

Imitating the silence of St. Joseph

In these final days of Advent, Benedict XVI invites Christians to prepare for the coming of the Son of God by meditating on the example of St. Joseph

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At midday today, in remarks to the faithful prior to praying the Angelus, Benedict XVI considered the figure of St. Joseph. Addressing thousands of pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square, the Pope recalled how the evangelist Matthew presents the

saint as the model "of the 'just' man who, in perfect harmony with his wife, welcomes the Son of God-made-man, and watches over His human development."

He added: "For this reason, in the days prior to Christmas, it is more important than ever to establish a kind of spiritual dialogue with St. Joseph, because he helps us to experience fully this great mystery of the faith."

John Paul II was greatly devoted to St. Joseph, said the Holy Father, and left us a meditation dedicated to him in the Apostolic Exhortation "Redemptoris Custos" (Guardian of the Redeemer), in which the late Pope "particularly stressed the silence of St. Joseph; a silence permeated by contemplation of the mystery of God, in an attitude of complete openness to the divine will. In other words, St. Joseph's silence

was not an expression of interior emptiness, but on the contrary, of the fullness of faith that he carried in his heart, and that guided his every thought and deed.

"A silence through which Joseph, together with Mary, safeguarded the Word of God ... and continually compared it with the events of Jesus' life; a silence interwoven with constant prayer ... and with unreserved trust in Divine providence. It is no exaggeration to say that from His 'father' Joseph, Jesus learnt - at a human level - the vigorous interior life that is a premise of true justice, the 'superior justice' that one day He would teach His disciples."

Benedict XVI concluded: "Let us allow ourselves to be 'infected' by St. Joseph's silence! We need it greatly, in a world that is often too noisy, that does not favor meditation or

listening to the voice of God. During this period of preparation for Christmas, let us cultivate interior meditation, in order to welcome and safeguard Jesus in our lives."

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