

THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH 2021

Retreat Presentation And He Spoke Not A Word

Matthew 17:4 “Lord, it is good for us to be here!”

HOW DID THIS RETREAT COME ABOUT?

In this Year of St. Joseph, I received an email from USCCB. An email I’m sure many people received. In this email it specified different options to obtain a plenary indulgence during this Year of St. Joseph. One option was to complete a one day retreat and fulfil all the normal requirements for a plenary indulgence as well as specific prayers, particularly a specific prayer to St. Joseph.

Seems to me all I have to do is read or hear the word “retreat” and I am immediately prompted by the movement of the Holy Spirit, and this time was no exception. While speaking with some of the women I mentor and give spiritual advice to during the first few days of 2021, and while passing on this information about the plenary indulgence, many women suggested that I offer this one day retreat. God bless their hearts for having such reliance on my ability to do such a thing. But as I always say and is so evident in my life, I have no ability to do such a thing, but God does. So I offer this as His work.

Now with the COVID situation, the best way to offer this retreat in safety is by a Zoom connection. Beginning to write this presentation, I invoked the Holy Spirit to lead me in this process as I had no idea how to go about setting up Zoom. As the Holy Spirit usually does, I was immediately struck and amazed at the inspiration I received to offer this retreat. I was also amazed that immediately came to mind the thousands of things I could say and write..... about a man who spoke not a word! That compelling thought alone fueled my desire to write a paper on St. Joseph for a retreat.

Once beginning to write this paper, it came to mind this retreat would be a great collaborative effort and an avenue of spreading awareness of a ministry with which I have long been connected. So I contacted Kathleen Fox, Director of Gratia Plena ministry for discerning women in Kansas City. Once the information on this retreat I was putting together was passed on to her, this process took on real life. So here we are today, due to this collaboration, learning more about a man who can never be fully known.

And He Spoke Not A Word

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.
Our Father.....St. Joseph, Pray for us.

Joseph's Vocation

St. Joseph's vocation was paternal, which means "fatherly, authoritarian, patriarchal, domestic." Joseph and therefore Jesus come from a lineage that stretched two millennia. A lineage of those men and women who suffered terribly and at great length, but they also hoped for and longed for the Messiah. The people in this lineage are not at all perfect. In Matthew's gospel this lineage includes the names of five women, four of which are: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba..... and it was known that these women committed sins. And, I understand it was contrary to Jewish practice to even name women in a genealogy so it seems to me that Matthew must have stepped out on a limb, so to speak, to include their names.

Interestingly, these women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba ("the wife of Uriah") were in fact Gentiles. That's important! And the fifth woman mentioned was Mary, she was Jewish. That's important. For Jesus to be the all-inclusive Jew-Gentile Messiah, Mary had to be Jewish, but Jesus also had to have Gentiles in his lineage. These four women named fulfilled that need. Doesn't God plan out every last detail? Yes, He does.

But I don't think Matthew's point is only to give a head's up to women in an otherwise patrilineal genealogy, meaning male. To affirm women in the lineage, Matthew could have simply chosen those with whom his readers were most familiar such as Sarah, Rebecca, Leah.

If in including these women who committed sins Matthew only wanted to make the point that God forgives sins, obvious by the fact that there are sinners in His lineage, he already had plenty of "qualified" men in the genealogy from which he could have chosen to name. But, he had a different emphasis in mind didn't he? Yes, by including Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary, Matthew demonstrates that Christ has all the necessary ancestry to stand as King over both Jews and Gentiles—in other words..... over all the earth. On the earth were either Jews or Gentiles. This genealogy also proves that Jesus was a descendant of David and therefore qualified to be the Messiah as well. The stage is set.

This genealogy includes Joseph's name just prior to Jesus' name. Although St. Joseph is silent we do read enough in the Gospels to know how Joseph willingly and notably – in his free will, made a decision guided by an angel not to separate himself from Mary but in fact to take on the role of foster-father of the Word made flesh, with complete acceptance of all trials and sufferings that may come from his making this decision. To me.....this silent acceptance of any trials or sufferings that may come our way..... is exactly what is a sure mark of holiness.

