltenham,
Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, 1888.
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**Prayer to St. Joseph**
CHAPTER I.

JOSEPH INCLUDED IN THE DECREE OF THE INCARNATION.

To describe the life and the glories of Joseph is to describe at the same time the life of Jesus and the glories of Mary; for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are so intimately united, that it is impossible to speak of one without treating of the others. These three dear names—Jesus, Mary, Joseph—form that triple heavenly alliance which can never be broken. He, therefore, who undertakes to narrate the life of Joseph is under the happy necessity of narrating at the same time, in large measure, the life of Jesus and Mary. The reader will never object to this, since, after God, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are the sweetest and sublimest objects with which our minds and hearts can be filled; they are the three powerful advocates of our cause, the three guiding stars of our salvation. But, in order clearly to understand the greatness of Joseph, we must look very far back; for his greatness did not begin with his birth, neither did it begin with his espousals to Mary. Its origin is far more remote, and must be sought, not in time, but in eternity; it began with his predestination.

Predestination, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, is the divine preordination from eternity of those things which, by divine grace, are to be accomplished in time.¹ Now, the most compassionate Lord God had, in the

¹ P. iii. q. xxiv. a. 1.
admirable dispositions of His Providence, from all eternity, preordained the ineffable mystery of the Divine Incarnation to repair the fall of Adam and save his descendants from eternal ruin. This mystery "hidden from ages," as the Apostle says,¹ was to be revealed in the fulness of time. The Eternal Word was to assume human flesh, and, after a life full of sufferings, was to offer Himself as a voluntary victim to die upon a cross, in order, as an innocent Lamb, to expiate the sins of all mankind. This mystery, then, was to be accomplished in Jesus; and, therefore, Jesus, the Saviour of all, was, according to the Apostle Paul, "predestinated the Son of God in power";² and, as St. Augustine explains, it was predestined that Jesus, who according to the flesh was the Son of David, was in truth to be the Son of God, seeing that it was preordained that human nature was one day to subsist in the Eternal Person of the Word along with the Divine Nature, in order that the sufferings of Jesus might have an infinite value to satisfy worthily the Divine Justice. And this is what is called the eternal decree of the Divine Incarnation.

Now, in this decree is comprehended, not only the mystery itself of the Divine Incarnation, but also the mode and order in which this mystery was to be accomplished, and, consequently, those persons who were principally and more immediately to have a part in it; for, according to the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, the eternal predestination includes, not only what is to be accomplished in time, but likewise the mode and order according to which it is to be so accomplished.³ And the mode and order predestined by God in the Incarnation of His Divine Son was this: that the Most Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ was to be taken, but without sin, from that same human nature which had sinned in Adam;

¹ Coloss. i. 26. ² Rom. i. 4. ³ Summa, p. iii. q. xxiv. a. 4.
that It was to descend from the blood of Abraham, to be of the tribe of Juda and the race of David, and that the Body of Jesus was to be formed by the power of the Holy Ghost in the pure womb of an immaculate virgin. This elect virgin is Mary; and therefore Mary, after Jesus, was immediately comprised in the decree of the Divine Incarnation, and from eternity predestined to be the most august Mother of the Son of God. "The Virgin," says the great doctor Suarez, "could not be disjoined from her Son in the Divine election." The Church herself puts into the mouth of the Virgin these words of the Divine Wisdom: "I was preordained from eternity". Mary was truly a predetermined end of the eternal counsel, and St. Augustine calls her "the work of eternal counsel".

But, in order to conceal this mystery of love from the world until the appointed time had come, and to safeguard at the same time the reputation of the Virgin Mother and the honour of the Divine Son, God willed that Mary by a marriage altogether heavenly should be espoused to the humblest, the purest, and the holiest of the royal race of David, one therefore expressly predestined for this end; a virgin spouse for the Virgin Mother, who at the same time should be in the place of a father to the Divine Son. In the Divine mind Joseph was the one chosen from amongst all others. Joseph held the first place. Joseph was predestined to this office. True, from the tribe of Juda, from the family of David, great patriarchs were to arise, famous leaders of the people, most noble kings; but God did not choose any of these. He chose Joseph alone. Joseph was the beloved one. Joseph was specially preordained to become one day the happy spouse of Mary and the foster-father of Jesus. "As Mary," says Echius, the famous opponent of Luther, "was from eternity predestined to be the mother of the

