

*Meditations in preparation for the Solemnity of St. Joseph  
Institute Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará*

**Meditation Day 9 (February 26)**

*"Chaste Guardian of the Virgin"*

*Pray for us.*

Saint Joseph was chosen among all men, to be the protector and guardian of the Virgin Mother of God; the defender and adoptive father of the Child Jesus.

I will divide this meditation into two points: the virginity of Mary and the protection St. Joseph gave to Mary.

**1. The Virginity of Mary**

*In the Gospel of St. Luke, Mary is spoken of as "a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph" (Lk 1:27).*

*We know few details about Mary. It is said that she was a virgin, that she was full of grace and that she was betrothed.<sup>1</sup>*

*At the time of the Annunciation, Mary was betrothed. Saint Matthew adds that they still did not live together, that is, in the same house (...) The Jews made a distinction between betrothal and marriage; one took place one year before the other. In general, girls were married between 12 and 13 years old and young men between 18 and 24. A year later, there was a celebration of the marriage, in which a procession (consisting of the Grooms Friends) solemnly took the Bride to the Groom's home.*

*Saint Luke says that Mary was (parthénos) a virgin. In itself, the expression simply indicates the status of the person at the time it is described, without reference to their future. The question that the girl addresses to the angel, ("How can this be since I have no relations with man?") expresses, on one hand, that She knows well how children are brought in to the world, and, on the other hand, that she does not have future intention to carry out any marital practice. In effect, the angel announces a future and not past conception; he says, "You will conceive ... you will give birth ..." and not "you have conceived." He does not tell her, therefore, that she is already pregnant. It was obvious, then, that a betrothed young woman, although a virgin, if she intended to live an ordinary conjugal life, understood that such an announcement would come true in due time and in the normal ways of the "knowledge" between a woman and her husband. Her question, then, does not reveal an exaggerated innocence but a weighted and definitive intention of not knowing men. She was, then, a virgin with the intention of remaining such for life. And although this was not very common in Israel, there is no lack, of testimonies of the practice of perpetual virginity among some groups of that time, such as, for example, the Essenes. John the Baptist himself will not marry, nor will Jesus.*

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. Fr. Miguel Angel Fuentes, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, pg. 22

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*This being the case, it is inadmissible that Joseph ignore his Bride's resolution, because of justice and to give reason for the determination with which Mary responds to the angel, it is to be assumed that the young husband was aware of Mary's dispositions and that he would have accepted it, having determined, to also live virginally. ”<sup>2</sup>*

## **2. Custody of Saint Joseph to the Virgin**

*In reference to the guardianship of St. Joseph to Mary, we see her throughout the Gospel.*

*Let us look at the example given to us in the Gospel of St. Matthew 1:19 when "Joseph, her husband, who was just and did not want to give her away, intended to divorce her quietly."*

*"Mary, not having manifested to her husband the appearance of the Angel or the wonderful conception by the Holy Spirit, put St. Joseph in a tremendous test of faith.*

*Legally St. Joseph had two solutions:*

*1) Accusing Mary before the courts, which according to the law of Moses, would have condemned her to death, as Lev 20:10 says "the man who commits adultery with the wife of another, with the wife of his neighbor, both will be irretrievably dead, both the adulteress and the adulterer ", Dt 22:22-24, Jn 8:2.*

*2) Give him a libel of repudiation that is to say of divorce, allowed by law for such cases. Yet, not doubting even a moment the sanctity of Mary, the patriarch decided to leave her secretly so as not to inflict her, until Heaven intervened, clarifying the mystery,<sup>3</sup> "an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, it is through the Holy Spirit that she has conceived" (Mt 1:20).*

*In this event, we can see the care and respect that St. Joseph showed to Mary.*

*Our Lord tells us: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God." (Mt 5:8)*

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. Fr. Miguel Angel Fuentes, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke pg. 22

<sup>3</sup> Msgr. Dr. Juan Straubinger, The Holy Bible, Mt1:19 Footnote, 2007, pg. 18