

**Homily – Solemnity of Saint Joseph
Mass with 11th Grade Students – March 19, 2024**

Today we celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph. We know too little about his life. Speaking about Joseph, and based on this same passage of the gospel, Pope Francis says: (quote) *“The Gospel does not explain what his thoughts were, but it does tell us the essential: he seeks to do the will of God and is ready for the most radical renunciation. Rather than defending himself and asserting his rights, Joseph chooses what for him is an enormous sacrifice.”* (end of quote). Saint Joseph followed the example of his remote ancestor, Abraham, and foreshadowed the sacrifice on the cross of his adoptive Son, Jesus.

Biographies in greatly detail are written about men known for their responsibilities: the Emperor of..., the President of..., the CEO of... However, we are barely told about the identity of Saint Joseph. He was a craftsman in a tiny village, but none of his works are preserved. No speech, like that of John the Baptist; no prayer, like that of Zechariah; no song. Nothing! He is the husband of Mary, the father of Jesus, the Patriarch of the Holy Family, the Patron of the Church. He was related to none other than David and Abraham, but his true greatness is in his closeness to Jesus and Mary.

We would love to know what Saint Joseph and Mary were like as boyfriend and girlfriend. We would love to know about the professional skills of Saint Joseph, but we do not. We would love to know about the religious practices of the Holy Family, both at home and at the synagogue, but we can only imagine. However,

among the very few things that are said about Joseph personally, there is one that says it all: "... he was a righteous man..." Joseph was a good man! Next to Joseph's connection with Jesus and Mary, anything else matters too little.

There needed to be a man as good as Saint Joseph for God to teach us how mercy should be practiced in a world full of misunderstandings. Through his example, the Holy Spirit teaches us how to prepare for the celebration of the Paschal Mysteries of our salvation, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Joseph shows us that we must always give the benefit of the doubt. If we must assume anything before acting, it should always be the best possible option. We must be humble to acknowledge that only God can judge consciences.

Joseph had a good plan for his own life, but the mission that God had reserved for him was greater than he could imagine. He was always attuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit, speaking from the depths of his heart and from above. When the time came, he did not insist on following his own life plan. He also did not allow resentment to poison his heart. If we learn from him to renounce the option of violence, rumor, revenge, God will show us a new path. God wants to make you part of his project. The holiness that Jesus has reserved for each of you is greater than you can imagine. You are key for God's plan to make Jesus present in the world.

Let us ask Our Lady of Guadalupe to help us know and imitate Saint Joseph, so that through the struggles and trials of life we may be risen again by Jesus.