1 Prov. viii. 23.
Son of God; so also was Joseph elected to be the
guardian and protector of Jesus and of Mary.”¹

Thus Joseph was, after Mary, comprehended in the
very decree of the Incarnation, and, after Mary, was
called to have an integral part, as it were, in this
ineffable mystery. It is easy to perceive how much
honour hence redounds to Joseph; for if, next to the
mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, the mystery of the
Divine Incarnation is the essential foundation of the
Christian faith, who can fail to see that to be included in
the eternal decree of so admirable a mystery, into which
the angels themselves “desire to look,”² is an incompar-
able glory to this great saint? We must always, there-
fore, bear well in mind this singular destination of
Joseph, because this is truly the ground of all his
greatness. This is the basis upon which all his glories
are raised. Whoever thoroughly realises the fact of this
preordination will no longer marvel at God’s predilection
for Joseph, and at seeing him so highly privileged and
exalted to be the guardian and patron of the Universal
Church.

¹ Sermo de S. Joseph. ² 1 St. Peter i. 12.
CHAPTER II.

JOSEPH INCLUDED IN THE ORDER OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION.

WHATEVER God disposes is disposed in a marvellous and perfect order. Wherefore the Church which Jesus came to found on earth imitates the Heavenly Sion. As in Heaven there are angelical hierarchies, and in these hierarchies there are divers orders, so also on earth there is a hierarchy of grace, and in that hierarchy are included various orders, or ministries, which, according to the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, excel each other in proportion to their approximation to God.¹ The highest of all these orders, whether angelic or human, is the order of the Hypostatic Union, in which is Christ Jesus, God and Man. By the Hypostatic Union is meant that the Eternal Son of God, in His Incarnation, assumed human nature, and united it to Himself in Personal unity; in other words, that in the one Divine Person of Jesus Christ, the two Natures, the Divine Nature and the Human Nature, ever distinct in themselves, became inseparably and eternally united. If a wonderful order is displayed in all the works of nature, an order supremely perfect is displayed in all the works of grace, especially in the great work of the Incarnation. Among these orders of grace some precede the mystery of the Incarnation, others follow it. Among those which precede it the most remote is the order of the Patriarchs, chosen to

¹ Summa, p. i. q. c. iv. a. 6.
prepare the progenitors of Jesus down to St. Joachim and St. Anne. To some of these, as to Abraham and to David, it was expressly revealed that of their blood and of their family the Saviour of men should be born into the world. The next is the Levitical and sacerdotal order, which was preordained by God to figure in all its rites the Priesthood of Jesus, His Church, His Sacraments, the Bloody Sacrifice of the Cross, and the Unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar. The third is that of the Prophets, destined to foretell and announce to the world, so many centuries before the coming of Jesus, His Birth of a Virgin, His country, the place of His Nativity, His flight into Egypt, His Apostles, His preaching, His miracles, His Passion, His Death, His Resurrection, His glorious Ascension into Heaven. Greater than all these Prophets was John Baptist, because destined and preordained to be the immediate Precursor of Christ, and to point to Him as being actually present on the earth; whence Jesus Himself affirmed that among those who were born of woman there was not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.¹ These are the orders which under the Old Law preceded Jesus.