As the patron and protector of his wife Mary, the mother of the unborn child, while also meeting the requirements of the census, Joseph searched for a place Mary could give birth to the child, a place safe from the weather. After many let downs, he was finally told of a cave (stable) that he could use.

I picture that Joseph, cleaning out the stable, after gathering fire wood, perhaps making a fire to heat up the stable, making a bed of hay for Mary to lie on, preparing the manger with straw for the child, collecting their few possessions from the donkey and placing them in the cave so they would be safe, he then was perhaps the first one to hold the infant Messiah. He was Mary's companion and he took care of all the details! What a remarkable husband he was....and how he must have loved Mary. What a man!

Joseph the true "Star"

When we really consider the shining star at Bethlehem, could we not think of St. Joseph as that shining star? Joseph was in fact a silent brilliance that leads us to the Blessed One who is the Messiah, the Christ. He leads Mary to Bethlehem for the census, protects her who is his spouse, on that Holy Night when our Savior, the Savior of the world, was to be born. He was there for them both and ever ready to do whatever he needed to do.

Now, the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem took around four or five day as they had to cover approximately 60-80 miles in changing weather. Certainly they were exhausted by the time they arrived but Joseph took care of all the duties necessary to make things as comfortable for Mary as he could. The birth took place in a stable or cave that was actually used for housing animals! In the dark of midnight, Mary gives birth to the child. After the long journey and after giving birth to the child I can see Mary sleeping soundly that night, completely confident Joseph would take care of the little one, and he did. She slept soundly and was not afraid because she knew Joseph was by her side to protect her and the child, and he did. I believe this quite beautifully demonstrates the importance of fathers in the life of the family....his wife, the unborn and the newly born child.

Joseph again becomes a beacon of light, lighting the way, so to speak, when he takes Mary and the new baby Jesus to Egypt. He takes them from the danger of Herod's wrath into the safety of Egypt where fellow Israelites resided. In Matthew's gospel, the infant Jesus, not unlike Moses, is in peril from a cruel king. Moses is in peril from Pharaoh and Jesus is in peril from Herod. Correlation. Jesus, like Moses, has a (fore)father/father named Joseph who goes down to Egypt. Correlation. Like the Old Testament Joseph this Joseph has a father named Jacob, and both Josephs receive important dreams directing and guiding them on what to do. Correlation.....all in the details, right?

Shortly after the visit from the Magi, Joseph received word from an Angel that he was to take the Mother and child and flee Bethlehem. ***“Rise, take the Child and his Mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child to destroy him (Mt 2:13).*** Now certainly this flight from Bethlehem to Egypt was a hard thing to do because in order to save his foster-son, they first needed to begin their flight..... in the dark of night. The foster father had to leave his home, his business which would have brought all three of them financial support, he was leaving his synagogue as important in his life as breath, his family, his childhood home. So, St. Joseph left everything he had unsure of what lay ahead.

Now I remember having read the words before, "his synagogue as important in his life as breath" and I wished to add them to this presentation because of the beauty of those words. But as I was typing them, tears actually came to my eyes thinking, we have a greater gift than the Synagogue.....we have the Catholic Church, the true lasting presence of God morning, noon and night, body, blood, soul and divinity, right within our grasp. Joseph and his family traveled maybe 65 miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem for their main worship in the Synagogue. In most instances, we only need to travel blocks or a few miles to Church. Should we not think about the Church as our Synagogue? And, should not the Catholic Church be as important in our life as breath??

Now there were two or three main roads to Egypt. The easier road was also the more traveled one; it passed through Gaza and then down south along the Mediterranean coast. We can envision Joseph beginning this trip toward Egypt, leading the donkey on which Mary and the new born infant sat, not knowing what he might encounter as robbers were known to follow the main roads leading in and out of town, so.....Joseph took the road less traveled, (ever heard that phrase before?) the more prudent road....but also the longer road, the more trying road, passing through Hebron and into the Sinai peninsula.

This was not an easy journey by any means was it? From what I understand, the normal mileage from Bethlehem down to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, through Gaza across the Sinai Desert and into Egypt was at least 40-50 miles depending on how far into Egypt they needed to go and that trip could last from 7 days to 9 days depending on how far they were able to travel each day. 40-50 miles, Joseph travels on foot, on an unpaved hilly road, in the heat, through the desert, in harsh weather, leading a donkey, constantly on watch to protect his precious cargo. What a man!

