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## **St. Joseph: Foster Father of Jesus**

**San Bernardino of Siena, priest**



*This reading on St. Joseph is used by the Roman Church for the Office of Readings for March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph. It is an excerpt from a homily (Sermo 2, de S. Joseph: Opera 7, 16, 27-30) by St. Bernardino (after whom the valley in CA is named). San Bernardino was a Franciscan Friar who died in 1444. During his lifetime, he was perhaps the most powerful preacher not only in Italy but in all of Christendom. He is best known for spreading devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. To read Marcellino D'Ambrosio's article "St. Joseph's Claim to Fame," [click here](#).*

There is a general rule concerning all special graces granted to any human being. Whenever the divine favour chooses someone to receive a special grace, or to accept a lofty vocation, God adorns the person chosen with all the gifts of the Spirit needed to fulfil the task at hand.

This general rule is especially verified in the case of Saint Joseph, the foster-father of our Lord and the husband of the Queen of our world, enthroned above the angels. He was chosen by the eternal Father as the trustworthy guardian and protector of his greatest treasures, namely, his divine Son and Mary, Joseph's wife. He carried out this vocation with complete fidelity until at last God called him, saying: "Good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your Lord".

What then is Joseph's position in the whole Church of Christ? Is he not a man chosen and set apart? Through him and, yes, under him, Christ was fittingly and honourably introduced into the world. Holy Church in its entirety is indebted to the Virgin Mother because through her it was judged worthy to receive Christ. But after her we undoubtedly owe special gratitude and reverence to Saint Joseph.

In him the Old Testament finds its fitting close. He brought the noble line of

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patriarchs and prophets to its promised fulfilment. What the divine goodness had offered as a promise to them, he held in his arms.

Obviously, Christ does not now deny to Joseph that intimacy, reverence and very high honour which he gave him on earth, as a son to his father. Rather we must say that in heaven Christ completes and perfects all that he gave at Nazareth.

Now we can see how the last summoning words of the Lord appropriately apply to Saint Joseph: "Enter into the joy of your Lord". In fact, although the joy of eternal happiness enters into the soul of a man, the Lord preferred to say to Joseph: "Enter into joy". His intention was that the words should have a hidden spiritual meaning for us. They convey not only that this holy man possesses an inward joy, but also that it surrounds him and engulfs him like an infinite abyss.

Remember us, Saint Joseph, and plead for us to your foster-child. Ask your most holy bride, the Virgin Mary, to look kindly upon us, since she is the mother of him who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns eternally. Amen.

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