Others succeeded Him; and these are the various orders or ministries of Holy Church, which form the ecclesiastical hierarchy, beginning with the Apostles. The Apostles were to render to the whole earth and to all ages their solemn testimony to the Divinity of Jesus Christ; they were to announce to all His Doctrine, His Law, His Sacraments; they were to found and to spread His Church throughout the world, so that all might attain to salvation. And, as the Apostolic order was nearer than any other to Jesus, even so, says the Angelic Doctor, did the Apostles receive greater grace than any saints in the other orders² of the Church. Of the inferior

¹ St. Luke vii. 28.  
² In Epistolam ad Ephes. i. 8.
orders we need not here speak. Now, above all these orders rises supreme the order of the Hypostatic Union. All the other orders, comprising even the angelic, are subordinate and subject to it; for this reason, that Jesus is the beginning, the author, and the head of this order, and on Jesus, as Sovereign Prince, depends every hierarchy, every sacred principedom in Heaven and on earth, since Jesus, as the Apostle says, is the end of the whole law.\(^1\) Jesus is the chief corner-stone\(^2\) upon which rests the whole sacred edifice of the Church. Jesus, according to the Prophet Isaías, is set up as an ensign to the people,\(^3\) the desire of all nations, the centre of universal hope. Jesus is the sole and true source of salvation to all men. By faith in Him who was to come all were saved who lived justly from Adam until His day; and all those who have lived and shall live justly since His coming have been and shall be saved by Him alone. In Him alone, from Him alone, and through Him alone, is truth, salvation, and life; so that, even as the planets in the firmament revolve round the sun, receiving from it light, heat, and power, so also around Jesus, the Eternal Sun of Justice, all the various orders of grace circle, from Him alone receiving light, virtue, and power to fulfil faithfully the holy offices to which they are ordained; and so much the greater or the less grace and dignity do they receive as they are more or less approximated in their ministry to Jesus, the author of grace, just as one who is nearer to the fire participates more largely in its heat. It is clear, then, that the order of the Hypostatic Union transcends and surpasses the other subaltern orders, even as the sun transcends the inferior stars.

Now, Joseph by divine predestination was placed in this sovereign order. Three only composed it—Jesus, Mary, Joseph. Jesus is true God and true Man; Mary

\(^1\) Rom. x. 4. \(^2\) Ephes. ii. 20. \(^3\) Isaías xi. 10, 12.
is true mother of God and mother of men; Joseph is true spouse of Mary and putative father of Jesus. Jesus is the principal subject of the Incarnation, and the author of the Redemption of the world; Mary is the immediate co-operatrix and, so to say, the executrix of the Incarnation itself; Joseph, the faithful depositary of these two most precious pledges, was to provide that this sublime mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption should be brought about with the greatest possible congruity, so that the honour of the mother and of the God-Man, her Son, should remain intact.

That Joseph should be comprised in this supreme order is not a mere devout opinion or the fruit of pious meditation; it is a sure decision of the soundest theology. Suarez, that eminent theologian, after having spoken of the order of the Apostles, upon which he said the greatest grace was conferred, goes on to say: “There are other ministries appertaining to the order of the Hypostatic Union, which in its kind is more perfect, as we affirmed of the dignity of the Mother of God, and in this order is constituted the ministry of St. Joseph; and, although it be in the lowest grade of it, nevertheless, in this respect, it surpasses all others, because it exists in a superior order”.

Thus spoke Suarez, the learned theologian of Granada, about three hundred years ago, when the opinion of the faithful respecting St. Joseph and the devotion due to him had not been so openly and generally displayed.

But the doctors who followed spoke still more clearly. Giovanni di Cartagena, contemporary of Bellarmine and Baronius, and very dear to Pope Pius V. for his piety and science, out of the numerous learned homilies which he wrote, devoted thirteen to the praises of Joseph. After having spoken of the Apostolic order, he passes on to

1 Tom. ii. disp. viii. sec. 1.
treat of the order of the Hypostatic Union, and says that in its kind it is more perfect than the other, and that in this order the first place is held by the Humanity of Christ, which is immediately united to the Person of the Word; the second place is held by the Blessed Virgin, who conceived and brought forth the Incarnate Word; the third place is held by St. Joseph, to whom was committed by God the special care, never given to any other, of feeding, nursing, educating, and protecting a God-made-man! After Cartagena comes P. Giuseppe Antonio Patignani, highly praised also by Benedict XIV., who, almost two centuries ago, wrote thus of St. Joseph: "He, as constituted head of the Family immediately belonging to the service of a God-Man, transcends in dignity all the other saints; wherefore he is happily established in an order which is superior to all the other orders in the Church".2

We might adduce other doctors of high authority, but we will proceed to consider some of the legitimate consequences which flow from this doctrine.