Again, I believe this demonstrates the importance of the father in the life of the family and particularly the newly born child. As many travelers have done, Joseph may have joined up with a traveling caravan along the way to secure better protection (protection in numbers right?) and it would have provided more shelter for Mary and Jesus as some of the carts would have had a straw domes over the cart to protect passengers from sun and weather. But what an extremely long trip! What great resolve Joseph had. What bravery! What a man.

But, Joseph walked this long road in silence, and I can imagine him... thinking on the mystery of this little child....this little child in his mother's arms..... sitting on a donkey..... and he might then begin to recognize the magnificence, splendor and wonder of this beautiful little child he would soon bounce on his knee and with whom he would teach the carpenter trade. I can imagine that every so often they would stop to stretch, find a little rest, get a drink of water, or eat a piece of unleavened bread which might have, by then, become hard and stale.

Once in Egypt it is uncertain as to where they finally settled. Joseph had to continue to be on guard for hostile people who did not have a great love for Israelites. He had to find work, food and shelter for his family and He might have at first even begged for food. He would probably use a tent type covering to put a roof over their heads until he could find a sturdy shelter.

They stayed in Egypt for anywhere from 1260 days which is equivalent to 3 years and 5 months, or as many as 7 years as suggested by St. Thomas Aquinas. Soon the angel would appear in Joseph's dream telling him to return to Nazareth. The journey back to Nazareth was now going to be another 120 miles. It was probably going to take another 2 plus weeks for the family to return home. What tenacity.

St. Joseph the Worker

The name Joseph in Hebrew means "he increases." But it has also been translated as "artisan." The Gospel of Matthew is the only gospel to mention Joseph as a carpenter..."Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matt 13:55) Tekton was the Greek word used for carpenter which included stone cutter and even metal worker. Joseph may have done all three of these jobs.

The feast of St. Joseph the Worker was established by the Church in 1955 to call on St. Joseph particularly due to the spread of Communism at the time.

This carpenter, St. Joseph the Carpenter, is a humble carpenter. This humble carpenter is also the patron of travelers, of a happy death, of families, of those wishing to sell their homes, of craftsmen, engineers and the working people in general. I would also offer that St. Joseph is the patron of the interior life, a man we can go to for help in our meditations and prayer life in general. He is also the patron and watchful defender of expectant mothers and the unborn child and newly born child. It would serve us well to call on St. Joseph to protect the expectant mothers and the unborn, to bring an end to abortion, particularly during this Year of St. Joseph.

St. Joseph, this humble carpenter, is also the patron of other countries listed by Catholic.org as, Canada (where the largest shrine to St. Joseph is located), Mexico, Korea, Austria, Belgium, Sicily, Peru, Croatia, China, the Philippines as well as..... Vietnam!! Imagine that!

Joseph is not mentioned as one present at the Wedding Feast at Cana and it is therefore suspected that Joseph has passed by this time. Jesus would have never entrusted his mother to the care of John the Apostle if Joseph had been alive. If he had been present at the Crucifixion, he would, under what was the present Jewish custom, have been expected to take charge of Jesus' body, but this role is instead performed by our third Joseph, Joseph of Arimathea. Details?

According to tradition, at the time of St. Joseph's death Mary and Jesus were present. With certainty, I can picture Joseph resting quietly in the arms of both Jesus and Mary as he was dying. It is this fact that Jesus and Mary were present at his death that perhaps prompted the Church to attribute a happy death to St. Joseph.

The main feast day of St. Joseph in the Church is March 19.....today! It was established in Rome in 1479 by Pope Pius V.

So think about this silent Saint as having one feast day as St. Joseph the Worker, another feast day as St. Joseph, and I'd even add a third feast day as the Feast of the Holy Family which surely

includes him.....Right? St. Lucia (Loo...cee...a) who was the last child shepherd survivor of Fatima said, "The final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan will be about marriage and the family."

Has it ever been more evident that the attack on the family is happening!! It has been morbidly attacked for years. That is why we need to call on St. Joseph, the "Terror of Demons" to be our strong arm in this battle..... as this battle, is the final battle.

