

1. The Hidden King

Dr. Brant Pitre

The Popes and St. Joseph¹

- 1889 Leo XII issues Encyclical on Devotion to St. Joseph (*Quamquam Pluries*)
- 1955 Pius XII institutes Feast of St. Joseph the Worker (May 1)
- 1962 John XXIII inserts St. Joseph's name into the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I)
- 1989 John Paul II issues Apostolic Exhortation on St. Joseph (*Redemptoris Custos*)
- 2013 Pope Francis inserts St. Joseph's name into all Eucharistic Prayers (I, II, III, IV)
- 2019 Pope Francis designates Dec 8, 2020—Dec 8, 2021 “Year of St. Joseph”

What is Your Image of St. Joseph?

1. Lowly Carpenter, or Hidden King of the Jews?
2. Elderly Widower, or Chaste Spouse of Mary?
3. Legal Guardian, or Shadow of Heavenly Father?

The Royal Genealogy of Joseph

The book of *the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David...* Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of *David the king*.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and *Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon*.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and *Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.* (Matt 1:1-16)²

God's Promise about King David's "House"

“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? [T]he Lord declares to you that... *your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established forever.*” (2 Samuel 7:5, 12, 16)

¹ See Francis L. Filas, S.J., *Joseph: the Man Closest to Jesus: The Complete Life, Theology, and Devotional History of St. Joseph* (Boston, Mass.: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962).

² Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (new. ed.; Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1993), 69: “The monarchical section concludes with Jeconiah who, despite the Babylonian Exile, begot an *heir* and thus enabled the Davidic line to survive.”

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The Reason for Joseph’s Journey to Bethlehem

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled... And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary.* (Luke 2:1-4)³

The Fake King of the Jews: Herod

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in *the days of Herod the king*, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is *he who has been born king of the Jews?* For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.” When *Herod the king* heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written... (Matthew 2:1-5)⁴

The Paranoia of King Herod

Herod, because the family of the Israelites contributed nothing to him, and because he was goaded by his own consciousness of his base birth, burned the records of their families, thinking to appear noble if no one else was able by public documents to trace his family to the patriarchs or proselytes, or to the so-called gers of mixed descent. Now a few who were careful, having private records for themselves, either remembering the names or otherwise deriving them from copies, gloried in the preservation of the memory of their good birth; among these were those mentioned above, called desposyni [Greek, “relatives of the Lord”], because of their relation to the family of the Savior, and from the Jewish villages of Nazareth... they traversed the rest of the land and expounded the preceding genealogy of their descent... (Eusebius, Church History 1.7.1 [trans. LCL]).

The Flight to Egypt and the Massacre of the Infants

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; *for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.*” And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there *until the death of Herod.* Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and *killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under,* according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.” (Matthew 2:16-18)

³ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (2 vols.; Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 1.490: “The establishment of one’s identity, status, or legitimacy in a post or office (as priest or king) often demanded the recording of ancestry.”

⁴ See Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1999), 52-62 on Herod as an Idumean or “half Jew” (Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.403-404).

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Herod Executed His Wife Mariamme (ca. 29 B.C.)

[T]he love which he [Herod] felt for Mariamme [his wife] was not less intense than those justly celebrated in story... [However,] she openly jeered at both his mother and sister for their low birth and reviled them, so that... suspicious was thereby nourished... *Calling together those who were closest to him, he brought an elaborately framed accusation against her... and finally condemned her to death.* (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.218, 221, 231 [trans. LCL])

Herod Executed His Own Sons (ca. 7 B.C.)

