

THE MONTH OF ST. JOSEPH

WEEK 2

FEBRUARY 24 - EIGHTH DAY

ST. JOSEPH, MODEL OF UNION WITH JESUS CHRIST

Sancte Joseph ineffabilibus benedictionibus dotate, ora pro nobis.

St. Joseph, confirmed in grace, pray for us.

FIRST POINT: Union with Jesus Christ is the most perfect expression of faith, and at the same time is its characteristic principle. Spiritual life receives its vitality from Jesus Christ, and is the more productive of virtue and abundant in good works according as the union of the soul with him becomes more intimate. "Without me you can do nothing," says our Saviour. Without the aid of grace man cannot entertain a good thought.

St. Paul says: "And no man can say the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost." Our Lord makes use of a familiar and striking comparison in order to make this text more clear to us. Speaking to His apostles, He says: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." Thus Jesus Christ continuously communicates His graces to us. A father of the Church, using another comparison, says that union with God is to the soul what air is to the lungs; for as we could not live a natural life without those successive inhalations which at short intervals cause the beating of our hearts, neither can our souls live the life of grace unless they receive spiritual nourishment from Jesus Christ. Let us live so as to be able to say with St. Paul, "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."

SECOND POINT: All true Christians experience the mysterious effects of the supernatural life, although they are not always perceptible to us. To experience these effects, it suffices that our souls be in a state of grace, and that we frequently invoke Jesus Christ, and offer our principal actions through Him to God the Father. The more frequently we think of Jesus Christ, the oftener we invoke Him; the more we beg His grace, which inspires us to imitate His example and obey His precepts, the more shall the supernatural life be perfected in us. We should be most unhappy had we not these simple and easy means of advancing in virtue, acquiring merit, and increasing our reward. In our days all men aspire to freedom. The greatest liberty is that given us by Jesus Christ in uniting us with himself, and enabling us to live in a Christian manner; for this union frees us from the thralldom of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It gives us a mastery over our faults, our actions, and elevates us far above all that could debase or degrade our dignity as Christians.

THIRD POINT: St. Joseph understood and practised this indispensable virtue of a Christian life. This union with God was not unknown to the just men of the old law. The principle and nourishment of their virtues were drawn from a belief in the merits of a Redeemer, and consequently from their union with Him. But this mysterious union has taken a wondrous development since the coming of the Redeemer, and the perfect fulfillment of the prophecies which previously gave His history to the just men who were not to see Him. St. Joseph, with the Blessed Virgin, was the first to contemplate the model of all justice. He saw and praised Him, adored Him as his God, and loved Him as his son. Are our lives in unison with that of Jesus Christ? Let us repeat these words, imposed on us as a dogma: Nothing without Jesus; on the

contrary, all things by Jesus, in Jesus, and with Jesus — *per ipsum, cum ipso, in ipsum* — by Him as mediator of grace; with Him, our model and our strength; in Him, the sole object of the complacency of the Father.

PRAYER

HOLY St. Joseph, I dare not repeat the words of the apostle, " I live, now not I ; but Christ liveth in me."

Those words, which are the device of holy souls that love and practice union with Jesus Christ, I find impressed on your heart, and, perhaps, gathered from your lips. But, alas ! I feel that I yet live in myself,

In my own thoughts, in my predominant faults, In the love of riches, and in the susceptibilities of my nature. Help me, powerful saint, to live for Jesus, with Jesus, in Him, and by Him.

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to mind the preceding reflections.

Repeat from time to time the invocation: St. Joseph, enriched with graces, pray for us.

Let your thoughts, words, and actions be in union with Jesus.

Conform your will to the will of God.

Rise promptly in the morning at a given hour.

Recite a Pater and Ave once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.

FEBRUARY 25 - NINTH DAY

ST. JOSEPH, FIRST CONFESSOR OF THE NEW LAW.

Sancte Joseph, legis novae confessor prime, ora pro nobis.

St. Joseph, first confessor of the new law, pray for us.