1. It is an exceeding honour to Joseph to be comprised in the same order wherein are Jesus Himself, the Son of God, the King of kings, and Mary, Mother of God and Queen of the universe, to be united with them in the closest relations, and enjoy their most entire confidence. The nobles of the earth deem themselves to be highly honoured in being brought into near association with monarchs of renown, holding the foremost places in their courts, and being the most trusted in their councils. What, then, shall we say of Joseph, who, placed in the order of the Hypostatic Union, was destined by God, not only to be the first in His court and the closest in His confidence, but even to be the reputed father of the King

1 Lib. iv. Hom. viii.
2 Il Divoto di S. Giuseppe, Novena, Gior. vi.
of kings; to be, not only the confidential friend, but the very spouse of the most exalted of all the empresses in the universe? Next to the Divine Maternity, no honour in the world is comparable with this.

2. To be comprised in the order of the Hypostatic Union implies being, after Jesus and Mary, superior to all the other saints, both of the Old and the New Testament; and the reason is clear: for, this order being superior to all the other orders in the Church, it follows that whosoever has a place in this order, albeit in its lowest grade, as Joseph has, ranks before all who are even in the highest grade of a lower order, such as that of the Apostles, which is the most eminent among them.

3. It follows that Joseph is superior, not in nature, but in dignity, to the angels themselves, since the orders of angels are subject to the order of the Hypostatic Union, subject to Jesus, their King and their Head, subject to Mary, their Queen; hence, as the Apostle declares, when the Eternal Father sent His Divine Son upon earth He commanded all the angels to adore Him.\(^1\) And on account of Jesus the angels became subject also to Mary and to Joseph: thus we find them hastening gladly to serve them, to warn them, to console them; and were they not sent expressly from Heaven to act as attendants on Joseph, at one time to assure him that his Spouse has conceived the Son of God Himself; at another to make known to him the plot of Herod, so that he might place the Virgin and her Divine Son in safety by flying into Egypt; and, again, to announce to him that now he may joyfully return into the land of Israel?\(^2\)

4. We conclude that Joseph was comprehended in this order because he was truly the head and guardian of this Divine Family. To rule and govern this august family belonged of right to Jesus, who was God. Mary and

\(^1\) Heb. i. 6.  
\(^2\) St. Matthew i. 20, 21; ii. 13, 19, 20.
INCLUDED IN THE ORDER OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION. 11

Joseph, exalted as they were in dignity, were, nevertheless, only creatures; but Jesus willed to give an example of the most perfect humility. It was His will to magnify our saint, and to concede to him this high glory, making him the head and guardian of His family; so that Joseph had rule and authority over the Son of God Himself and over the very Mother of the Son of God. And Joseph, being thus destined to be the head and guardian of Jesus, the head and guardian of Mary, became at the same time the patron and guardian of the Church, which is the spouse of Jesus and, in a manner, the daughter of Mary. Whence Pius IX., of blessed memory, in proclaiming Joseph Patron of the Church, did not so much confer a new title of honour upon him as affirm and declare this his most ancient prerogative, which had not before been so expressly promulgated by Holy Church.

5. It follows that Joseph was comprised in that order and in that family by the highest representation which it is possible to conceive, inasmuch as he was made the very representative of the Divine Father, who alone has the right to call Jesus His Son, having begotten Him from all eternity; and yet that same God, who by the mouth of Isaias¹ protested that He would never give His glory to another, that God who, in communicating to the Word and to the Holy Spirit His Divine essence, does not in any wise communicate to them His Divine paternity, was so generous to Joseph as to concede to him His glory, and communicate to him His name and His paternity; not actually, for that was impossible, but so that he should be in His place and stead, and should be called the father of Him who was the Divine Word, and that the Word Himself should call Joseph by the sweet name of father, so that he might with true joy appropriate to himself that passage in Holy Scripture:

¹ Chap. xiii. 8.
"I will be to Him a father and He shall be to me a son".\(^1\) Herein we see manifested the great love of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity for our saint and the confidence They reposed in him; for the Eternal Father committed wholly into his charge His well-beloved Son; the Divine Son delivered Himself entirely to his care and to his will; the Holy Spirit consigned and committed to him His most immaculate Spouse; so that this Holy Family, of which Joseph became the head, was another Triad on earth, a resplendent image of the Most Holy Triad in Heaven, the Ever-Blessed Trinity: Joseph representing the Eternal Father, Jesus representing and being in very truth the Eternal Word, and Mary representing the Eternal Love, the Holy Spirit. This thought is borrowed from the new Doctor of the Church, St. Francis de Sales. "We may say"—these are his words—"that the Holy Family was a Trinity on Earth, which in a certain way represented the Heavenly Trinity Itself."\(^2\)

6. Finally, it follows that Joseph, in that he was comprised in that sublime order, superior to that of all the other saints, must as a natural consequence have been predestined to receive greater gifts and graces than all the other saints, that he might be made worthy to be so near to Jesus and Mary, and fitted to discharge most faithfully those high ministries to which he was elected. Hence the pious Bernardine de Bustis makes this bold assertion: "Since Joseph was to be the guardian, companion, and ruler of the Most Blessed Virgin and of the Child Jesus, is it possible to conceive that God could have made a mistake in the choice of him? or that He could have permitted him to be deficient in any respect? or could have failed to make him most perfect? The very idea would be the grossest of errors. When God selects any one to perform some great work He bestows upon him every virtue needful for its accomplishment."\(^3\)

\(^1\) Heb. i. 5. \(^2\) *Entretien*, xix. \(^3\) *Mariane*, Sermo xii.
INCLUDED IN THE ORDER OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION. 13

Let us rejoice, then, with our most loving Patriarch that he has been exalted to so sublime an order, and has obtained such grace, power, and dignity as none other, after Jesus and Mary, has ever received, to the glory of God, who made him so great, and for our profit and that of the whole Church.
CHAPTER III.

Joseph prefigured in Holy Scripture as to his Name, his Life, and his Glory.

We have undertaken to speak, not only of the life, but of the glories of St. Joseph; it behoves us, therefore, to exhibit the glory that accrued to him in having been prefigured in Holy Scripture. Nor is this a most signal glory only; it is also a manifest sign of that great love and especial regard which God had for him from all eternity. They are greatly mistaken who suppose, and indeed complain, that, considering how great a personage Joseph was, so little is said of him in Holy Writ. For, even in the literal and historical sense, there is sufficient mention of him in the Holy Gospels to make us apprehend his exalted dignity; while, prophetically speaking, he is so clearly foreshadowed in the Old Testament as to make it abundantly evident that it pleased God to present him to the world many centuries before he was born.

In the first place, there can be no manner of doubt that God designed to give an exact and elaborate figure of our saint in the person of the ancient patriarch Joseph, the son of Jacob. Nor let it be objected that, according to the Fathers, that ancient patriarch was a true type and figure of our Divine Redeemer, and therefore that he cannot be at the same time a type and figure of our Saint; for in Holy Scripture, dictated as it was by the infinite wisdom of God and containing manifold meanings, it often happens that one and the same thing or person is a type or figure of several things
or persons; or the same individual may, under one aspect or in one action, represent one person, and, under another aspect and in another action, represent a different person; or, again, under the one literal sense of a passage are often contained various mystical and spiritual senses: thus, for instance, Jerusalem in the literal sense is the capital city of the Hebrew people, where was the Holy Temple; allegorically it is the Holy Catholic Church; in a tropological and moral sense it is the soul of the Christian; in an anagogical sense it is Paradise. So it is very true that the ancient Joseph was in many events of his life a type and figure of Jesus, especially when he was sent by his father in search of his brethren, and they plotted his death; when he was sold for a sum of money to a band of barbarians; when he was falsely accused and made no defence, but suffered the punishment due to the accuser; when he was kept in bonds between two criminals, and foretold death to the one and glory to the other; when he supplied food to those who had sought to compass his death; and, finally, when he received the name of “saviour of the world”.¹ But it is also true that in other points this ancient patriarch most clearly prefigured our saint.