When [Herod] read aloud the letters written by [his sons], there was no plot or any notion of filial disloyalty mentioned in them, only... some offensive remarks about Herod... When he came to Caesarea, everyone at once began to talk about his sons, and the kingdom was in suspense as people waited to see what would be done with them... *Then Alexander and Aristobulus were taken to Sebaste and at the command of their father were killed by strangling.* (Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.363-64, 394 [trans. LCL])

Herod Last Acts: Massacres and Executions

[Herod] was not blind to the feelings of the Jews and he knew how ardently they prayed for his death... [Yet] he would, he said, have a grand funeral such as no other king had ever had... When he was about to leave this world, [Herod] took care to leave the entire nation in a state of mourning over the loss of their dearest ones, *and gave orders to do away with one member of each household, although they had done nothing wrong or offended him in any way and had not been accused of any other crime...* Having done this he died, on the fifth day after having his son Antipater killed. He had reigned for thirty-four years... *He was a man who was cruel to all alike and one who easily gave in to anger and was contemptuous of justice.* (Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.176, 180, 190-91 [trans. LCL])

The Reason Joseph Settles in Nazareth

But when [Joseph] heard that *Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there*, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. (Matthew 2:22)

The Persecution of Joseph's Family: After the Resurrection

After the martyrdom of James... those of the Apostles and of the disciples of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with *those who were, humanly speaking, of the family of the Lord...* and they all took counsel together as to whom they ought to adjudge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that *Simon the son of Clopas*, whom the scripture of the Gospel also mentions, was worthy of the throne of the diocese there. He was, so it is said, *a cousin of the Savior*, for... *Clopas was the brother of Joseph*, and... *Vespasian, after the capture of Jerusalem, ordered a search to be made for all who were of the family of David, that there might be left among the Jews no one of the royal family...* (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.11.1-12.1 [LCL])⁵

⁵ For a full study, see Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 1990).

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The Martyrdom of Joseph's Nephew Simon

Some of these... accused *Simon the son of Clopas of being descended from David and a Christian and thus he suffered martyrdom, being a hundred and twenty years old*, when Trajan was emperor and Atticus was Consular." The same writer says that his accusers also suffered arrest for being of *the royal house of the Jews* when search was made at that time for those of that family. (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.32.4-5)

Conclusion

The Carpenter King

Joseph caressed the Son as a Babe; he ministered to him as God. He rejoiced in him as in the Good One, and he was awe-struck at him as the Just One... "Who has made me worthy of so tremendous an honor that the Son of the Most High should be a son to me? "*David my forefather bore a diadem; but I, thrown down from that honor, have come upon utmost contempt; and him whom lineage destined to be a king, chance has made a carpenter. But now the crown that snatched away has returned after you, the King of Kings, hast come into my arms.*" (Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Nativity*, 4)⁶

The Humility of St. Joseph

For Joseph, of royal blood, ...content with his slight possessions, bore the trials consequent on a fortune so slender, with greatness of soul, in imitation of his Son, who having put on the form of a slave, being the Lord of life, *subjected himself of his own free-will to the spoliation and loss of everything.* (Pope Leo XIII, *Quamquam Pluries* no. 4)

The Courage of St. Joseph

Just as God told Joseph: "Son of David, do not be afraid!" (*Mt* 1:20), so he seems to tell us: "Do not be afraid!" *We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish.* Not with mere resignation but with hope and courage. (Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* no. 4)

⁶ Translation in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2*, 13.235; and Filas, *Joseph*, 176.

2. The Most Chaste Spouse

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Introduction

1. Image of Joseph: Elderly widower, or chaste husband?
2. “Brothers” of Jesus: Children of Joseph, or cousins of Jesus?
3. Eucharistic Prayer: “blessed Joseph, *her Spouse* (Latin *Sponsi*) (Euch Prayer I-IV)
4. Divine Praises: Blessed be saint Joseph, *her most chaste* (Latin *castissimus*) *spouse*

The Betrothal of Joseph and Mary

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to *a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Hail, full of grace...”* (Luke 1:26-28)

When his mother Mary had been *betrothed to Joseph, before they came together* she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and *her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly.* (Matthew 1:18-19)

Two Stages of Jewish Marriage¹

What man is there that has *betrothed* (Hebrew *’arash*) *a wife* and has not *taken* (Hebrew *laqah*) her? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle...’ (Deuteronomy 20:7)

