

This article first appeared in the March 2021 Print Edition of *Catholic Family News* (click [HERE](#) to subscribe; current subscribers can access the E-Edition [HERE](#)).

In a papacy that has been filled with ‘interesting’ developments (to put it mildly), we are reminded that the Office of the Pope is truly intended for the good of the Church, when the Holy Father speaks and acts as he should — that is, when he exercises his God-given power “unto edification” and not “destruction” (cf. 2 Cor. 10:8). The current Pontiff’s [proclamation](#) of the Year of Saint Joseph (Dec. 8, 2020—Dec. 8, 2021) is a happy development, and we must make the most of it. Granted, it seems that this year will also be used to push forward the *Amoris Laetitia* agenda,^[1] which is troubling. In addition, there is an element of a socialist co-opting of the notion of St. Joseph the Worker. Nonetheless, it is God Who is ultimately in control, and when the name of St. Joseph is honored, the Foster Father of Our Lord will deliver. Whether or not the Modernists want to pretend that Joseph validates their fraudulent endeavors is beside the point; St. Joseph will present himself in all truth, and God will not be mocked.

So, what a perfect opportunity to take back the truth about St. Joseph and grow in devotion to a Saint who is second only to his Immaculate Spouse in the glorious Communion of Saints. In a world where virtue and, perhaps most importantly, *manhood*, are ill-understood or undermined, the earthly father of Our Lord is the perfect remedy. In a way, we might even be reminded that God is truly in charge of history, as it is His story, and when the world groans in travail, He raises up the cure for all our ills. The demon is bold in our day and his minions lurk around every corner, waiting to devour unwitting souls on the broad road “that leadeth to destruction” (Matt. 7:13). No earthly force will save us, no politician will on his own stem the tide, and no half-hearted solution exists. It is the Hour of Joseph, and the *Terror of Demons* is as a father ready to rescue his children who have been kidnapped — the time is now.

Inspiration Behind *Terror of Demons* Book

Perhaps some readers may be aware, but for those who are not, I have written a book called [Terror of Demons: Reclaiming Traditional Catholic Masculinity](#) (Our Lady of Victory Press, 2020). The easiest way to find it is to visit www.kennedyhall.ca. It is a strange phenomenon that I was able to write this book, which has been successful beyond anything I imagined. I am a prodigal son, like many in today’s Church, and I lived a life far from God for many years. I will not provide too many details on that, but suffice it to say that for a time I was indeed a son of perdition, all the while having no idea I was actually a son of St. Joseph. When I began writing the book, I initially did not have any conscious inspiration in mind,

other than a need for true men to arise and come to the aid of Holy Mother Church. After I had finished the manuscript, I was on retreat and the chapel had a most wonderful image of the Holy Family, with a vigorous and youthful rendition of St. Joseph. I had never seen him like this before, and as I knelt meditating in the chapel, I asked God for guidance on what to name the book, and what purpose it had. At this point, I was not in any way explicitly devoted to Joseph, and to my knowledge I had never gone through his Litany. Nonetheless, God answered my prayers and I began to hear and see in my mind's eye, "Terror of Demons." From then on, it was clear what my book would be called, and the true inspiration behind it was evident. I even decided to embark on a [series of articles](#) developing the meaning of his titles mentioned in his Litany, which became the appendix for my book.

I had always kept the model of my *Nonno* (Italian grandfather) at the forefront of my thoughts. I dedicate the book to him, as he was heroic in my life — perhaps the only faithful Catholic in my immediate and extended family, and a man of stalwart virtue. In any case, I carry his namesake as one of my middle names (his name was Giuseppe). Thus, Joseph is my middle name. All those morning offerings I had prayed, asking for the intercession of "the Saint whose name it is my honor to bear," and for some silly reason I had never clued into what was so obvious. I had this vague idea that I possessed some forgotten baptismal name, and each morning I called on some unknown saint. It is silly, now that I think of it, but sometimes it seems that God has a sense of humor. At any rate, it also struck me after I wrote the book that my birth date is March 18 — that is, I was born in the early evening on the vigil of the feast day of St. Joseph.

I am a child of a divorced family, and although I do love my parents, the trauma of that situation is what it is. Through custody issues and moving around, my father did his best under difficult circumstances, but through a series of boyfriends and step-fathers I experienced while with my mother, I never felt cemented under the care of a single father. Again, this is not to criticise my father, who in many ways was given the short end of the stick. At any rate, sometimes I think that it was St. Joseph who was behind the scenes the whole time, even when I was far away from Rome. In fact, just as he is rarely seen or heard in the Bible, his quiet strength is a foundational element of salvation history. This is certainly true in my case.

