

The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + MARCH 2020



St. Joseph

He is not quoted in the Bible but here is what he had to say when he appeared in the United States

When Our Lady of America appeared to Sister Mildred on March 11, 1958, she said, “My holy spouse has an important part to play in bringing peace to the world.”

This appearance took place just days before the Feast of St. Joseph which is March 19. In Dan Lynch’s book, *Our Lady of America: Our Hope for the States*, he writes: “From Scripture we know that the great virtue of St. Joseph was his obedient faith. ‘He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife.’ (Mt. 1:24). He did this in spite of the fact Mary’s pregnancy was apparently visible to everyone. He took her in the mystery of her motherhood and acted in obedient faith, as did Mary when she said, ‘Let it be done to me according to your word.’ (Lk. 1:38). ‘Blessed are they who have not seen, yet have believed.’ (Jn. 20:29).

But nowhere in Scripture do we actually hear Joseph speak. But on the eve of his feast, March 18, 1958, he appeared to Sister Mildred and said: “All Fatherhood is blest in me whom the Eternal Father chose as His representative on earth, the Virgin-Father of His own Divine Son. Through me the Heavenly Father has blessed all fatherhood, and through me He continues and will continue to do so till the end of time. . .

“Fathers must come to me . . . to learn obedience to authority: to the Church always, as the mouthpiece (*Continued on page 2*)



Deacon Baxter on the value of peace and silence for Lent on page 3.

Charity is superior to all virtues & deals with our love for God and his love for us. See page 4



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of God, to the laws of the country in which they love, insofar these do not go against God and their neighbor.

“Mine was perfect obedience to the Divine Will, as it was shown and made known to me by the Jewish law and religion. To be careless in this is most displeasing to God and will be severely punished in the next world,” St. Joseph continued.

“Let fathers also imitate my great purity of life and the deep respect I held for my Immaculate Spouse. Let them be an example to their children and fellowmen, never willfully doing anything that would cause scandal among God’s people.

“Fatherhood is from God, and it must take once again its rightful place among men.”

The next day on his feast, St. Joseph appeared again to Sister Mildred and spoke of his role as a peacemaker, echoing the remarks of Our Lady.

“Dear child, I was king in the little home in Nazareth, for I sheltered within it the Prince of Peace and the Queen of Heaven. To me they looked for

protection and sustenance, and I did not fail them.

“I received from them the deepest love and reverence, for in me they saw Him whose place I took over them.

“So the head of the family must be loved, obeyed and respected, and in return be a true father and protector to those under his care.

“In honoring in a special way my fatherhood, you also honor Jesus and Mary. The Divine Trinity has placed into our keeping the peace of the world.

“The imitation of the Holy Family, my child, of the virtues we practiced in our little home at Nazareth is the way for all souls to that peace which comes from God alone and which none others can give.”

During an apparition, Sister Mildred saw the pure heart of St. Joseph. Then she heard these words: “Behold the pure heart so pleased to Him who made it.”

On March 30, 1958, St. Joseph appeared again and told Sister Mildred: “I am the

protector of the Church and the home, as I was the protector of Christ and His Mother while I lived upon earth. Jesus and Mary desire that my pure heart, so long hidden and unknown, be now honored in a special way.

“Let my children honor my most pure heart in a special manner on the First Wednesday of the month by reciting the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary in honor of my life with Jesus and Mary and the love I bore them, the sorrow I suffered with them. Let them receive Holy Communion in union with the love with which I received the Savior for the first time and each time I held Him in my arms.

“Those who honor me in this way will be consoled by my presence at their death, and I myself will conduct them safely into the presence of Jesus and Mary.” +

To read more about the Our Lady of America apparitions and transcripts of them, you can go to ourladyofamerica.com, jkmi.com/our_lady_of_america, and ourladyofamerica.org.

