

DAY 12

Chaste Guardian of the Virgin, *Pray for Us*

It was necessary that divine Providence should commit her [Mary] to the charge and guardianship of a man absolutely pure.¹

— St. Francis de Sales

Chastity is a virtue. A very important virtue. To be chaste is to have self-mastery, to be in control of your passions and sexuality. Contrary to what many people think, a person who exercises chastity is not repressing or rejecting the beauty of human sexuality. On the contrary, chastity preserves the human heart and body for authentic self-giving. All people, no matter their vocation in life, are called to chastity. Chastity is the virtue that prevents us from being slaves to our passions and acting like irrational animals.

Celibacy, on the other hand, is a special form of chastity. God calls some men and women to celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Saint Joseph was both chaste and celibate. He was called by God to espouse a virgin consecrated to God in her mind, body, and soul. Saint Joseph was the Chaste Guardian of the Virgin.

Saint Joseph and Mary lived in what is often called a “Josephite marriage.” They were truly husband and wife, but they never engaged in sexual relations. Their vocation was to be united in heart, mind, and soul, but never in body. They were both consecrated to God and sacrificed a natural good for a greater good: the salvation of souls.

SAINT JOSEPH IS PURE OF HEART. To be chaste is to be pure of heart. If a person’s heart is not pure, they are incapable of seeing God. Saint Joseph’s heart is exceptionally pure. Saint Joseph gazed on the countenance of God in the Person of his Son for decades. Poets have often stated that the eyes are the window to the soul. If this is true, St. Joseph must have had the most chaste and pure eyes of any husband who ever lived. His eyes and heart were pure-intentioned, chaste, and afire with love for Jesus and Mary.

Modern man has become blinded by impurity. The world encourages premarital relations, cohabitation, contraception, and many other immoral practices. Chastity is a forgotten virtue today. Even married

couples live with the idea that they are free to do whatever they desire with the body of their spouse. However, this is not true. Chastity is required in marriage as well, in order for couples to truly love one another, to retain their dignity and respect for each other.

YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER IS A GENTLEMAN. Saint Joseph is the first Christian gentleman; next to Jesus, he is the greatest example of masculine chastity. He was married to the most beautiful woman in the world, and he treated her with respect, dignity, and reverence. If men today were more like St. Joseph — protectors and defenders of beauty, instead of users and abusers of the feminine mystery — what a different world this would be.

God wants all men to be like St. Joseph. He is the *first* Chaste Guardian of the Virgin. Most men will be called to marriage, while some are called to consecrated celibacy. Both vocations are necessary. Without marriage, there are no children. Without priests, there are no Sacraments. Married men need to be chaste in marriage; priests and bishops need to be like St. Joseph in their chaste love for the virginal Church — guardians, defenders, and protectors of the beauty entrusted to them, not users and abusers of the sacred mysteries.

Joseph, the just man, is appointed to be the steward of the mysteries of God, the *paterfamilias* and guardian of the sanctuary, which is Mary the bride and the Logos in her. He [Joseph] thus becomes the icon of the bishop, to whom the bride is betrothed; she is not at his disposal but under his protection.²

— Pope Benedict XVI

Read “Feast of the Holy Spouses” (page 125)

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)