

niton, for his mission, which will last as long as the Church itself, draws everyone within its scope. As adorers we have a right to a large share of his graces and protection, and careful study will show that all his special gifts aimed at making him a good adorer.

From his [Jesus'] entry into the world, even while still enclosed in Mary's womb as in a living ciborium, Jesus singled out Mary and Joseph to be his adorers. Joseph responded royally. He never ceased adoring Jesus in her womb. And after the child's birth at Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary adored him uninterruptedly as he lay before their eyes. They represented all mankind at the feet of Christ. Certainly Adam and Eve were well replaced!

At Nazareth Joseph's days were filled with work which [by] necessity took him away at times from his Infant God. During these hours Mary replaced him, but when evening brought him home again, he would pass the entire night in adoration, never tiring, only too happy for the chance to contemplate the hidden riches of Jesus' divinity. For he pierced the rough garments the child wore, until his faith touched the Sacred Heart. In profound adoration he united himself to the special grace of each one of the events in the life of Jesus. Have confidence, strong confidence in him [St. Joseph]. Take him as the patron and the model of your life of adoration.²

Saint Peter Julian Eymard is known as the "Apostle of the Eucharist." He was zealous in promoting Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Saint Peter Julian founded two religious communities to promote Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament for men, and the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament for women.

When we receive Holy Communion, let us consider that Jesus comes to us as a little baby, and then let us pray that St. Joseph helps us welcome him, as when he held him in his arms.³

— St. Joseph Marelllo

Adorer of Christ

How many times did he [St. Joseph], like the lone sparrow, nestle on the roof of that holy temple of the divinity, contemplating this divine Child sleeping in his arms, and thinking of his eternal repose in the bosom of the heavenly Father?¹

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Wherever St. Joseph traveled with his wife and Son, his home became an Adoration chapel. Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Egypt are all places where St. Joseph contemplated the divine presence of Jesus Christ and welcomed others to do the same. In that sense, St. Joseph is the founder of Adoration chapels and, with his wife, is the first to conduct a procession with the Body and Blood of Christ.

Along with Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph gave the world the greatest Adoration chapel known to man, the Catholic Church. Thanks to Mary and St. Joseph, every Catholic church around the world has a tabernacle housing the Real Presence of Jesus Christ — Christ present in his Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

No one can describe the adoration of this [St. Joseph's] noble soul. He saw nothing, yet he believed; his faith had to pierce the virginal veil of Mary. So likewise with you! Under the veil of the Sacred Species your faith must see our Lord. Ask St. Joseph for his lively, constant faith.²

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

In Nazareth, months before the angel revealed to St. Joseph that Mary was pregnant with a divine Child, St. Joseph was inches away from the tabernacled presence of God in Mary's womb. Saint Joseph's wife was a walking tabernacle. The Incarnate God was living and growing inside St. Joseph's wife's womb, and he didn't even know it. God was preparing him to be the loving father of the greatest treasure the world has ever known: the Incarnate Son of God.

As a newly married man, St. Joseph never wanted to be far away from his wife. Mary must have come to him and expressed a desire to visit her relative Elizabeth for three months, and this must have been quite a surprise to St. Joseph. When we read this episode in the New Testament, we tend to presume that Mary did not ask St. Joseph to accompany her to Elizabeth's. The sacred text, however, does not inform us of what exactly happened on this occasion, other than telling us that Mary went in haste to the hill country. We are not told if St. Joseph went or not.

Many saints and mystics — St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales, Venerable Mary of Ágreda, Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, and others — believe that St. Joseph did accompany Mary to Elizabeth's. Why wouldn't he go with her? What kind of husband would he be if he let his young and beautiful wife make such a long journey unaccompanied

by her husband? The New Testament does not **explicitly** tell us that St. Joseph went with Mary, but it also does not **explicitly** tell us that he didn't. From a marital perspective, how could he stand to be away from her for so long? It actually makes a lot of sense that St. Joseph would have accompanied Mary to Elizabeth's, and maybe even stayed there with her for the three months. It's a very long journey from Nazareth to the hill country where Elizabeth lived (nearly 100 miles). Horrible things could have happened to St. Joseph's beautiful bride on the journey. What newly married man would not be concerned about such a journey, especially one that involved walking and sleeping in dangerous places? No man in his right mind would stay behind.

