

## DAY 18

### Joseph Most Prudent, *Pray for Us*

What prudence was required to educate a God become a child, who willed to obey him [St. Joseph] for thirty years!<sup>1</sup>

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

**W**hat is prudence? In modern times, many people consider it to be a vice or a flaw. If a person is cautious or circumspect in moral matters, they are quite often called a prude. Prudence, however, is a virtue — an extremely important virtue.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides a concise definition of prudence. It states:

Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it ... It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* (the charioteer of the virtues); it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure.<sup>2</sup>

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that prudence is the “principal of all the virtues.” Its role is to govern the other cardinal (preeminent) virtues: temperance, justice, and fortitude. Without prudence, a person will be either too lenient or too harsh. Prudence serves as a guide and a “charioteer,” helping the soul to avoid erroneous extremes.

*PRUDENCE IS THE VIRTUE OF KINGS AND RULERS.* Without prudence, no leader can exercise temperance, justice, and fortitude. Saint Joseph, king of the Holy Family and your spiritual father, is (after Jesus) the most prudent of all men. In every situation in life, he is a model of prudence. He prayed and waited on the Lord to reveal the mysteries of his wife’s pregnancy to him. He educated the God-Man and, in every situation, allowed prudence to govern his actions.

The prudence of St. Joseph was a supernatural prudence.<sup>3</sup>

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Supernatural prudence is different from human prudence. Human prudence guides a person to avoid difficulty, suffering, and

hardship. Supernatural prudence, on the other hand, does not seek to avoid suffering. Supernatural prudence embraces the cross out of love and always strives for the greater good. By God's grace, St. Joseph's prudence was supernatural and heroic. Before the wisdom of the cross was revealed to the world, St. Joseph willingly and voluntarily embraced suffering for the good of others. Before the mystery of co-redemptive suffering was unveiled to souls, St. Joseph lived it out of love.

*SAINT JOSEPH WILL INCREASE IN YOU THE VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE.*  
 Saint Joseph will help you exercise supernatural prudence. In every situation, he will teach you to allow prudence to be your charioteer, guiding you to always do what is right for the sake of love of God and neighbor, no matter how much you have to suffer for it.

Saint Joseph teaches us that prudence is correct knowledge about things to be done or, more broadly, the knowledge of things that ought to be done and of things that should be avoided.<sup>4</sup>

— Servant of God John A. Hardon

A man of human prudence would never arise from sleep and flee to Egypt with his spouse and child in response to a dream. A man of human prudence would quickly rebuke any man who informed his wife that her heart would be pierced with a sword and his Son be a cause of division. But St. Joseph is no ordinary man. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he is a man of supernatural prudence. He ponders, prays, discerns, and acts. Prudence is his charioteer. With St. Joseph, the virtue of supernatural prudence will be your charioteer as well.

Master that he [St. Joseph] is, he remains always the prudent and faithful servant. Saint Joseph, of the family of the kings of Judah, leads a poor and hidden life. Because he was destined to become, as it were, the governor and father of a weak and humble God, it was fitting that he should resemble him.<sup>5</sup>

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Read "Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys" (page 157)  
 Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (page 233)