Prayers to St. Joseph,

Prayers to St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, date back almost as far as Our Lord’s time! Although he came from King David’s noble lineage, St. Joseph lived a life of great humility and devotion to his Holy Family as a carpenter. Matthew’s gospel

describes him as a “just man” (1:19). He is the patron saint of the Universal Church, and people invoke his aid for workers, families, home buyers and sellers, and the grace of a happy death, among other things. St. Thomas Aquinas once noted that St. Joseph is unique

among patron saints in that he is able to assist us at anytime for anything. St. Theresa of Avila echoed this when she wrote “I know by experience that the glorious St. Joseph assists us generally in all necessities. I never asked him for anything which he did not obtain for me.” +

Seeking Silence and Peace

*A Lenten Meditation by
Deacon Bruce Baxter*

In his book, *In the School of the Holy Spirit*, Father Jacques Philippe states, “The Spirit of God is a Spirit of Peace and He speaks and acts in peace and gentleness, never in tumult and agitation. What’s more the motions of the Spirit are delicate touches that don’t make a great noise and can penetrate our spiritual consciousness, only if we have within ourselves a sort of calm zone of silence and peace. If our inner world is noisy and agitated the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit will find it very difficult to be heard.”

We live in a noisy world with non-stop TV, radio, cell phones, computers, electronic games and countless email communications. The constant use of these devices erodes our peace of mind. Our thoughts can be overtaken by imaginations and cause us to worry and have fear. This creates frustration and agitation. It is easy to spend too much time on what is not really important. The greatest harm that upsetting ourselves does to us is that it makes us incapable of following the impulses of the Holy Spirit

On the other hand, silence nourishes us. It is in silence and in the presence of God that we find true peace. Find a quiet place in the presence of God and make a habit of praying daily. Spiritual reading helps you to get to know the Father in a personal way. The graces we receive from the Holy Spirit help us to serve God and our neighbors.

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is noisy and agitated,
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**— Father Jacques
Philippe**



Photo: Catholic Stand

Jesus Himself recommended that, “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will respond to you.”

Eucharistic Adoration for one hour a week is another way to get out of the noise and listen to Him as He speaks softly. Trust in Him for the concerns of your heart. Do your part and He takes care of the rest. Without these moments of silent prayer we could miss the Lord when He speaks.

St. John of the Cross gives us this advice, “Take care to preserve your heart in peace; let no happening of this world upset it . . . Even if everything here below crumbles apart and all things were against us, there would be no use in upsetting ourselves over it, for that would bring us more harm than benefit.”

The voice of Jesus is like a loving instinct that over time makes it easier to know the voice of the Lord in the midst of outside noise. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd. He says that the sheep follow Him for they know His voice, they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know that stranger’s voice.

In his book, *The Power of Silence*, Cardinal Robert Sarah writes, “Silence is more important than any other human work, for it expresses God. The true revolution comes from silence; it leads us towards God and others so as to place ourselves humbly and generously at their service.”

Find your peace in silence and prayer, then

Charity: Superior to all the Virtues

Under the Theological Virtues in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* second edition, there is a definition of Charity.

“Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

“Jesus makes charity the new commandment. By loving his own ‘to the end,’ he makes manifest the Father’s love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.’ And again: ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.’

“Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God and his Christ. ‘Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.’

“Christ died out of love for us, while we were still ‘enemies.’ The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself.

“The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: ‘charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at

wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.’

“. . . The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which ‘binds everything together in perfect harmony’; it is the *form of the virtues*; it articulates and orders them among themselves; it is the source and the goal of their Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love.

“The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of the children of God. He no longer stands before God as a slave, in servile fear, or as a mercenary looking for wages, but as a son responding to the love of him who ‘first loved us.’

“The *fruits* of charity are joy, peace, and mercy; charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion.

[As St. Augustine has said:]

“Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal, that is why we run; we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.”

The fruit of sacramental life is for the individual, life for God in Christ, and for the Church, an increase in charity and witness. +

Your Shall Love the Lord your God . . .

”And it is only by the observance of the first and greatest commandment that we can keep the second. The more we love God, the more we shall love man; the less we love God, the less we shall, in the true sense of the word, love man. Our love will become capricious, fitful, and unreliable—not charity, but passion.

If you feel that your love for your fellowman is dying out in the fumes of selfishness, there is but one way to revive it: strive for, pray for, the love of God.

As the heart turns toward its source, it will be quickened and expanded.

There is no true, no lasting spirit of charity apart from the practice of religion.

Therefore, we cannot keep those commandments which teach us our duty to men unless we are keeping those which teach us our duty to God.”