In the mystical writings of Venerable Mary of Ágreda, Mary and St. Joseph engage in a delightful conversation about the Visitation:

[Mary to St. Joseph:] "My lord and husband, it has pleased the Lord to enlighten me, informing me that my cousin Elizabeth, despite being infertile, is now expecting a long-desired child. Therefore I think it may be suitable that I go and visit her to be of assistance and spiritual comfort to her. If, my lord, this is in accordance with your will, I shall do so. Consider yourself what may be best and command me what I am to do."

[St. Joseph to Mary:] "You well know, my lady and my wife, that your desires are mine and that I trust fully in your prudence, since your most honest will would incline to nothing that was not of the greatest satisfaction to the Most High. So I believe it to be with this journey. And so that it may not appear strange that you undertake it without the company of your husband, I shall follow you with joy to be of use to you on the way, until you have reached your destination."³

Even if St. Joseph did not remain with Mary at Elizabeth's for three months, it is very likely that he at least accompanied his wife to Elizabeth's to keep Mary safe from robbers and men with bad intentions. Upon arriving at Elizabeth's with Mary, he would have then returned to Nazareth alone. After three months, he would have made the return journey to Elizabeth's and safely escorted his wife back to their home in Nazareth. If these things did happen, St. Joseph unknowingly conducted the first procession with the Body and Blood of our Lord!

For the sake of meditation, let's say that St. Joseph at least accompanied Mary to Elizabeth's. What might he have experienced

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upon arriving at Elizabeth's? Well, he most likely would have heard Elizabeth's Spirit-filled greeting to Mary.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what the Lord said to her would be fulfilled!

— Lk 1:42-45

What would St. Joseph have thought of Elizabeth's greeting? Her words would have seemed strange to him. There is no way he would have understood their theological significance, because he had no idea that his wife was pregnant. Yet, as a man of deep prayer, he would have pondered her words and taken them to prayer. He didn't understand their significance at the time, but months later, when he noticed that Mary was pregnant, he would have recalled Elizabeth's words. Remembering that Elizabeth called Mary "mother of my Lord," St. Joseph's eyes would have been opened to the full reality of what was happening in the womb of his wife. As a devout Jew, St. Joseph was not ignorant of the Scripture that states that a virgin would bring forth the Messiah (see Is 7:14). Realizing this great wonder, he would have felt completely unworthy to be the husband and father of such a woman and Child.

The possibility that St. Joseph accompanied Mary and heard Elizabeth's Spirit-filled greeting helps us to understand why St. Joseph never doubted Mary or wanted to divorce her. As Elizabeth had been, he was overwhelmed with reverential awe at the revelation that his beloved wife was pregnant with a heavenly Child. A just and God-fearing man, St. Joseph did not consider himself worthy of living under the same roof as Mary and serving as the father of the Child in her womb. How could he possibly be worthy to be the husband of such a wife? How could he ever take such a mother and Child into his home and into his care? Nothing short of an angelic announcement would keep him from removing himself from the picture.

On the other hand, if St. Joseph did not accompany his wife to Elizabeth's house, imagine the loneliness he must have felt being without Mary for three months. A separation of such a duration would have been a torture to his heart. His heart must have longed to be reunited with his beloved. To hear her voice must have been on his mind day and night. How his heart must have beat wildly with joy at the return of his queen after three long months apart.

Whether he accompanied Mary to Elizabeth's or not, he most likely traveled with his wife and Son to see Elizabeth, Zechariah, and their son, John (the Baptist), on later "visitations." Such family visits are normal. Catholic intuition has always known this and depicted these visitations in art. Scenes of Mary, St. Joseph, the Child Jesus, and John the Baptist are prominent in Catholic art throughout the world. After all, Jesus and John were relatives. They would have played and prayed together during the many visits that took place over the years. Saint Joseph might not have been present to hear Elizabeth's greeting, or been present to witness the birth of John the Baptist, but St. Joseph would have seen and spoken with John the Baptist on the other family visits. Saint Joseph and St. John the Baptist had to have known each other.

If the first procession with Jesus was to Elizabeth's house, the second procession took place when St. Joseph journeyed with his pregnant wife to Bethlehem to be enrolled in the census. In this procession, St. Joseph established the world's first Adoration chapel: Bethlehem.