For this opinion we have the express authority of St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventura, St. Bernardine of Siena, and, to descend to more recent times, that of the two new Doctors of the Church, St. Francis de Sales and St. Alphonsus Liguori; and, again, of the solemn decree of the Holy See wherein Joseph was declared Patron of the Universal Church.²

¹ Gen. xli. 45.
² “Quemadmodum Deus Josephum illum a Jacob Patriarcha progenitum prepositum constituerat universe terra Aegypti . . . ita temporum plenitudine adventante, alium selegit Josephum, cujus ille primus typum gesserat.”—Decr. S. Rit. die 8. Dec., 1670.
The ancient Joseph, then, prefigured our Joseph in his very name. "Remember," says St. Bernard, "the ancient patriarch who was sold into Egypt, and know that that man (Joseph) not only inherited his name but possessed, moreover, his chastity, his innocency, and his grace;"¹ nay, he inherited not only his name but the import and the substance of that name in a hundredfold greater measure. Joseph in the Hebrew language signifies increase; hence the dying father of the ancient Joseph, when bestowing upon him the fulness of his benediction, said, "Joseph is a growing son; a growing son";² meaning thereby, not only that his son Joseph himself increased in wisdom, in power, and glory, but that he increased for his brethren and his children, obtaining for them rich goods and possessions in the land of Gessen. But this double increase was far more verified in the second Joseph; first, by his own daily increase in the fulness of grace and in the Divine favour, and then by augmenting for us, his children and his brethren, the means of salvation, obtaining for us from God a continual increase of graces and benefits towards the attainment of our eternal inheritance.

The first Joseph was son of the patriarch Jacob, and the second Joseph was the son of another holy patriarch, Jacob, so that he resembled our saint not only in his own name but in that of his father; and the mother of the ancient Joseph, the beautiful Rachel, was buried near Bethlehem, whence sprang the second Joseph and where the Divine Redeemer was to be born. And even as at the birth of the first Joseph the servitude of Jacob to Laban was about to cease, and the way began to be opened for his return to his country, so at the birth of the second Joseph began to appear, as it were, the dawn of that day when the slavery of sin would be removed and the way re-opened to the blessed home of Paradise.

¹ Super Mismatch est. Hom ii. ² Gen. xlix. 22.
As the ancient Joseph grew in years he was of all his brethren the most gracious in manners, the most innocent and pure in his conduct. His father loved him with a special affection in preference to all his other sons, and, as a proof of his love, caused to be made for him a beautiful garment richly embroidered in various colours; by which it is signified that our Joseph should grow in grace and sanctity surpassing that of all the angels and saints, save Mary alone, and should be beloved above all by God, and by Him be clothed with habits of the most heroic virtues, so as to become an object of singular veneration and pre-eminently glorious among all the blessed who have attained to glory. This was shown to the ancient patriarch in a marvellous vision, wherein it seemed to him that he and his brethren at harvest-time were binding their sheaves, and his sheaf stood erect, while those of his brethren which surrounded it bowed themselves down as if to adore it. In the literal sense this vision was fulfilled when, during the seven years of famine, his brethren came to him for bread, signified by those sheaves of wheat, and did him homage as the Viceroy of Egypt; but in the mystical sense it was accomplished in the second Joseph. The field in which he is found with his brethren is the Church; the sheaves of wheat are the accumulated merits, the fruits of grace. The foremost in gathering and binding full sheaves of holy works and heroic virtues in this great field was, after Mary, to be Joseph. The first who should follow him would also collect their sheaves, but these would never equal Joseph’s sheaf, which would stand rich and glorious above them all; and, recognising therein his superiority in merits and greatness, all would bow before him, beholding in him the reputed father of Jesus, the husband of Mary, the exalted patron of the Universal Church.