Betrothal = Marriage

If there is a *betrothed virgin*, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because *he violated his neighbor’s wife...* (Deuteronomy 22:23-24)

Mary’s Vow of Perpetual Virginity

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.*” And Mary said to the angel, “*How shall this be, since I do not know man?*” (Greek *epei andra ou ginōskō*). (Luke 1:28-34)

Now Adam *knew* (Greek *ginōskō*) Eve his wife, and she conceived... (Genesis 4:1)

Vows of Abstinence for Married Women²

Any vow and any binding oath to afflict herself [= fasting or sexual abstinence], her husband may establish, or her husband may make void. But if her husband says nothing to her from day to day, then he establishes all her vows.... But if he makes them null and void after he has heard of them, then he shall bear her iniquity.” These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses, as between a man and his wife... (Numbers 30:13-16)

¹ See Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (2 vols.; Anchor Bible; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 1:343.

² See Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Messiah* (New York, N.Y.: Image, 2018), 100-131.

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The Evidence for Joseph's Abstinence

But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "*Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*" ... When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; *he took his wife, but knew her not* (Greek *ouk eginōsken*) *until* (Greek *heōs*) *she had borne a son*; and he called his name Jesus. (Matthew 1:20-21, 24-25)

"Until" (Greek *heōs*) ≠ Imply Anything After the Wedding

Lo, I am with you always, *until* (Greek *heōs*) the end of the age. (Matt 28:20)

Michal the daughter of Saul had no child *until* (Greek *heōs*) the day of her death. (2 Sam 6:23 LXX)

The "Brothers" of Jesus = Children of Joseph?

"*Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers* (Greek *adelphoi*) *James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?*" (Matthew 13:55; cf. Gal 1:18-19)

After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles *except James the Lord's brother*. (Gal 1:18-19)

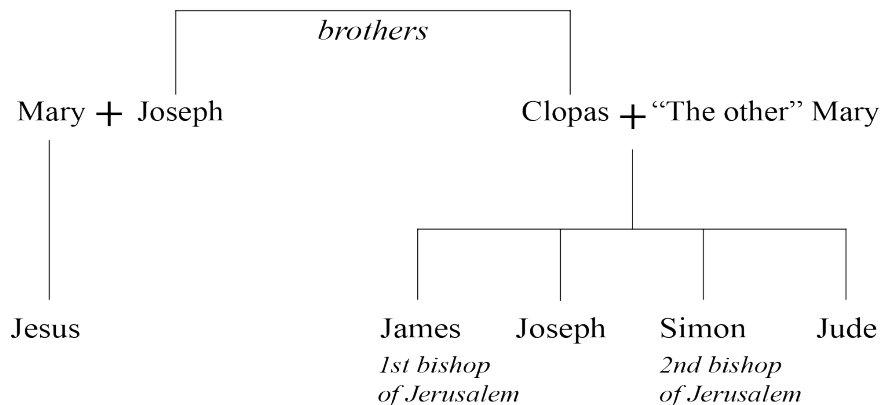
The "Brothers" of Jesus = Children of Mary, the Wife of Clopas

There were also many women there, looking on from afar... among whom were Mary Magdalene, and *Mary the mother of James and Joseph*... Mary Magdalene and *the other Mary* were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre. (Matthew 27:55-56, 61)

By the cross of Jesus were his mother, and *his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas*, and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25)

Clopas = The Brother of Joseph, Uncle of Jesus!

After *the martyrdom of James*..., the disciples of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with *those who were, humanly speaking, of the family of the Lord*... they all took counsel together as to whom they ought to judge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that *Simon the son of Clopas*... He was, so it is said, *a cousin of the Savior*, for ... *Clopas was the brother of Joseph*... (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.11.1-12.1)



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The Apocryphal Legend of the Elderly Joseph