FIRST POINT: The title given to St. Joseph at the beginning of this meditation might cause confusion in the minds of the faithful, unless fully explained. The holy Church gives him this title, and honors him in her public office as first among her confessors. We say that he was the first confessor of the new law, because he was the first just man who died under the empire and sweet influence of the law of love. In styling a great number of saints confessors, the Church does not mean to signify that they were priests and exercised the ministry of confessor, but it has adopted this manner of expression in the same sense that we would say to confess the faith, to confess the Gospel, or, more simply still, to confess Jesus Christ.- Consequently, the word confessor should be well understood and sufficiently explained in the following point.

SECOND POINT: To confess Jesus Christ is to acknowledge and prove that we are His disciples ; to believe all the truths taught us by the Church in the name of Jesus Christ ; and to practise His law as His ministers make it known to us. The resistance of the spirit against faith, and the flesh against the world and morality, exacts from the faithful a kind of martyrdom, and our confession derives its value from their interior violence and exterior combats. To confess Jesus Christ in a manner worthy the title of saint and confessor, is to believe the truths taught by the Church with a more lively and ardent faith than do the generality of the faithful ; but especially to live according to the teaching of the Gospel with a devotion and perfection bordering on heroism. The holy confessor does not bind himself to follow the rigorous precepts of the Gospel, but he attaches himself to the observance of the counsels, and follows as closely as possible the divine Model, thus becoming in his turn an example to others. St. Joseph, then, confessed Jesus Christ in the manner indicated in this point of our meditation. He was the first after the Blessed Virgin to imitate Jesus Christ in a perfection until then unknown. He listened to Jesus Christ, and

implicitly believed the truths received from the lips of eternal truth. He not only followed the rigorous precepts of the Gospel, but he moreover practised everything inculcated by the counsels, thus arriving at the heroic martyrdom of natural inclinations, and meriting the name of confessor. What simplicity yet incomprehensibility in the concise words made use of in the Gospel: He was a just man !

THIRD POINT: It remains now for us to examine and see if we confess Jesus Christ, His spirit, and His Gospel. We can enter heaven without being canonized saints and confessors, or without forcing on ourselves the fulfillment of the evangelical counsels ; but it is not possible for us to attain eternal bliss if we do not, in some degree, imitate the saints and advance in the path of perfection. Not to advance is to recede. By a non-correspondence with the grace of God, we expose ourselves to lose our souls. St. Paul, addressing the faithful, says: " If you live according to the flesh, you shall die ; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." Do our lives correspond with our profession of confessors of Christ and of His Church?

Let us seriously examine our hearts, and correct in them what we may find opposed to the virtues of a true Christian. Let us thank God for having sustained us in the good we have accomplished, and humble ourselves for the non-conformity of our words and actions with our profession. May the words of our Saviour be applied to us: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father, who is in heaven."

That is to say, I will, on judgment day, recognize before my Father, as my disciple, him who during life will have recognized me as his Master.

PRAYER

ADMIRABLE Saint! we have not up to this confessed Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth. Help us to correct all in our conduct, everything that is contradictory to our faith. Obtain for us the coinage and strength necessary to fulfil our obligations as Christians and followers of Christ crucified. Grant that we receive all as coming from God, centre our hopes in Him, and be faithful to His grace

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to your mind the preceding reflections.
Repeat from time to time: St. Joseph, first confessor of the new law, pray for us.

Do not question others through curiosity.

Let all your projects be subordinate to the will of God, and in all your undertakings depend on Him.

During meals attend to the wants of those at table with you.

Recite the Pater and Ave once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.

FEBRUARY 26 - TENTH DAY

ST. JOSEPH, MODEL OF HOPE

Sancte Joseph, legis novae confessor prime, ora pro nobis.

St. Joseph, first confessor of the new law, pray for us.

