

## **Bishop John Barres' Meditation on the March 19, 2020 Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary**

**On this March 19, 2020 Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we celebrate the role of St. Joseph in Salvation History and in the mission of the Church. We also celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1.**

**In his decree *Quemadmodum Deus* issued on December 8, 1870, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Blessed Pius IX (1792-1878) proclaimed St. Joseph to be the *Patron of the Universal Church* and we will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of that decree on December 8, 2020.**

**In 1962, Pope St. John XXIII (1881-1963) inserted the name of St. Joseph in the Canon of the Mass and in 2013 Pope Francis added St. Joseph's name to the three other Eucharistic Prayers.**

**Our devotion to St. Joseph is so relevant to our experience these days of the outbreak of the corona virus. St. Joseph, like ourselves in these anxious days, faced constant uncertainty and changing events and circumstances in the course of his life in his role as the Spouse of the Virgin Mary and as the foster father of Jesus.**

**In *Divine Intimacy*, Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalene (1893-1953), the great Carmelite spiritual theologian, wrote: "St. Joseph's whole life may be summed up as a continual adherence to the divine plan, even in situations which were very obscure and mysterious to him. In our life, too, there is always some mystery, either because God is pleased to work in a hidden, secret manner or because His action is always incomprehensible to our poor human intelligence. Therefore, we need that glance of faith, that complete confidence which, relying on the infinite goodness of God, convinces us that God always and in all circumstances wills our good and disposes everything to that end. Only this loving trust will permit us, like Joseph always to say our *yes* to every manifestation of the divine will, a humble, prompt trustful *yes*, in spite of the obscurities, the difficulties, the mystery..."**

And so, we go to St. Joseph in these days of confusion, anxiety and mystery and we ask that we may be as faith-filled, mature, reliable, constant, hard-working and contemplatively prayerful as he was in the many times of crisis he experienced.

In his 1989 Apostolic Exhortation *On the Person and Mission of Saint Joseph in the Life of Christ and of the Church (Redemptoris Custos)*, Saint John Paul II (1920-2005), like St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), commends St. Joseph to us as a patron and intercessor for the depth of our interior lives.

He writes: “The same aura of silence that envelops everything else about Joseph also shrouds his work as a carpenter in the house of Nazareth. It is, however, a silence that reveals in a special way the inner portrait of the man. The Gospels speak exclusively of what Joseph ‘did.’ Still, they allow us to discover in his ‘actions’ – shrouded in silence as they are – an aura of deep contemplation. Joseph was in daily contact with the mystery ‘hidden from ages past,’ and which ‘dwelt’ under his roof. This explains, for example, why St. Teresa of Jesus, the great reformer of the Carmelites, promoted the renewal of veneration to St. Joseph in Christianity.” (25)

We go to St. Joseph in these days of confinement and instead of surrendering to boredom, restlessness and frivolous distractions, we ask St. Joseph to intercede for us that the Holy Spirit will expand our hearts, minds and souls in a spirit of deep, strong and consistent prayer in these challenging days.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us!

St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Patron of the Universal Church, pray for us.

Note: I encourage you all to watch a Youtube by Notre Dame University Theology Professor Fr. Kevin Grove, CSC, entitled “Saturdays with the Saints 2017: Venerable Solanus Casey (1870-1957) and St. Andre Bessette (1845-1937).” A key theme of St. Andre’s ecclesial mission was his devotion to St. Joseph which resulted in the building of the Basilica of St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal, Canada.

