

to be holy and without blemish. So their wives as their own bodies. He himself. For no one hates his own flesh as he hates it, even as Christ does the members of his body. "For this reason he and [his] mother and be joined together and become one flesh." This is a great mystery of Christ and the church. In any way, as Christ loves his church, so he loves his wife as himself, and the wife

— Eph 5:22-33

**HEAD OF YOUR FAMILY.** Obtain a copy of the prayer for your home. Place it in a prominent place to invoke the intercession of St. Joseph. The grace St. Joseph makes.

...which unites you to Christ! "This is the grace which comes to you and is yours. In your families! For this reason, St. Joseph and his family to his mission, and his son. ... offer a

John Paul II

## DAY 16

### Joseph Most Just, Pray for Us

He [St. Joseph] won for himself the title of "The Just Man," and thus serves as a living model of that Christian justice which should reign in social life.<sup>1</sup>

— Pope Pius XI

**W**hat does it mean to call St. Joseph a just man? Saint Josemaría Escrivá provides a great answer for us. He states:

Saint Joseph was an ordinary sort of man on whom God relied to do great things. He did exactly what the Lord wanted him to do, in each and every event that went to make up his life. That is why Scripture praises Joseph as "a just man." In Hebrew a just man means a good and faithful servant of God, someone who fulfils the divine will (cf. Gen 7:1; 18:23-32; Ezek 18:5ff; Prov 12:10), or who is honorable and charitable toward his neighbor (cf. Tob 7:6; 9:6). So a just man is someone who loves God and proves his love by keeping God's commandments and directing his whole life towards the service of his brothers, his fellow men.<sup>2</sup>

What about you? Are you just? Do you love God, keep his commandments, and act with honor and charity toward your neighbor?

*SAINTE JOSEPH WILL INCREASE IN YOU THE VIRTUE OF JUSTICE.* Theologians define the virtue of justice as "giving to another his due." For example, in our relationship with God, we owe it to him to be grateful for our existence, and to praise him for his goodness. We act justly toward God, giving him his due, when we worship him, especially by our participation in Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. If we fail to do this, we are not loving God. We are not acting justly toward God; we are not giving him his due.

For St. Joseph, being a just man meant he observed the dictates of the Jewish religion. This required him to travel to Jerusalem three times a year — a long distance from Nazareth — and participate in various rituals and ceremonies. You, on the other hand, most likely live a short distance from a Catholic church. If you can't spend one hour a week thanking God and worshipping him, you are not loving God or giving God his due. You are not a just man.

Holy Mass is not about the priest, the people, or the choir. It's about returning love for love and giving God his due. Yes, priests should preach well, liturgical music should be sacred and inspiring, and it's always pleasant to see familiar faces at Mass. Yet even if you find the priest less than edifying, the music a distraction, and the congregation spiritually dead, you need to remember it's not about them — it's about you acting justly and lovingly toward God. There is no greater way to tell God "I love you," give thanks to God, and worship him than through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving."

God is not the only one that we are to act justly towards out of love. You also need to give others their due. Do you? Do you love, venerate, and honor Mary, your spiritual mother? Do you love, venerate, and honor St. Joseph, your spiritual father? Do you treat members of your family with love, respect, and dignity? What about your neighbors, co-workers, and everyone else with whom you daily interact? If you are an employer, do you offer a just wage? Remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Lk 6:31). Your spiritual father acted justly and lovingly toward everyone; you should, too.

Do you wish to know why Joseph is called just? Because he possessed perfectly all the virtues.<sup>3</sup>

— St. Maximus of Turin

The Gospel describes St. Joseph as a Just Man. No greater praise of virtue and no higher tribute to merit could be applied to a man.<sup>4</sup>

— St. Pope Paul VI

Read "Just and Reverent Man" (page 141)

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)