



Feast of Madeleine Sophie - 25th May 2021

Saint Madeleine Sophie introduces us to Saint Joseph.



"This statue of Saint Joseph was honoured by our Blessed Mother and by all our Mothers General. It was in the rue de Varenne in the room of our Mother Foundress. According to this small sketch by Mother Perdrau, it was on this same piece of furniture and with this same placemat."

This statue is currently on the desk of Barbara Dawson, our Superior General, in her office at the Mother House in Rome.

As we celebrate Sophie's feast in this special year dedicated to Saint Joseph, let us look at how she honors him and calls on him as the "patron of all religious houses and the model of the interior life" (Conference of Saint Madeleine Sophie, 1829).

From the very beginning, Sophie has emphasized that "the spirit of this Society is essentially based upon prayer and the interior life" (Abridged Plan of the Institute #5).

She invites us to turn to Saint Joseph from whom we have much to learn about the interior life:

Who better than he could teach us to know the Heart of our divine Master, who often enjoyed a rest in his arms? For after Mary, Joseph alone had that honor, and besides, he lived about thirty years with this God Incarnate. Now who could say the treasures of knowledge and virtue that he drew from this intimate familiarity with Jesus and Mary?

(To the novices, in preparation for the Novena of St Joseph, 9 March 1833)

Let us ask him for his interior spirit, this spirit of prayer, of which he was such a perfect model, in the midst of such an active life.... Ah! let us therefore understand today that without this interior spirit our Society.... could neither subsist nor fulfill the end that it proposes, which is to work for the glory of the Heart of Jesus, by making it loved.... Ask for this grace ... not only for you ... but for the whole Society.

(To the novices, Conference on the Interior Spirit, Feast of St Joseph, 18 March 1829)

In our time today, Pope Francis likewise draws our attention to Saint Joseph, especially at this time of great uncertainty.

I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience... My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how "our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone... How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all". Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

(Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*)

With Madeleine Sophie, let us ask Saint Joseph to grant us both the interior spirit we are called to cultivate, and the selfless dedication to serve, support, and stand with the weak and vulnerable.

Saint Joseph,

guardian of the Redeemer,
servant of Christ,
minister of salvation,
support in difficulties,
patron of exiles,
patron of the afflicted, and
patron of the poor,***

show us the way to grow in our interior life;
guide us on the path of selfless, dedicated service;
share your courage so that, like you,
we can be artisans of hope,
especially among the weak and vulnerable.

In a special way, we ask for your protection during this pandemic.
Intercede for our world affected in different ways by Covid-19.

Be with all those who take the front lines
to help the sick and provide essential services.
May all those who work to eradicate this pandemic
find effective ways that will be made available to all.

Saint Joseph... pray for us.

***These are the seven new invocations added to the Litany of Saint Joseph, as approved by Pope Francis.

*Happy feast of Sophie to all!
With her, we pray for the intercession of Saint Joseph.*

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