Saint Joseph went in haste with Mary to Bethlehem which means "house of bread," so that the bread of eternal life might be born there.⁴

— Venerable Joseph Mindszenty

How fitting it is that the first public exposition of the Living Bread from Heaven took place in Bethlehem. As Venerable Joseph Mindszenty notes, the word "Bethlehem" in Hebrew means "House of Bread." In Arabic, Bethlehem means "House of Meat" or "House of Flesh." Our Jesus, the true Bread come down from heaven, was born in poverty and placed in a manger for a reason. Our Lord is a humble king, and he wanted St. Joseph to place him in a poor manger because a manger is where animals feed. The word "manger" is related to the well-known Italian word *mangiare*: Eat!

O most intimate familiarity to be always with God, to speak only to God, to work, to rest, to converse in the company and presence of God! How many times did the happy tutor of the Child Jesus, like a chaste bee, gather the nectar of pure devotion from this beautiful flower of Jesse? How many times did he [St. Joseph], like the dove, hide in the heart of this rock?⁵

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

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The first Adoration chapel was visited by local shepherds, followed closely by Wise Men who came from a distant land to pay homage to the newborn God-King lying in a feeding trough (manger). Saint Joseph would not only establish Adoration in the Holy Land though. Saint Joseph established the second Adoration chapel in pagan territory: Egypt.

Saint Joseph is bold!

When Jesus was born, Egypt was both pagan territory and the bread basket of the world. How fitting that God sent St. Joseph to Egypt! There, St. Joseph was responsible for raising the Living Host that would feed the world. The Joseph of the Old Testament had saved his people from starvation by dispensing grain out of Egypt. The new Joseph would offer the world the "grain" he lovingly helped grow in Egypt, the living Bread that gives eternal life!

After their time in Egypt, St. Joseph and Mary walked with Jesus to Nazareth. This long walk was, and remains, the grandest procession of the Body and Blood of Christ ever conducted. It was a procession that covered more than 120 miles!

Once in Nazareth, St. Joseph and his wife adored the divine presence of Jesus in their home for decades. In one sense, it was like a house of Perpetual Adoration and uninterrupted contemplation, even while they carried out all the daily tasks and chores of domestic life. The Adoration lasted for decades!

If the two disciples going to Emmaus were inflamed with divine love by the few moments which they spent in company with our Savior, and by his words; so much so, that they said, "Was not our heart burning within us while he spoke to us on the way?" — what flames of holy love must we not suppose to have been enkindled in the heart of St. Joseph, who for thirty years conversed with Jesus Christ, and listened to his words of eternal life!⁶

— St. Alphonsus Liguori

Even if Jesus were outside the home, working, or on a journey, St. Joseph was still in the presence of God when he was near his wife.

Let me explain.

Have you heard of fetal microchimerism, sometimes also called fetomaternal microchimerism? It's a long, complicated term, I know, but it reveals something wonderful about the biological connection between a mother and a child. Fetal microchimerism is the scientific term that describes a process in which living cells of a child remain in

the body of a mother after her pregnancy has ended. In the late 20th century, scientists discovered that when a woman becomes pregnant, and after she has given birth, there are cells from her baby that remain in the mother's body. Many of these cells remain in her body for the rest of her life! Scientists and researchers have also discovered that the cellular exchange occurs in the other direction as well; cells of the mother are exchanged with her children and remain in the bodies of her children for life. This is amazing!

Though St. Joseph knew nothing of fetal microchimerism, God continued to bless him with the presence of Jesus whenever he was in the presence of his wife. To be near Mary is to be near Jesus. Jesus lives in her! Mary has in her body some of her divine Son's living cells. Our Lord didn't need to be in the house for St. Joseph to remain in the presence of God. Wherever Mary was, Jesus was. Saint Joseph's wife is a living tabernacle, a walking monstrance, a veiled temple. No wonder demons do not dare come near Mary — she is never without the divine presence. God lives in her body!