Mary was in the Temple of the Lord... but when she reached her twelfth birthday, the priests held a council and said, "See, Mary has become twelve years old... What then shall we do with her?" And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and said to him, "Zacharias, Zacharias, go out and gather *the widowers of the people*, and have each of them bring a rod; she will become the wife of the one to whom the Lord gives a sign." The heralds went out to all the countryside of Judea and the trumpet of the Lord was blown... Joseph cast aside his carpenter's axe and went to their meeting. When they had gathered together they went to the priest, bringing their rods... Joseph took the last rod, and behold! A dove came out of the rod and flew onto Joseph's head. The priest said to Joseph, "You have been chosen to take the Lord's virgin into your safekeeping." *But Joseph refused, saying, "I have sons and am an old man (Greek presbytēs); she is but a child. I do not want to become a laughingstock..."* The priest replied, "Fear the Lord your God, and remember everything he did to Dathan, Abiram, and Core, how the earth split open and they were all swallowed up because of their dispute. Now, Joseph, you should be afraid of this happening to your house as well." *Joseph was afraid and took her into his safekeeping.* He said to her, "Mary, I have received you from the Temple of the Lord. Now I am leaving you in my house, for I am going out to construct some buildings; later I will come back to you. The Lord will watch over you." (*Proto-Gospel of James* 8:1-9:3)³

The "Old Man" Zechariah vs. the "Man" Joseph

Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am *an old man* (Greek *presbytēs*), and my wife is advanced in years." (Luke 1:18)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee... to a virgin betrothed to *a man* (Greek *aner*) whose name was Joseph. (Luke 1:26-27)

The Age of the "Man" (Greek *aner*) Joseph = Late 20s-40s

He is a boy till his beard begins to grow, and that time is the end of a third period of seven years [21]. He is a youth (Greek *neaniskos*) till the completion of the growth of his whole body, which coincides with the fourth seven years [28]. *Then he is a man* (Greek *aner*) *till he reaches his forty ninth year* [49]... He is an elderly man (Greek *presbytēs*) till he is fifty-six [56]... after that he is an old man. (Philo, *On the Creation of the World* 105)

Conclusion

Marriage = Union of Souls

It seems that there was no true marriage between Mary and Joseph... *On the contrary*, Augustine says... *if after marriage they remain continent by mutual consent, their union is still and is rightly called marriage...* The form of matrimony consists in a certain inseparable *union of souls*, by which husband and wife are pledged by *a bond of mutual affection* that cannot be sundered. (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III, q. 29, art. 2)

³ Translation in Bart D. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 49-51.

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A Virginal Love

Analyzing the nature of marriage, both St. Augustine and St. Thomas always identify it with an “*indivisible union of souls*,” a “*union of hearts*,” with “*consent*.” These elements are found in an exemplary manner in the marriage of Mary and Joseph... This “just” man... *loved the Virgin of Nazareth and was bound to her by a husband's love*... In the Liturgy, Mary is celebrated as “united to Joseph, the just man, by a *bond of marital and virginal love*.” There are really two kinds of love here, both of which together represent the mystery of the Church—virgin and spouse—as symbolized in the marriage of Mary and Joseph... (St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Custos* no. 7, 19, 20)

The Chastity of St. Joseph: Married and Virginal

All the baptized are called to chastity... All Christ’s faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life... “*People should cultivate [chastity] in the way that is suited to their state of life*. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single.” *Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence*... (CCC 2348-49)

Joseph Hid the Virgin Birth from Satan

Why, when God had decided that the Savior should be born of a virgin, he chose not a girl who was not betrothed, but precisely one who was already betrothed... I found an elegant statement in the letter of a martyr—I mean Ignatius... He stated, “*Mary’s virginity escaped the notice of the ruler of this age*.” *It escaped his notice because of Joseph, and because of their wedding, and because Mary was thought to have a husband. If she had not been betrothed or not had (as people thought) a husband, her virginity could never have been concealed from the “ruler of this age*.” Immediately, a silent thought would have occurred to the devil: “*How can this woman... be pregnant? This conception must be divine. It must be something more sublime than human nature*.” *But the Savior had so arranged his plan that the devil did not know that he had taken on a body*. (Origen of Alexandria, *Homilies on Luke* 6.3-5)⁴

“*Mary’s virginity and giving birth... escaped the notice of the prince of this world*...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 498)

⁴ Origen, *Homilies on Luke* (trans. Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.; Fathers of the Church 94; Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 24-25.