FIRST POINT: Christian hope is a virtue which has for its first object future and eternal life — that is to say, the possession, knowledge, and love of God during all eternity — and for its second object the graces necessary as a means of attaining to this supreme end. Hence it leads us to believe that our past sins have been forgiven, and that God will raise us up and have pity on us if we should have the misfortune again to fall into them, though at the same time making us entertain the sentiment that God in His mercy will give us grace to guard against new falls. Moreover, it hopes and incessantly prays for the signal favor of final

perseverance. How sweet are these thoughts, and how consoling this obligation of confidence in the beneficence of our Heavenly Father towards His children ! Christianity alone makes hope a virtue, for it alone teaches us the opposite excesses of defiance and presumption. The unfortunate traitor Judas sinned against the virtue of hope by defiance and despair. To guard against presumption, we must rely on God alone, and distrust ourselves. Presumption caused St. Peter to deny his divine Master. Let us be penetrated with these thoughts, and dwell on them, and beg of God the virtue of hope through the intercession of St. Joseph, who practised it in its perfection.

SECOND POINT. — The virtue of hope corresponds in a marvellous manner to the title of confessor, which, with the Church, we gave to St. Joseph in yesterday's meditation. To all bearing this title the Church applies this device of Christian hope. Happy is he who has not placed his hopes in the things of earth ; and, in deed, this is one of the most precise lessons given us by Jesus Christ, and one that makes the difference between the old and the new law. The expectation of the Jews looked forward to transitory joys and terrestrial recompenses. Jesus Christ entirely effaced from His law this hope allow able to the just men of old. The mutable happiness of earth must be subservient to hope ; and the true Christian will place no value on the joys of this life, since his proposed goal is eternal joy with God. The former teachings of Jesus Christ in the Beatitudes are the points of introduction to His doctrine. All the confessors of the new law must have understood the lessons and examples of Jesus Christ from this point of view, and St. Joseph was the first to receive and follow them. May the sentiments relative to Christian hope in this meditation affect our lives and actions, and tend to enkindle in our hearts the same degree of this virtue to which St. Joseph attained !

THIRD POINT. — No earthly joys nor human consolations mingled in the hope of St. Joseph. His future life on earth and in heaven was blended in the one same hope and love. Let us not view the condition in which Providence placed him as a preventive against the reverses of fortune. It was not to aid his great soul in the practice of humility that Joseph was poor and lived in poverty ; but it was to teach us how our choice should be directed. Had he been rich, he would have sacrificed all and despised the worldly advantages of a brilliant future, in order to become more closely attached to the hopes of eternal life, to follow the example of our divine Master, and have impressed more deeply on his mind and heart the desire of eternal life. Or if, in obedience to the will of God, he had been obliged to live in prosperity, his whole life would have been characterized by voluntary self denials, renunciation, and sacrifice. This is a salutary lesson, from which we must derive profit. We are not obliged to fore go all pleasures and joys ; but we should not allow our hearts to become attached to them, so that in tne enjoyment of them we forget the desire of heaven. The more we seek for terrestrial happiness, the less we think of heaven ; and the practise of hope, as taught in the first part of this meditation, would become impossible. Sursum corda — " Lift up our hearts."

PRAYER

HOLY St. Joseph! thy name is linked with hope. Obtain for me this gift, and let my soul be impressed with its sweet and amiable obligation of hoping all things from God. Grant that I may never more place confidence in human support, nor my happiness in perishable goods. Let the thought of the judgments of God only awaken a new cause for love. Teach me to live as a Christian, and to become worthy of the hope which your soul so fully appreciated. May I confide in God as the author of my salvation, hoping all things from His mercy, desiring to possess Him, the source of true joy, despising all earthly goods, guarding against them by continual sacrifice, and preparing my soul for the delights of heaven. Amen.

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to mind the preceding reflections. Repeat from time to time the invocation: St. Joseph, first confessor of the new law, pray for us.

Address your inferiors attentively and politely.

Are not certain affections of our hearts too ardent and ill regulated?

Observe mortification of the eyes.

Recite the Pater and Ave once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.

FEBRUARY 27 - ELEVENTH DAY

SAINT JOSEPH, MODEL OF PATIENCE AND MORTIFICATION

Sancte Joseph, Christi patientis imitator prime, ora pro nobis.

St. Joseph, first imitator of the sufferings of Christ, pray for us.

