

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

Meditation on Day 10 (February 27)

"Foster Father of the Son of God"

Pray for us.

Pope Saint John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos*, speaks of the paternity of St. Joseph¹: Joseph's marriage to Mary is the juridical basis of his fatherhood. It was to assure fatherly protection for Jesus that God chose Joseph to be Mary's spouse. It follows that Joseph's fatherhood - a relationship that places him as close as possible to Christ, to whom every election and predestination is ordered (cf. Rm 8:28-29) - comes to pass through marriage to Mary, that is, through the family.

While clearly affirming that Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that virginity remained intact in the marriage (cf. Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38), the evangelists refer to Joseph as Mary's husband and to Mary as his wife (cf. Mt 1:16, 18-20, 24; Lk 1:27; 2:5).

Moreover, while it is important for the Church to profess the virginal conception of Jesus, it is no less important to uphold Mary's marriage to Joseph, because juridically Joseph's fatherhood depends on it. Thus, one understands why the generations are listed according to the genealogy of Joseph: St. Augustine asks, "why should they not be according to Joseph? Was he not Mary's husband?... Scripture states, through the authority of an angel, that he was her husband. Do not fear, says the angel, to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Spirit. St. Joseph was told to name the child, although he was not born from his seed. She will bear a son, the angel says, and you will call him Jesus. Scripture recognizes that Jesus is not born of Joseph's seed, since in his concern about the origin of Mary's pregnancy, Joseph is told that it is of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, he is not deprived of his fatherly authority from the moment that he is told to name the child. Finally, even the Virgin Mary, well aware that she has not conceived Christ as a result of conjugal relations with Joseph, still calls him Christ's father."²

St. Joseph, we beseech your intercession on behalf of all parents, especially those who are suffering to see you as the example to fatherhood.

St. Joseph, Foster Father of the Son of God

Pray for us!

¹ St. John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation Redemptoris Custos*, August 15th, 1989, n.7

² St. Augustin, *Sermon 51*, 10, 16: PL 38, 342