His glory and dignity were still more manifested in
another admirable vision which the ancient patriarch saw, when he seemed to behold the sun, the moon, and eleven stars descend to adore him. This vision was fulfilled according to the letter when his father and his eleven brethren with their families came into Egypt to do homage to him on his throne; but more truly in a spiritual sense was it accomplished in our Joseph when, in Egypt, in Nazareth, in Jerusalem, he beheld Jesus, who is the Sun of Justice, "subject" to him; his immaculate Spouse, Mary, who is fair as the moon, yielding him obedience; and now in Heaven beholds the Apostles and Saints all doing him homage and paying him the profoundest veneration. Now, if such bright stars do reverence to Joseph, what homage, what veneration, do not we owe to him, miserable little lamps as we are!

As the ancient Joseph became the victim of his brethren's envy and was led as a slave into Egypt, so our Joseph, through Herod's envy, was forced to become an exile in Egypt, flying thither with his greatest treasure, Jesus, and his most holy Spouse. And, as the former found grace with Putiphar, chief captain of Pharaoh's army, even to being made steward of his household, and set as governor over his whole family to order all things at his pleasure, even so the latter found grace with Jesus, his Lord, was constituted His minister-general, and promoted to the government, tutelage, and patronage both of the Holy Family and of the House of the Lord, which is His Church. The first Joseph in the house of Putiphar gave a signal proof of heroic chastity; and yet he was consigned for some time to the obscurity of a dungeon and was almost forgotten. The second Joseph gave a far more sublime example of angelic virginity, espoused as he was to the purest of all virgins; nevertheless, in order that the Divinity of Jesus and the Virginity of Mary

1 St. Luke ii. 51.
might first be displayed in all their incomparable splendour, he chose to remain for some time hidden and almost forgotten in the Catholic Church.

While the first (says St. Bernard) receives from God intelligence in the interpretation of dreams, to the second He gives both the knowledge and the participation of heavenly mysteries. The former passed from the obscurity of a prison to the splendours of a court; the latter passed from the sorrows of exile to the celestial mansions, with the truly regal dignity of reputed father of the King of kings, spouse of the Queen of Heaven, and most powerful patron of the Universal Church. The exaltation of the ancient Joseph to the highest rank in the court of the king of Egypt could not more perfectly figure the elevation of our Joseph to the loftiest seats in the House of the Lord and the Court of Heaven. See how Pharao, having recognised the wisdom of Joseph in the true interpretation of his dreams, joyfully exclaims: “Can I find one wiser and one like unto thee? Thou shalt be over my house, and at the commandment of thy mouth all the people shall obey. Behold I have appointed thee over the whole land of Egypt.”¹ Then he took his ring from his own hand and placed it on Joseph’s, and arrayed him in a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made him go up into his second chariot, while a crier proclaimed that all should bow the knee before him, and acknowledge him as Governor of Egypt. Here, then, is an express figure of the second Joseph, when he was constituted by God head of the Holy Family and Patron of the Catholic Church. To our saint God in like manner said: “Whom shall I find wiser and more fitting than thou art to preside over My Family, and to be the Patron and Protector of My Church? Behold I set thee as the master and governor of My house, and all My children

¹ Gen. xli. 39-41.
must do thy bidding.” So it is: as the ancient Joseph, according to the saying of holy king David,¹ was made by Pharaoh lord of all his house and ruler over all his possessions, so, as Holy Church teaches us, the second Joseph was appointed by God lord of all His House and ruler over all His possessions; and so much the more powerful, the richer, and the more exalted as the House of Nazareth and the Catholic Church are more noble and more sublime than the perishable palace of Memphis, and his sway the more extensive in as much as the possessions of God in the whole earth are vaster than were those of the first Joseph in the land of Egypt.

So also the ring placed by Pharaoh on Joseph’s finger was the sign of the great authority conferred on our Joseph by God; the silken robe typified the glorious gifts with which his pure soul would one day be invested; the chain of gold was the symbol of that intense charity with which his heart was ever burning. And thus, again, was Joseph elevated above the other saints, and raised, as it were, on a glorious chariot, to receive, especially in these our days, the praises of the whole earth; the supreme lawgiver of the Vatican, the immortal Pius IX., having proclaimed to the world that all are to bow down to Joseph, for that God has exalted him to the patronage and guardianship of the Universal Church.

¹ Psalm civ. 21.