FIRST POINT: The whole life of Jesus Christ was a cross and a martyrdom, says the author of the "Imitation of Christ." We may say that the life of a Christian must be the same. This conclusion is drawn from the Gospel. It resumes the teaching of the apostles, and proves that suffering is the chief characteristic in the lives of the saints. On this principle, and following these models, we must reflect on the necessity of sufferings. Coming from God, we must make them meritorious by a voluntary acceptance and loving offering, and sometimes even impose them on ourselves by generous acts of mortification and sacrifice. We have learned that the Christian must be a confessor by confessing Jesus Christ and Him crucified. These acts of mortification, directly opposed to nature, and painful to it, bear testimony of our love for Jesus. Thus the name of Christian may be regarded as synonymous with that of martyr. This is a severe but important lesson, one which, if understood and practised, would be an abridgment of all others, and which we seek, in the resolutions taken each day of this month, to implant in our souls, and to inculcate to others. St. Joseph is our model in this, inasmuch as we can apply to him in a true sense the beautiful and noble appellation of martyr.

SECOND POINT: St. Joseph suffered in his senses, his mind, and his soul. First in his senses. He was a poor workman, and this occupation must have been painful to him, since he could number kings and chiefs of nations among his ancestors. The journey to Bethlehem, and the flight and sojourn in Egypt, were the cause of inexpressible suffering to him. Second, in his mind he endured painful apprehensions and motives of fear, less for himself than on account of those two precious beings who were placed in his charge, and whom he had to support and protect. Without imagining unknown perils, he knew enough of the Incarnation and Redemption to be convinced that the Saviour of the world would pay a great price for our ransom. His soul, as well as that of Mary, was pierced by the words of Simeon, and reflection often brought to his mind the mysteries in which he was an intimate participator. Thirdly, in his soul. There was no martyrdom more painful than the sufferings to which Almighty God was pleased to subject St. Joseph during the first periods of the Incarnation. God concealed the mystery from him, and made him witness of the condition of the Holy Virgin, his chaste spouse — a condition which seemed to accuse her of infidelity towards him and towards God. Mary, our holy and sweet Mother; Mary, the Virgin Immaculate, must herself have suffered in the mental anguish of St. Joseph. Their reciprocal anxiety must have increased in one the suffering of the other. Add to this suffering that which was caused by the three days' loss of Jesus, and again the repulses met at Bethlehem, probably in Egypt, and at Nazareth. Moreover, in this detail of the sufferings of St. Joseph, we have mentioned only those coming directly from the hands of

Providence ; other voluntary sacrifices and self-imposed mortifications are the secrets of heaven.

THIRD POINT: We have explained the doctrine of self-denial, and given a great and touching example. Let us now compare our own conduct with this lesson and model. How far advanced are we in Christian mortification? Do we understand and practise its maxims, and do we comprehend its importance, its advantages, and its indispensable necessity, whether for the expiation of our sins, to prevent new relapses, or to advance in virtue — each act of which is naturally an effort or sacrifice — or to detach us from earth, and make the hope of heaven dearer and more precious to us — whether, in fine, to resemble Jesus Christ, who suffered so much for us, and thereby give Him the strongest proof of our tender affection? The thought of testifying our love for God, and manifesting our gratitude for His benefits to us, and our happiness in being allowed to endure pains and sacrifices for Him in commemoration of the sufferings, sacrifices, and affronts which he endured for us, should incessantly incite and animate us to bear patiently all the sufferings, pains, and sacrifices in life. But, alas ! our most essential duties seem insupportable, for the manner in which we fulfill them indicates the repugnance we have for them. Let us be humbled at our weakness, and pray for more generosity.

PRAYER

GLORIOUS St. Joseph, thou wert a martyr in imitation of the Blessed Virgin, thy Spouse, and the Queen of martyrs. Thou, through prophetic revelation, hast been on Calvary, and endured the lingering death of compassion, which in the Virgin Mother surpassed all the torments of martyrs. Mayest thou be blessed, our protector and father; for it was for us thou didst suffer ! But thy soul, sustained by grace under the weight of its trials, wast prepared by sufferings and voluntary sacrifices. Pray that I may be animated by thy example.

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to mind the preceding reflections:

Repeat from time to time the invocation . St. Joseph, first imitator of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, pray for us.