Marriage and Fatherhood: Resolving to "Man Up"

I distinctly remember being 19 years old, sitting in the passenger seat while my mother drove through the downtown of my hometown. It was a Sunday afternoon, and I was feeling a little melancholic. We rarely (if ever) went to Mass, and often Sunday afternoons involved a certain feeling of homesickness, which I now realize was a longing to be in my heavenly

Father's House. I had just fallen head over heels for the woman who would become my wife, and she was an 8-hour drive away at university. As I looked out the window, I said to my mother, "I really do love her, and I need to learn how to be a husband and a father." My mother chuckled and sort of wondered if I was trying to 'tell her something'. But in reality, it was something like a prompting of particular grace in a simultaneously fast and achingly slow re-version to the One True Faith.

Years later, my wife and I were expecting our first son, Titus, and I knelt weeping in front of the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. It was the final day of a mission that would alter my life forever, and I had found out only a few days prior to leaving that we were expecting a child. As I said, I was far from God for so long, so you can imagine the emotional toll that such a profound experience had on me. I fell in love with my unborn child, and I made a resolution to the Virgin Mary to become a truly faithful man — in other words, to "man up."

During the next few years, I embarked on a quest to recapture true masculinity, and after an unrelenting influx of information — all aided by living in a constant state of grace for the first time in my life — I came to the point where I almost *had* to write the book. It was like exhaling when I was at the point of bursting at the seams.

So, who is the *real* St. Joseph who has changed my life?

Getting to Know Saint Joseph

There is a tradition of pious art that depicts our Saint as an aged man, and from what I can tell, this comes from a legend found in the Protoevangelium of St. James (an apocryphal work), wherein Joseph is depicted as an older widower who is entrusted with the care of the Virgin. Whatever good intention this may have entailed — perhaps to explain how such a man could be chaste — it is not supported by the strongest testimonies and tradition of our great saints and theologians. For example, the most ancient artistic depictions of Joseph show him as a younger man, and St. Jerome defends this belief. Jerome professes it as if it was already the long-standing position, which means that since he was active during the late 4th and early 5th centuries, this belief is as early as they come. He also stresses that St. Joseph lived and died without ever forsaking his virginity, which calls into question the idea that he could have been a widower. Other great early Church Fathers like St. Athanasius and St. Gregory Nazianzus taught the same thing.

Now, to strengthen this tradition, the doctrine that he was confirmed in grace is overwhelming. He was conceived in Original Sin, but in a manner similar to St. John the Baptist, Joseph was somehow sanctified in the womb. Francisco Suarez, Bernardine de

Bustis, St. Frances de Sales, Jean Gerson, Isidor Isolano, St. Alphonsus Liguori and Cornelius a Lapide all hold to the same belief of his sanctification in his mother's womb and preservation from all personal sin. Could we really expect anything less from the Head of the Holy Family? It should not be surprising that from all eternity, God ordained in His infinite wisdom to call forth a truly "just man" (Matt. 1:19) to lead the sinless Son and Mother of God.

So, what was Saint Joseph like?

The New Testament does not record one spoken word or phrase of Saint Joseph, but there are at least two words we can be certain he uttered often: Jesus and Mary. He spoke the names of the Holy Theotokos and her Divine Son, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Not only did he speak their names, but he spoke *to* them and cultivated a relationship of deep love and affection towards them that should take our breath away, were we to understand its fullness.

If we want to know what the man was like, then we ought to consider the Holy Family. You see, the Virgin Mary is the most exalted (holiest) Saint in history, and can be surpassed by no other creature. Christ is of course the Second Person of the Trinity, and thus rules over all creation. *Latria*, which is the worship due to God alone, is offered to Christ, the eternal Word "made flesh" (John 1:14), while *hyperdulia*, the highest form of veneration (*dulia*), is offered to the Virgin Mary. In addition, *protodulia* is offered to St. Joseph, as after the Virgin Mary he is highest among all creatures. He is not just "any Saint," and his proximity to Jesus and Mary tells us something of how special he must be, in order to be chosen for that role.

Even though he is lower than his Spouse and his Son, he is still the *Head of the Holy Family*, which means that he led the Blessed Mother and Christ during his earthly sojourn. It is astonishing to consider the absolute humility that both Our Lord and Our Lady practiced by placing themselves under the guidance of a man who was objectively beneath them. And yet, the humility of Joseph is no less edifying to contemplate as he accepts a mission for which he knows he is not "qualified" in the earthly sense — the headship of God Incarnate and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost — because he sees it as his duty to obey God in all things. Our Lord's famous maxim that "the last [shall] be first, and the first last" (Matt. 20:16) comes alive in the dynamic of the Holy Family household economy. Maybe as Christ uttered these words during his public ministry, He had Joseph on his mind (what a beautiful thought on which to meditate).

Chaste Guardian of the Virgin

Imagine for a moment what sort of man Joseph must have been to guide and guard the

Virgin and her Son. Perhaps we might pause on his title of Chaste Guardian of the Virgin as we consider the type of servant leadership he exhibited.

