



Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ. Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, in spite of difficulties I trust in your love and mercy. I believe in you, I hope in you, and I love you above all things. These ingredients – faith, hope and love – will help strengthen me for today's battle. Lord, I entrust myself to you unconditionally.

Petition: Lord, grant me a clean conscience like that of your foster father, Joseph.

1. My Situation: A danger could exist on our spiritual journey. When everything is quiet, works well and is intelligible, or when others esteem our efforts, our life seems to flourish. On the other hand, when everything is tough, humiliating or painful, a repugnance seems to cast a gray cloud over us. We may even begin to wonder if God still loves us. We need to keep our faith in God strong always. Joseph is a good example for us to emulate, for he did not become discouraged easily when undergoing trials.

2. A Clean Conscience: Joseph, a just man, wanted to believe Mary's story, but the facts were too harsh to comprehend. He loved and cared for Mary, but he felt betrayed. Since he had a clean conscience, he tried to dismiss the perfect dream of taking Mary to be his wife and decided to divorce her quietly. God, seeing Joseph's honesty, communicated to him the truth about Mary's integrity. A message in a

dream was enough to convince his willing heart. How willing am I to believe the works of God in my life? How willing am I to fulfill God's will?

3. Not All Is Easy for a Just Man: God chose a man of great integrity and detail to shoulder the daunting responsibility of raising his Son. Would Joseph ever have imagined that five months after taking Mary into his home he would have to take her to Bethlehem without any comforts or security during the journey? Would he ever have imagined that he would have to flee to Egypt, dodging swords and soldiers? This was the price he paid for being an honorable man. However, the Lord rewarded Joseph with being the foster father of the Creator of the Universe, with all the blessings and satisfactions that this would imply.

Conversation with Christ: O Christ, King and Lord, your foster father Saint Joseph provides me with an example of courage in bearing serenely the weight of life's crosses and difficulties. Help me to see the beauty of giving limitlessly and surrendering my life to you.

Resolution: I will chat with Saint Joseph at some moment during the day, asking him to teach me how to be serene in times of trial.