Make choice of some sacrifices after the spirit of St. Joseph.

Recite the Our Father and Hail Mary once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.

FEBRUARY 28 - TWELFTH DAY

ST. JOSEPH, MODEL OF THE LOVE OF GOD AND OF SUFFERINGS

Sancte Joseph, in charitate ardentissime, ora pro nobis.

St. Joseph, ardent lover of God, pray for us.

FIRST POINT: After the meditation made yesterday on the sufferings of St. Joseph, we must not imagine that our venerated and glorious protector had severe points of character, caused by sorrow and contracted by affliction. Calmness and mildness marked his whole demeanor, particularly his angelical countenance, and nevertheless he at all times suffered in tensely. The mystery of this mildness, peace, and even joy, amidst sufferings, is explained by the influence of the love of God on the endurance of suffering and crosses, and the reciprocal influence of the love of sufferings and crosses on the development in us of the love of God. The love of God ! These few words explain better than all others the great doctrine of the necessity of mortification and sufferings. Let us examine the subject of yesterday's meditation still more closely, and, placing ourselves at the foot of the cross, beg of St. Joseph that its sweet and precious influence may excite us to the love of suffering in union with Jesus.

SECOND POINT: When we truly love God, we feel ourselves drawn to the practice of mortification and to the love of sufferings: 1st. Because he counsels and commands them. He makes use of an express command, in which he places every one under the necessity of making sacrifices. " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and daily follow me." This is not simply an invitation, but a command, and one that is not addressed to a class of persons, but to all who desire to be Christians. We find in the Gospel several other maxims formal as this one, and numerous others which may be regarded as counsels ; but counsels are sufficient for those who love. When love is sincere, it is easy to comply with the will of the beloved. 2d. God was the first to endure sufferings for love of us. We have already alluded to this motive, and would not again refer to it were it not so easy to repeat to ourselves, " Jesus Christ has loved me and delivered Himself to death for me." What a happiness for me to suffer for Him, like Simon the Cyrenean, who assisted Him in carrying His cross, and accompanied Him on His way to Calvary ! 3d. God would not have advised nor commanded sufferings, nor would He have given us an example of love of sufferings, were they not to be in turn strongest and truest proofs of our love towards Him. God is spiritual. The most touching expression that can be used to testify our sentiments towards Him may be but formulas uttered by the lips without moving our hearts ; but sufferings endured for God, and sacrifices and crosses offered to Him, manifest more strikingly than words could that we love Him purely for Himself. This is proof of our love, the one, too, which God desires, as it is given by the heart, whose most sensitive and delicate fibres, often bleeding and torn in nature's conflict, are looked upon with infinite appreciation by our divine Jesus, who will Himself in heaven become our only love and consolation.

THIRD POINT: The love of crosses and sufferings dilates our hearts, and rapidly increases the love of God in them. Those who fear crosses naturally shrink from the exercise of the works of mercy, from the frequent reception of the sacrament of penance, and the correction of their faults ; whereas, love of sufferings removes all obstacles which retard, embarrass, and finally force us to desist entirely from the love of God. When the possession of earthly joys and benefits satisfies our hearts, we forget heaven ; but when oppressed with sorrow and affliction, we instinctively draw nearer to God, and have recourse to prayer. When all around becomes dark, and, by providential concurrent circumstances or the heroism of our own will, we suffer in abandonment, then God becomes our resource, our support, and our hope ; and the invocation, " Incline unto my aid, O God ! O Lord ! make haste to help me !" comes from the depths of our hearts. God manifests his love in a most tender and paternal manner towards those who generously suffer for him. This mercy of God removes the bitterness of sufferings without destroying it. The sting is felt, but the balm of divine consolation is immediately poured over to heal the wound. Thus suffering produces love, and love produces suffering in all souls, as well as in the soul of St. Joseph, whose heart was ever animated with divine love. Let us believe this doctrine and imitate this model.