Devotion to St. Joseph goes back to the 9th century when at that time he was called "the guardian of the Lord." What a title for such a humble man to receive. But he was certainly the Lord's guardian. I also see St. Joseph as the guardian of what belongs to the Lord, the unborn child as well as the newborn child. Children belong to the Lord..... not us.....we are merely, like St. Joseph, their guardians.

The Litany of St. Joseph was promulgated in 1909. This humble, quiet, sturdy man has a litany of titles (24 of them) attributed to him. Reciting this litany may be of good use for mediation at any time but during this retreat..... it is on the list of prayers to recite for the plenary indulgence.

Do we as Catholics know that St. Joseph appeared in an apparition with Our Lady and St. John the Evangelist at 8:00 on a Thursday evening in 1879 in Knock, Ireland? Do we know that St. Joseph appeared at Fatima in 1917 on the last apparition, holding the child Jesus who blessed the world? St. Joseph is patron of the Universal Church, the Catholic Church, and he continues to watch over this sacred and holy Church for all time. St. Joseph was declared Patron of the Universal Church in 1870 by Pope Pius IX which actually makes Joseph, get this, the patron of a multitude of people!!! Sadly, it wasn't even until 1889 that the first Encyclical was written on St. Joseph which was issued by Pope Leo XIII. Therefore, this should be a year of great joy and thankfulness for the presence of this silent Patron in our lives in the Church noted on this 150 year anniversary (2020-2021). And don't forget, St. Joseph was one who had the most intimate contact with the founder of the Catholic Church.....Jesus.

Angels guided them both

We read in the scriptures that Mary was gifted by a visit from the Angel Gabriel, announcing the good news. Well, let us think about the fact that an angel appeared to Joseph at least three times.

The first time an angel came to him was in a dream to tell him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife as the child she carries is indeed the Christ, the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel. St. Joseph, unhesitatingly, did as the angel requested. This struck me while thinking of the unborn and the fact that we do not know what any child might be or do if allowed to retain their life. We are also prompted not to be afraid, but to trust the Lord in all cases regarding pregnancy. The second time the angel talks to Joseph is to say that he should take Mary and the child and flee to Egypt and stay there until he comes again to tell him what to do next! St. Joseph

unhesitatingly did as the angel requested. The third time the angel comes to let St. Joseph know that with the death of Herod it is now safe to return to Jerusalem. St. Joseph unhesitatingly did as the angel requested.

Now think about this.....St. Joseph was guided by angels from the very beginning!! We should reflect on that! We should reflect on the fact that in all instances St. Joseph unhesitatingly did as the Lord requested. Was this not a just and holy man that God graced him with what I call spiritual direction from angels?

And, this humble carpenter was chosen from ALL men to be the foster father and guardian of Christ. This humble servant could not even afford to purchase a lamb to ransom his foster-son. He could only afford two turtle doves. So, this humble carpenter was also.... poor.

After Joseph's return to Jerusalem, he was briefly referred to in the gospel when Mary speaks to Jesus in the temple telling him "your father and I were anxious about where you were." Joseph is not referred to at all.... ever again. If we meditate on this I believe a viable scenario would beto become holy, to lead a good saintly life, to lead a good humble life, to lead a life worthy of heaven's reward, we do not need to be known, do we? We do not need to say a word, do we? We do not need to be acknowledged, or spoken of, commended, celebrated, or applauded. Indeed, simply put..... seems to me to be holy all we need to do is be like St. Joseph, live our life like St. Joseph, pray to St. Joseph to inherit for you the humility, tenacity, bravery, and love needed to reap heaven's reward. It's all there for the asking!

Quotes from Saints regarding St. Joseph

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

St. Joseph was chosen among all men, to be the protector and guardian of the Virgin Mother of God; the defender and foster-father of the Infant-God, and the only co-operator upon earth, the one confidant of the secret of God in the work of the redemption of mankind.

St. Teresa of Avila

Though thou hast recourse to many saints as thine intercessors, go specially to St. Joseph, for he has great power with God.