Call to mind the journey that Mary and Joseph took for the Roman census, leading up to Our Lord's Nativity in Bethlehem. It is believed that they took the Jordan Valley route, which descends to the *lowest point on earth* and passes by the Dead Sea. It is also the way to Jericho, a city known for danger. The symbolism of this voyage cannot be understated. Our Lady, led by St. Joseph, carried Our Lord by the lifeless waters of the pit of the earth. St. Joseph guarded the Most Holy Virgin through this land of death. Envision the criminal threat present around every corner, especially given the shorter days and darker evenings of the winter season. St. Joseph was perfectly aware of the spiritual forces who writhed in pain at the Virginal Monstrance of Our Lady's Womb. The priest of the Holy Family processed his wife and unborn Son amongst the Valley of Death. It is here that King David's words come alive: "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me" (Ps. 22[23]:4). Perhaps Mary contemplated these words, rubbing Her womb the way expectant mothers are known to do, as she gazed lovingly at her husband, finding comfort in his masculine countenance.

With each dominating footstep, St. Joseph sent a warning to the depths of hell that the Coming of Christ was approaching. Through the dark of night, he led the bestial chariot of Our Lady, her perfect holiness lighting the way while Joseph marched his family forward through the descending fog of demons. This Chaste Guardian of the Virgin was not a diminutive man, but a conqueror, flanked by the Prince of the Heavenly Host and His Angels. At the end of every valley, there is an ascent to be made in order to climb upwards out of the deep. As they passed by the degenerate city of Jericho, they began their ascent out of the Valley of Death. This was the hardest part of the journey, a steep climb after days of exhaustive trekking through unforgiving weather and terrain. From the Limbo of the Fathers, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David watched as the Light of the Patriarchs showed them the glory soon to come when Christ would descend into the dead in order to raise the holy men of old from the shadows.

Saving the Best for Last

Throughout many situations in life, but especially for those whom we love, it is customary to 'save the best for last'. Well, in the Litany of Saint Joseph, the final name of our beloved saint is Protector of Holy Church, a title [solemnly declared](#) by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1870. Just before this title in the litany is where we find the name Terror of Demons, the title which I think needs to be on our banner in our crusade against Communism, Modernism,

and other pernicious errors so prevalent today. Joseph, of all creatures ever existing in God's Providence, is the one who garners this terrifying name. The very presence of Joseph spreads dread and fear into those who, motivated by pride and hatred of God, make it their goal to terrorize men.

For many years, Joseph spent long hours perfecting his craft, striving and sweating in his workshop. Like a foreshadowing of the New Adam, Joseph worked by the sweat of his brow, taming the dried flesh of the trees of the Holy Land. In a manner similar to how God whittles down a man, transforming him from a rough plank to a man perfected, so too did Joseph bend and form the elements that would become the Cross of his adopted Son. The demons are never truly absent, even at our hour of death; thus, with each passing year, the devils assigned by hell to tempt Joseph watched him ever so closely. How could a man so humble also demonstrate the fortitude of a dragon slayer? From the shadows, they observed Joseph axe down trees and prepare them for transport. Like a painful premonition, those demons saw a flash of the Christ as St. Joseph knelt to the ground, only to stand with a tree on his shoulders. Watching the Terror of Demons carry oak and olive trees was torturous. As Joseph lifted his hammer to pound iron, each metallic clang smashed the gates of hell like the cheerful piercing of the bells of Consecration.

It is incredible to think of the years Jesus spent apprenticing under His foster father. Although they did not share a biological relation, I imagine Our Lord showed many of the same mannerisms in His way of speaking and acting. If we were to watch how Christ carried His Cross, and we knew St. Joseph, we might even think we were watching God Himself carry that Tree after His earthly father's image and likeness.

In this Year of Saint Joseph (Dec. 8, 2020—Dec. 8, 2021), let us *beg* Heaven for Joseph's aid. Our spiritual house (the Church) is a mess; it is befouled with grievous sins, idols, and demons. At this point, I can think of no better solution than to call upon the Foster Father of Our Lord to come home and terrorize every devil in sight as he sends them straight back to the pit of hell.

St. Joseph, Terror of Demons, pray for us!

Want more great Catholic content? [SUBSCRIBE](#) to *Catholic Family News* and help support our work! [DONATIONS](#) are also accepted and greatly appreciated. God bless you and thanks for reading!

[1] On Dec. 27, 2020, Pope Francis [announced](#) "a year of reflection on *Amoris Laetitia*"

which will begin on March 19, 2021 (Feast of St. Joseph, fifth anniversary of the document's promulgation) and go through June 2022. Thus, Mar. 19—Dec. 8, 2021 will concurrently be the Year of St. Joseph and the Year of *Amoris Laetitia*.