PRAYER

HOLY St. Joseph, by our love for thee, and admiration of thy spirit of the cross, we beg of thee to obtain that our sentiments may become like unto thine. Thou couldst exclaim with the Prophet, "*Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum*" — " My heart is ready, O Lord ! my heart is ready." Then shall my soul be prepared for the loving designs of Providence, who realizes spiritual progress only by sacrifices and denials.

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to mind the preceding reflections.
Repeat from time to time: St. Joseph, ardent lover of God, pray for us.

Let your mind and heart be impressed with the truths mentioned in the two preceding meditations.

Desire a more ardent love of God and of the cross.

Receive willingly and endure patiently all afflictions which God may send us.

Recite the Our Father and Hail Mary once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.

MARCH 1 - THIRTEENTH DAY

ST. JOSEPH, MODEL OF ARDENT CHARITY

Sancte Joseph, in charitate ardentissime, ora pro nobis.

St. Joseph, model of ardent charity, pray for us.

CHARITY is the most excellent and eminent of all virtues, including all the others, and giving them their true value and perfection. It is the noblest exercise of our faculties. Its influence produces the principal and essential difference between Christian virtue and human morality. Its practice is on earth, but its perfection only in heaven.

FIRST POINT: To love God seems simple and agreeable to the reasoning mind. God manifests himself in the beauty, grandeur, and sublimity of his wondrous works. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable fact that without the pale of the true religion, though we hear the word of God discussed in beautiful and appropriate terms, we seldom or never see manifest proofs of love towards Him. Natural strength and virtue are too weak to produce that act of supreme love which makes us prefer God above all things, and retain a deep and durable impression of love for Him ; still it is not only possible, but easy, for a Christian to love God. Besides the eternal works of God, which always inspire one with an idea of His infinite perfections, a Christian has the revelations of faith opening to his view a new field vaster, a thousand times richer and more varied, whence shine forth the grandeur, beauty, and, above all, the goodness of God. Revelation is truly a field of mysteries, where all is splendor and beauty, greatness and sublimity ; but let us repeat, more manifest than aught else, goodness and love. Moreover, as it is only by grace that the Christian is enabled to love God with his whole heart and soul, mind and strength — in a word, as God deserves to be loved — so those who do not correspond to this grace do not love God as he should be loved.

SECOND POINT: St. Joseph loved God with an ardent love. He was just ; and perfect love of God and justice are inseparable. As he was eminently just, he loved the source of all justice in an eminent degree. Contemplating in their true light the grandeur and extent of the mysteries of Christianity, which are the sublimest testimony of the incomprehensible works of God and of his infinite bounty, he was attached to them by the closest and most tender ties. These sentiments were elevated and consecrated by an abundance of celestial favors and graces, greater than which were given to none but the Blessed Virgin Mary. How sweet to contemplate St. Joseph, not before the tabernacle where dwells the God of love, not at the foot of the cross whereon that God died for us, but carrying in his arms, and near his heart, the God Incarnate, the Infant God of love, who deigned and wished to be called the Son of Joseph. We are allowed to become participators in this happiness of our glorious saint by loving God with our whole souls.

THIRD POINT: Do we love God? Being Christians, we can and must love Him, and manifest our love by acts of love ; saying our morning and evening prayers devoutly; loving Him above all things — that is to say, more than all the goods of the world, the interests of fortune, and more than anything created. We should love God with our whole hearts, not dividing our affections between the Creator and the creature, but loving all things in God and for Him, since our Lord Himself tells us we cannot serve two masters. We

should love God with all our strength, not sparing ourselves in anything when the accomplishment of the will of God is concerned. We should love Him as the saints loved Him, as St. Joseph loved Him, and as did a holy priest, the Curé of Ars, who, with sweet simplicity, said, " God created little birds to sing, and they sing ; God created man to love Him, and he does not love Him."

PRAYER

HOLY St. Joseph ! my prayer to-day A will be an act of love, which I will beg thee to present to God. I desire to love God, His holiness and infinite power. I desire to love the Sovereign Bounty, Him who is love, and who loves me with an ineffable love. In Him I will place my consolation and my strength here on earth, and my hope of supreme bliss in heaven.

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to mind the preceding reflections:

Repeat from time to time the invocation: St. Joseph, ardent lover of God, pray for us.