Ven. Mary of Agreda a Poor Claire nun who became abbess at the young age of 25 and was said to have mastered prayer, spiritually married herself to St. Joseph

The children of the world are ignorant regarding the privileges and rights which the Most High has conferred on my holy spouse, and the power of his intercession with the Divine Majesty and with me. But I assure you, my daughter, that in Heaven he is most intimate with the Lord, and has great power to avert the punishment of Divine justice from sinners. In all trials seek his intercession, because the Heavenly Father will grant whatever my spouse asks.

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Since we all must die, we should cherish a special devotion to St. Joseph, that he may obtain for us a happy death. All Christians regard him as the advocate of the dying who had honored him during their life, and they do so for three reasons: First, because Jesus Christ loved him not only

as a friend, but as a father, and on this account his mediation is far more efficacious than that of any other Saint.

Second, because St. Joseph has obtained special power against the evil spirits, who tempt us with redoubled vigor at the hour of death.

Third, the assistance given St. Joseph at his death by Jesus and Mary obtained for him the right to secure a holy and peaceful death for his servants. Hence, if they invoke him at the hour of death he will not only help them, but he will also obtain for them the assistance of Jesus and Mary.

St. Thomas Aquinas

Some Saints are privileged to extend to us their patronage with particular efficacy in certain needs, but not in others; but our holy patron St. Joseph has the power to assist us in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking.

St. Alphonsus Liguori

We should, indeed, honor St. Joseph, since the Son of God Himself was graciously pleased to honor him by calling him father. The Holy Scriptures speak of him as the father of Jesus. If, then, the King of Kings was pleased to raise Joseph to so high a dignity, it is right and obligatory on our part to endeavor to honor him as much as we can.

St. Alphonsus Liguori

God, because of the great love He bears us, and His great desire to see us saved, has given us among other means of salvation the practice of devotion to the saints. It is His will that they, who are His friends, should intercede for us, and by their merits and prayers obtain graces for us which we ourselves do not deserve. But everyone must know that, after the Mother of God, St. Joseph is, of all the saints, the one dearest to God. He has, therefore, great power with Him and can obtain graces for His devout clients...

St. Alphonsus Liguori

The two disciples, going to Emmaus, (Lk. 24:13-31) were inflamed with divine love by the few moments which they spent in company with our Savior, and by His words. What flames of holy love must not, then, 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; who observed the perfect example which Jesus gave of humility and patience, and saw the promptness with which He obeyed and helped him in his labors, and all that was needed for the household!

St Gregory of Nazianzus

The Lord has arrayed Joseph, like with a sun, in all which the saints possess together in regard to light and splendor.

So all that every saint possessed together in regards to their light and splendor, the Lord showered down and applied to St. Joseph.

We are certainly blessed to be here today to honor such an amazing Saint, a man's man.....who spoke not a word!

I encourage you to purchase the book "Consecration to St. Joseph" immediately. Fr. Calloway is the author and if you go on stjosephnow.org....you can get the book for just the cost of shipping. Make no mistake, the family is being persecuted, you must act as Catholics in every effort possible to call on St. Joseph to battle against Satan. It is no coincidence, that at this particular time, we are able to consecrate ourselves to his care as our Spiritual Father as well as we have hopefully already consecrated ourselves to Mary as our Spiritual Mother. We need to consecrate ourselves to Jesus also so that we have the Holy Family be at our side to fight the battle of our lives....the battle of Satan against our families, the final battle.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, we are thankful that Your Church offers us the gift of plenary indulgences. Thank you Lord for giving to us this great Saint as our model.....a man's man..... a model for holiness! May we follow his lead and have the same resolve to grow in love of You and Mary.

May we with Your help, particularly as Catholics, rise to protect the unborn and the newly born child. May we, with Your help, rise to protect all of human life from conception to natural death. May St. Joseph, your protector, particularly in this Year of St. Joseph, guide us, protect us, protect our families, protect all expectant mothers and the unborn and the newly born child.

May we, with Your help, be unafraid to spread the word of this magnificent man who saved You, an unborn and then newly born child, from the wrath of Satan. We know that Satan even today continues to seek to destroy the unborn and newly born child as well as the whole of family life. We thank you for giving us St. Joseph as the Terror of Demons and gallant knight to help us fight the battle of our lives. Keep our souls at peace not only during this time of retreat but in all of life. Amen

St. Joseph, Pray for us.

Carol Kleinert 2021