3. The Shadow of the Father

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Introduction

1. Joseph's Fatherhood: "Reputed"? "Legal"? "Foster?"
2. "Virginal" Father = fatherhood does not just mean *biological* generation¹
3. Earthly "Shadow":

In his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the *earthly shadow of the heavenly Father*. (Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* no. 7)

1. Joseph Named Jesus

Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and *you shall call his name Jesus* [Aramaic *ye-shua'* = "the LORD saves"], *for he will save* [Hebrew *yasha'*] *his people from their sins*. (Matthew 1:20-21)

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2:21)

Jewish Custom: he Father Named the Child

And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." *And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called*. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "*His name is John*." And they all marveled. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. (Luke 1:59-64)

2. Joseph Taught Jesus To Pray

And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. *And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him*. (Luke 2:39-40)

Jewish Law: Fathers Teach Children the Shema'

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; (Hebrew *שמע ישראל יהוה אחד*) *and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and *you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise*. (Deuteronomy 6:4-8)

3. Joseph Brought Jesus to Worship

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in *the company/caravan* (Greek *synodia*) they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did

¹ See Francis L. Filas, S.J., *Joseph, the Man Closest to Jesus: The Complete Life, Theology, and Devotional History of St. Joseph* (Boston, Mass.: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962), 152-336.

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not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “*Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.*” And he said to them, “How is it that you sought me? *Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?*” And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. *And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them;* and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:41-52)

Jewish Tradition: Fathers Taking their Sons to Jerusalem

All are subject to the command to appear [before the Lord] excepting a deaf-mute, an imbecile, *a child...*, women..., a man that is lame or blind or sick *or aged...* Who is deemed a child? *Any that cannot ride on his father’s shoulders and go up from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount.* So the School of Shammai. And the School of Hillel say: *Any that cannot hold his father’s hand and go up [on foot] from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount...* (Mishnah, *Hagigah* 1:1).²

4. Joseph Taught Jesus to Work

“Is not *this the carpenter’s (Greek tektōn) son?*... Where then did this man get all this?” *And they took offense at him.* (Matt 13:55-56)

The Carpenter’s Trade: Woodwork

[W]ood is the material of the carpenter (Greek *tektonos*), bronze that of the statuary. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.15)³

King Herod Employed Carpenters to Build the Temple (ca. 19 B.C.)

For he [King Herod] prepared a thousand wagons to carry the stones [for the temple], selected *ten thousand* of the most skilled workmen... and trained some as masons, others as *carpenters* (Greek *tektonas*), and began the construction only after all these preparations had diligently been made by him. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.390 [trans. LCL])⁴

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “*It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?*” But he spoke of the temple of his body. (John 2:19-21)

The Carpenter’s Trade: Ploughs, Yokes, Woodwork

When he [Jesus] was on earth he used to work as a *carpenter* (Greek *tektōn*), making ploughs and yokes... (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88)⁵

² In Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 211.

³ Epictetus, *Discourses, Books 1-2* (trans. W. A. Oldfather; Loeb Classical Library 131; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), 105.

⁴ See Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1999), 238.

⁵ St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (trans. Thomas B. Falls; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 138.

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The One Word Joseph Spoke

*A son's circumcision was the first religious obligation of a father, and with this ceremony (cf. Lk 2:21) Joseph exercised his right and duty with regard to Jesus... At the circumcision Joseph names the child "Jesus." (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Custos* no. 11, 12)*