If the lily, by being exposed only for a few days to the light and heat of the sun, acquires its dazzling whiteness, who can conceive the extraordinary degree of purity to which St. Joseph was exalted, by being exposed as he was day and night for so many years to the rays of the Sun of Justice, and of the Mystical Moon who derives all her splendor from him [Jesus]?⁷

— St. Francis de Sales

I congratulate you, most holy Patriarch, for those delightful hours you spent joyfully contemplating Jesus and happily enjoying the beautiful interior and exterior beauty of Mary. Constantly you studied them, drawing sweetness, patience, and self-denial from their hearts.⁸

— Blessed Concepción Cabrera de Armida

Priests, monks, and nuns are privileged to experience something of what it would have been like to be St. Joseph. Every monastery and/or convent has a tabernacle housing the divine presence; all tabernacles are basically a replica of Mary's bodily temple. It doesn't matter if the tabernacle is veiled or if the doors are closed: Jesus is still there. It was the same in the Holy House of Nazareth. God lived in Mary at all times, and St. Joseph was perpetually in the presence of Jesus.

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The mark of the Christian is the willingness to look for the divine in the flesh of a babe in a crib, the continuing Christ under the appearance of bread on an altar.⁹

— Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Mary, God's tabernacle, is replicated in every tabernacle in a Catholic church. What is often missing in front of these tabernacles, however, are souls who resemble St. Joseph — souls who adore Jesus present and hidden in the tabernacle. The Church needs more people like St. Joseph.

We must beg for good adorers; the Blessed Sacrament needs them to replace St. Joseph and to imitate his life of adoration.¹⁰

— St. Peter Julian Eymard

To be like St. Joseph, you, too, need to adore Christ. You can go to the nearest Catholic church where Jesus is present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist is Jesus Christ. The Blessed Sacrament is the source and summit of the Christian faith, and St. Joseph wants to lead you to a deeper relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist.

In 1997, St. John Paul II conducted a papal visit to the Shrine of St. Joseph in Kalisz, Poland, and informed those in attendance that, before each of his Masses, he prayed the following prayer to St. Joseph.

O happy man, St. Joseph, whose privilege it was not only to see and hear that God whom many a king has longed to see, yet saw not, longed to hear, yet heard not (cf. Mt 13:17), but also to carry him in your arms and kiss him, to clothe him and watch over him!

O God, who has conferred upon us a royal priesthood, we pray to you to give us grace to minister at your holy altars with hearts as clean and lives as blameless as that blessed Joseph who was found to hold in his arms and, with all reverence, carry your only-begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary. Enable us this day to receive worthily the sacred Body and Blood of your Son, and equip us to win an everlasting reward in the world to come. Amen.¹¹

Spend time in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. If there is Perpetual Adoration at a church in your area, sign up for a weekly holy hour. Adoration will change your life. If there isn't a

church with Perpetual Adoration in your area, sometimes a parish will have Adoration for a few hours a day or on a particular day of the week. Go! If you are unable to find a church that offers exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at all, simply visit any Catholic church and pray before the tabernacle. Jesus is there night and day. He waits for you. Be another St. Joseph for Jesus and Mary!

When you visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, approach Jesus with the love of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and St. John.¹²

— St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar

O Blessed Joseph, I adore with you the first words that came from the mouth of the Incarnate Word. I prostrate myself with you to kiss with reverence the first footprints left by his adorable feet. O infinite God, You became weak in order to give us strength; You desired to speak like other children in order to teach us the language of heaven! O Blessed Joseph, inspire me with your feelings for Jesus, and obtain for me the grace to love God like you. Amen.¹³

— Blessed Bartolo Longo

The Holy House of Loreto

Has anyone ever visited Loreto who has not seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears the mighty works of God, and felt them in his soul?¹

— St. Peter Canisius

The holiest house in the world is in Italy.

You read that right. It used to be in the Holy Land, but it moved.

The family home of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph is located in the town of Loreto, Italy. How did it get there? Well, what you are about to read is the true story of how the home of the Holy Family in Nazareth was transported to Italy by angels. The story is so fascinating that you are probably going to want to go to Loreto after reading it.

According to historians, the home of the Holy Family remained in Nazareth for 13 centuries. Then, on May 10, 1291, it suddenly disappeared! All that remained of the house was the foundation. The sudden disappearance of the house was noticed by everyone in Nazareth, leaving the entire community completely baffled. For a person or group of persons to remove it so quickly without anyone noticing was impossible.