



Fr. David Calloway, MIC, speaks about his devotion to St. Joseph and shares some thoughts on one of the greatest and most often forgotten saints in the Church. ([www.thedivinemercy.org](http://www.thedivinemercy.org))

[During my novitiate year] I went over for at least a few minutes and poured my heart out to him, asking him to help me be holy and grow in virtue. I would pray for tons of different intentions: family situations; people who were asking me to intercede for them; and so forth. I just laid all that out constantly, day after day, at the feet of St. Joseph. Doing that really gave me the confidence to "go to Joseph," to take everything to Joseph.

We always talk about living under the mantle of Our Lady, but there's also a tradition of the cloak of St. Joseph being a protective shield. He's called the Guardian of the Redeemer, the Guardian of Our Lady. One of the things I love about St. Joseph is that he is the only one who has been called the "Savior of the Savior" by the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine, for example. Not even Our Lady has that title! When Herod sought the Child and His mother, it was Joseph who, responding to what he understood in his dream, took the Savior to a place of hiding, to Egypt. Without St. Joseph, we wouldn't have what we have today.

In his role of Savior of the Savior, he's the perfection of the Joseph of the Old Testament. The Joseph of the Old Testament, you remember, was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt, where Pharaoh basically made him a son. During a time of great famine, Egypt was understood to be the breadbasket of the world, and Joseph was put in charge of all the granaries. He fed the people during the time of famine (see Gen 37-41).

The new Joseph, the Guardian of the Redeemer, the Savior of the Savior, takes Jesus, who becomes our bread and feeds the nations (see Jn 6), from the manger (a feeding

trough filled with grain) in Bethlehem (literally, "House of Bread") into Egypt, the breadbasket of the world, and then the Holy Family comes out of Egypt back into the Holy Land (see Mt 1-2). So St. Joseph is fulfilling, in a more perfect way, what the Joseph of the Old Testament did.

Within the last 150 years or so, God has been using the Church and the popes to speak to us about St. Joseph's importance. In 1870, he was declared the Universal Patron of the Church. In 1889, Pope Leo XIII released an amazing encyclical on St. Joseph. It was only in 1955 that the feast of St. Joseph the Worker came into existence; in 1962 that Joseph's name was put into the Roman Canon, Eucharistic Prayer 1; and in 2013 that St. Joseph's name was put into all the Eucharistic prayers. Pope Benedict wanted to do it, but then he retired. So Pope Francis did that soon after he was elected to the papacy.

There are also some pretty significant things from approved apparitions in these last 150 years. At Fatima, for example, during the Sept. 13, 1917 apparition, Mary told the three visionaries that in October, St. Joseph would come and bless the world. Well, on Oct. 13, 1917, St. Joseph did come. He was holding the Child Jesus, and both the Child Jesus and St. Joseph blessed the world, making the Sign of the Cross.

Saint Joseph was also present at the approved apparitions of Our Lady of Knock. And then, recently, there was a whole series of apparitions with St. Joseph given in Itapiranga, Brazil, the first part of which is fully approved on a diocesan level. (As is typical, the Church will await the death of the visionary before passing judgment on all of the apparitions.) The apparitions talk about how Heaven wants us to establish devotion to St. Joseph.

Why is this so important? Well, remember that St. Joseph is the patron of the Mystical Body of Christ. The root of the word "patron" is pater, father. When Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Head of the Mystical Body of Christ, Our Lady also gave birth to the members of the Mystical Body. In the same way, St. Joseph is not only the Guardian of Jesus in His physical body, but also the Guardian of His Mystical Body. So he's going to have a fatherly role in looking after the Mystical Body of Christ, just as he looked after the physical body of Christ.

In the Old Testament, the phrase was *Ite ad Ioseph*, "Go to Joseph" (Gen 41:55). Well, that's what saints have been saying for centuries, saints like St. Theresa of Avila, who said she always received graces when she prayed to St. Joseph; saints like St. Francis de Sales, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, St. Andre Bessette, St. Josemaria Escriva, Bl. William Joseph Chaminade, St. Bernardine of Siena, and so many others. "Go to Joseph."

Our times require us to turn to him, not only in intercession, but also in imitation. All children imitate their parents. When we look at Joseph, we can see that maybe we should be a little more quiet and not so sarcastic or critical, especially on social media. Maybe we should imitate our spiritual father a little more and keep our mouth shut. We can maintain a certain equilibrium, move forward, and not be paralyzed, but continue to strive towards virtue.

We need our spiritual father more than ever these days, in light of the chaos of the times. There's disorder, there's disunity in society and, sadly, even in the Church. There's a lot of confusion and a lot of people against each other right now. But we're a family. What do families do? During the holidays, we all come home. So even if relatives are arguing or fighting, generally people sit down at the table in their father's house and share a meal and put the sword away, so to speak, or bury the hatchet. Just so do we need to return to the fatherhood of St. Joseph to have unity and to have peace.

**"Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you" (Gen 41:55).**

