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Saint Bernard Church
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SAINT JOSEPH AND THE PROUD WAVES

We all know who is the most powerful woman and mother in the history of the world. It's Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

She not only gave birth to Jesus, but she has been working powerful miracles in the world ever since, and brought millions and millions of people into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

So who is the most powerful man and father in the history of the world? We may not think of him this way, but it's Joseph. He was the protector of Mary and Jesus. Now, he is officially the patron and protector of the Church.

What is the source of Joseph's power?

Like Mary, it is his humility, his meekness, his obedience. Mary submitted to God's will as revealed in the Annunciation given her by the angel Gabriel. Joseph also submitted when God's plan for him, Mary and Jesus was communicated to him by an angel in a dream. As it says in the Gospel of Matthew, Joseph "awoke and did as the angel had commanded him."

Today's readings from the Bible give us some additional clues as to why Joseph was so powerful in his role as husband and father.

In the Book of Job, we know that Job, who had been very prosperous, fell upon hard times and questioned the Lord as to why he was experiencing so much suffering. In today's First Reading, God speaks to Job about his power over nature and says, "Here shall your proud waves be stilled!"

God's reference to "proud waves" touches on a major theme in the Bible.

The proud waves represent those who are rebellious and filled with human pride. So, for example, in the Letter of Jude, Jude describes the false teachers who pervert the grace of God and deny Jesus Christ as follows:

"They are like wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameless deeds..."

In the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah says of Babylon:

“For the Lord lays Babylon waste, stills her loud cry, though her waves were roaring like mighty waters, and their clamor was heard from afar.”

On this Father’s Day, it might be helpful to consider the life of Saint Joseph as an alternative to the proud waves.

The life of Saint Joseph is in sharp contrast to the waves of human pride.

Joseph abandoned his own will, his own expectations for his marriage to Mary, and humbly obeyed the directions of the angel.

He submitted to Mary’s mysterious motherhood, embracing it, protecting it, supporting it in every way he could.

He provided for Jesus and Mary, though their life together was very basic and simple.

Joseph was known for his silence. Not a single word from Joseph’s lips is found in the Bible.

Joseph’s support, simplicity and silence all served an important purpose: they helped Joseph eliminate any distractions from discerning God’s will for himself, Jesus and Mary.

Joseph does not allow God’s will for Jesus and Mary to be obstructed by any selfishness on his part. He sacrificed himself, so that his humility, obedience and courage would enable Jesus and Mary to fulfill their roles in God’s plan for the salvation of all humanity.

Those of us who are Catholic fathers share a mission very similar to Saint Joseph’s. Our responsibilities to our family require that we be humble and obedient to God. We have to have a spirit of self-sacrifice to put the needs of our wives and children ahead of our own needs.

More than anything else, we fathers need to be men of prayer. In our prayer life, rather than us talking to God, we should follow Joseph’s example and focus on listening so we can discern God’s will for our family and to identify and fight against physical and spiritual threats to our family’s well-being.

It’s time to reclaim the sacred vocation of Christian fatherhood. It’s time for us fathers to get down on our knees and then get to work.

Let’s close by asking for the intercession of Saint Joseph:

Saint Joseph, please protect our families from the seductive attractions of the world and the subtle attacks from the evil one. Bless our fathers with the strength, courage, foresight, and self-sacrifice that you possessed in leading and protecting the Holy Family from the many evils of the day. Bless all the members of our families with a commitment to respect each other; to be obedient to their father's leadership; to always strive to do the will of God; to trust in Jesus; and to be worthy dwellings for the Holy Spirit. Amen.