Be diligent in the fulfillment of duty.

Sacrifice all affection for vain and trifling objects, and generously attach your hearts to the eternal welfare of your souls.

Do not listen to frivolous or uncharitable conversations.

Recite the Our Father and Hail Mary once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.

MARCH 2 - FOURTEENTH DAY

ST. JOSEPH, HEAD OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Sancte Joseph, caput nobilissimae et sanctissimae families, ora pro nobis.

Saint Joseph, head of the holiest and noblest of families, pray for us.

IN our days, revolutions are everywhere rife. The spirit of revolt could not originate in society. It must be produced to a certain degree by the habits formed in family relations. In the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph we see order, peace, and calm serenity ruling all things. There neither talent nor merit claims the right of command; on the contrary, the greatest in merit and dignity obeys the least, and the will of God is the law of their lives. Let us examine each member of the Holy Family, and learn our duty from them.

FIRST POINT: The Father. He is the representative of God, the head and director of the household ; but St. Joseph in this capacity exercises his authority with all simplicity, humility, and sweetness. He is continually brought before God by the weight of the double responsibility towards the Mother and the Child. Joseph was obedient to God in all things. He is the model after which fathers should govern. St. Paul warns them to avoid provoking impatience, anger, or hatred by rough, harsh, irritable commands, or by the severity of their punishments, which are allowable only to repress disobedience or natural tendency to evil. Were the hearts of all fathers animated with the love of Jesus and of Mary, as was the heart of St. Joseph, their actions governed by the same principles, and their affections nourished by the same thoughts, their lives would close with the same desires.

SECOND POINT: The Mother. All that Mary saw and heard was treasured in her heart, so that she might impart it to others. She allowed herself to be governed by St. Joseph without remark or resistance, well knowing the motives by which he was inspired. Whenever she interposed her authority, it was done by way of supplication, as at Cana, or by a tender maternal reproach, as in the temple. Silence, reserve, tears,

and prayers should be the habitual resource of Christian mothers. A mother's sphere becomes extended when a father fails in his duty, compromises his authority, and even provokes resistance by his disorderly conduct. But we prefer to imagine ourselves in the heart of a Christian family, where the parents are all that God wishes them to be. A Catholic mother should imitate the Blessed Virgin in her prudence, reserve, and submission to the will of her husband; and the care of her children should be her chief duty. Though she exercises less authority over them than the father does, her influence is much greater than his. Oh ! did mothers know the power of tears o'er the hearts of their children, and the efficacy of prayers in their behalf with the heart of Jesus, their lives would be offered a continual sacrifice for the salvation of those entrusted to their care.

THIRD POINT: The Child. Children should obey their parents. The only history of the childhood of Jesus given in the Gospel is, *Et erat subditus illis* — "And He was subject to them." It adds, it is true, that He grew in grace before God and man ; but this was a consequence of His submission and obedience. The virtue of obedience comprises all the others. Children that are submissive and obedient to God and their parents will also increase in virtue, grace, and merit before God and man. Once only did our Lord seem to resist, or at least offer an excuse to His parents; when they complained of His having fled from them for three days, He said, " How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" There is but one circumstance wherein a child is authorized to act contrary to the wishes of his parents — that is when the glory of God and the salvation of his soul is concerned. He should then say, as did Jesus, Do you not know that the interests of God, our Father in heaven, must first be considered, and that obedience to parents should be subordinate to the will of God?

PRAYER

GREAT Saint, not to thee alone do I this day address my prayer. I desire to invoke the whole family, of which you are the father. Holy and amiable family of Nazareth, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, protect Christian families, particularly mine. Let humility, meekness, obedience, and all virtues dwell in it. May the members composing it be united in thee, that death may not separate them. May those bearing the cherished names of father, mother, brother, sister, or friend meet in heaven. Amen.

RESOLUTIONS

DURING the course of the day recall to your mind the preceding reflections.

Seek to learn from others, rather than to teach.

Be obedient to parents and superiors.

Mortify the sense of hearing.

Recite the Our Father and Hail Mary once, and St. Joseph, pray for us, three times.