

“Married life: an occasion for God’s presence on earth”

There are many good reasons to honor Saint Joseph, and to learn from his life. He was a man of strong faith. He earned a living for his family - Jesus and Mary - with his own hard work. He guarded the purity of the Blessed Virgin, who was his Spouse. And he respected - he loved! - God's freedom, when God made his choice: not only his choice of Our Lady the Virgin as his Mother, but also his choice of Saint Joseph as the

Husband of Holy Mary. (The Forge, 552)

2 December

When I think of christian homes, I like to imagine them as being full of the light and joy that were in the home of the holy family. The message of Christmas is heard in all its forcefulness: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" [1]. "And may the peace of Christ triumph in your hearts," writes the Apostle [2]. It is a peace that comes from knowing that our Father God loves us, and that we are made one with Christ. It results from being under the protection of the Virgin, our Lady, and assisted by St Joseph. This is the great light that illuminates our lives. In the midst of difficulties and of our own personal failings, it encourages us to keep up

our effort. Every christian home should be a place of peace and serenity. In spite of the small frustrations of daily life, an atmosphere of profound and sincere affection should reign there together with a deep-rooted calm, which is the result of authentic faith that is put into practice.

For a Christian marriage is not just a social institution, much less a mere remedy for human weakness. It is a real supernatural calling. A great sacrament, in Christ and in the Church, says St Paul [3]. At the same time, it is a permanent contract between a man and a woman. Whether we like it or not, the sacrament of matrimony, instituted by Christ, cannot be dissolved. It is a permanent contract that sanctifies in cooperation with Jesus Christ. He fills the souls of husband and wife and invites them to follow him. He transforms their whole married life

into an occasion for God's presence on earth. (Christ is passing by, 22-23)

[1] Luke 2:14

[2] Col 3:15

[3] Eph 5:32

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