The Virginal Father

The Virgin Mary herself, knowing full well that she did not conceive Christ as a result of conjugal life with [Joseph], *yet calls him the Father of Christ...* The fact, then, that the Lord Jesus Christ answers, "I must be about my Father's business," *does not emphasize that God is His Father in such a way as to deny that Joseph was his father also...* You see, then, ...that He did not say, "I must be about my Father's business," as though we were to understand this as meaning, "You are not my parents." *They were His parents in time; He, His Father in eternity...* As [Joseph] is in chastity a husband, *so is he in chastity a father... not in the flesh, but in love.* (St. Augustine, *Sermon* 51.16, 19, 20, 30)⁶

Spiritual Head of the Holy Family

Joseph fulfilled every aspect of his paternal role. *He must certainly have taught Jesus to pray, together with Mary.* In particular Joseph himself must have taken Jesus to the Synagogue for the rites of the Sabbath, as well as to Jerusalem for the great feasts of the people of Israel. *Joseph, in accordance with the Jewish tradition, would have led the prayers at home both every day — in the morning, in the evening, at meals — and on the principal religious feasts.* In the rhythm of the days he spent at Nazareth, in the simple home and *in Joseph's workshop*, Jesus learned to alternate *prayer and work...* (Benedict XVI, General Audience, December 28, 2011)

Why Was Jesus Son of a Carpenter?

You are the son of the Creator by whose will the world grew out of nothing; so, too, you are the son of Joseph... O son of the Creator, you who are also *son of the carpenter*, who when you were constructing the framework of the world were referring everything to the hidden mystery of the cross, *perchance in that very house of Joseph the thought of the cross never left your heart.* (Ephrem the Syrian, *Sermon* 17)⁷

The Holy Family and the Holy Trinity

St. Joseph was endowed with all gifts and graces required [for]... the guidance of *his family, which was composed of three persons only, representing to us the mystery of the most holy and adorable Trinity.* Not that there is any real comparison in this matter excepting as regards Our Lord, who is one of the persons of the most blessed Trinity, for the others were but creatures; *yet still we may say that it was a trinity on earth representing in some sort the most holy Trinity.* ...Joseph, Jesus, and Mary—a trinity worthy indeed to be honored and greatly esteemed! (St. Francis de Sales, *Spiritual Conferences* 19)⁸

⁶ In St. Augustine, *Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany* (trans. Thomas Comerford Lawler; ACW 15; New York, N.Y./Mahwah, N.J.: Newman, 1952), 43, 46, 63, 64.

⁷ Translation in Francis L. Filas, S.J., *Joseph, the Man Closest to Jesus: The Complete Life, Theology, and Devotional History of St. Joseph* (Boston, Mass.: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962), 62.

⁸ *The Spiritual Conferences of St. Francis de Sales* (trans. by Abbot Gasquet and Canon Mackey, O.S.B.; Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1945), 373-74.

3. The Shadow of the Father

Dr. Brant Pitre

St. Joseph: Your Spiritual Father

The divine household which Joseph governed just as with paternal authority contained the beginnings of the new Church... *The Virgin most holy is the mother of all Christians since she is the mother of Jesus... Jesus is, as it were, the firstborn of Christians, who are his brothers by adoption and redemption.* From these considerations we conclude that *the blessed Patriarch must regard all the multitude of Christians who constitute the Church as confided to his care in a certain special manner. This is his numberless family, scattered throughout all lands,* over which he rules with a sort of paternal authority because he is the husband of Mary and the father of Jesus Christ. (Leo XIII, *Quamquam Pluries* no. 3)⁹

Devotion to Joseph

I took for my advocate and lord *the glorious Saint Joseph and commended myself earnestly to him;* and I found that... he gave me greater blessings than I could ask of him. I do not remember even now that I have ever asked anything of him which he has failed to grant... *I wish I could persuade everyone to be devoted to this glorious saint... I have never known anyone to be truly devoted to him and render him particular services who did not notably advance in virtue,* for he gives very real help to souls who commend themselves to him. (Teresa of Avila, *Life* 6.6-7)¹⁰

⁹ In Filas, *Joseph: the Man Closest to Jesus*, 368-69.

¹⁰ Teresa of Avila, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus* (trans. E. Allison Peers; New York, N.Y.: Image, 2004), 34-35.