— Fr. Basil W. Maturin from “Christian Mastery”

Pope Francis' Lenten Message

“We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year the Lord grants us, once again, a favorable time to prepare to celebrate with renewed hearts the great mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the cornerstone of our personal and communal Christian life. We must continually return to this mystery in mind and heart, for it will continue to grow within us in the measure that we are open to its spiritual power and respond with freedom and generosity.

1. The paschal mystery as the basis of conversion

Christian joy flows from listening to, and accepting, the Good News of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This *kerygma* sums up the mystery of a love “so real, so true, so concrete, that it invites us to a relationship of openness and fruitful dialogue” (*Christus Vivit*, 117). Whoever believes this message rejects the lie that our life is ours to do with as we will. Rather, life is born of the love of God our Father, from his desire to grant us life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10). If we listen instead to the tempting voice of the “father of lies” (Jn 8:44), we risk sinking into the abyss of absurdity, and experiencing hell here on earth, as all too many tragic events in the personal and collective human experience sadly bear witness.

In this Lent of 2020, I would like to share with every Christian what I wrote to young people in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*: “Keep your eyes fixed on the outstretched arms of Christ crucified, let yourself be saved over and over again. And when you go to confess your sins, believe firmly in his mercy which frees you of your guilt. Contemplate his blood poured out with such great love, and let yourself be cleansed by it. In this way, you can be reborn ever anew” (No. 123). Jesus’ Pasch is

not a past event; rather, through the power of the Holy Spirit it is ever present, enabling us to see and touch with faith the flesh of Christ in those who suffer.

2. The urgency of conversion

It is good to contemplate more deeply the paschal mystery through which God’s mercy has been bestowed upon us. Indeed, the experience of mercy is only possible in a “face to face” relationship with the crucified and risen Lord “who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20), in a heartfelt dialogue between friends. That is why prayer is so important in Lent. Even more than a duty, prayer is an expression of our need to respond to God’s love which always precedes and sustains us. Christians pray in the knowledge that, although unworthy, we are still loved. Prayer can take any number of different forms, but what truly matters in God’s eyes is that it penetrates deep within us and chips away at our hardness of heart, in order to convert us ever more fully to God and to his will.

In this favorable season, then, may we allow ourselves to be led like Israel into the desert (cf. Hos 2:14), so that we can at last hear our Spouse’s voice and allow it to resound ever more deeply within us. The more fully we are engaged with his word, the more we will experience the mercy he freely gives us. May we not let this time of grace pass in vain, in the foolish illusion that we can control the times and means of our conversion to him.

3. God’s passionate will to dialogue with his children

The fact that the Lord once again offers us a favorable time for our conversion should never be taken for granted. This new opportunity ought to awaken in us a sense of gratitude and stir us from our sloth. Despite the sometimes tragic presence of evil in our lives, and in the life of the Church and the world, this opportunity to change our course expresses God’s unwavering will (*Continued on page 6*)

Pope Francis' Lenten Message *Continued from page 5*

not to interrupt his dialogue of salvation with us. In the crucified Jesus, who knew no sin, yet for our sake was made to be sin (cf. 2 Cor 5:21), this saving will lead the Father to burden his Son with the weight of our sins, thus, in the expression of Pope Benedict XVI, "turning of God against himself" (Deus Caritas Est, 12). For God also loves his enemies (cf. Mt 5:43-48).

The dialogue that God wishes to establish with each of us through the paschal mystery of his Son has nothing to do with empty chatter, like that attributed to the ancient inhabitants of Athens, who "spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new" (Acts 17:21). Such chatter, determined by an empty and superficial curiosity, characterizes worldliness in every age; in our own day, it can also result in improper use of the media.

4. A richness to be shared, not kept for oneself

Putting the paschal mystery at the center of our lives means feeling compassion towards the wounds of the crucified Christ present in the many innocent victims of wars, in attacks on life, from that of the unborn to that of the elderly, and various forms of violence. They are likewise present in environmental disasters, the unequal distribution of the earth's goods, human trafficking in all its forms, and the unbridled thirst for profit, which is a form of idolatry.

Today too, there is a need to appeal to men and women of good will to share, by almsgiving, their goods with those most in need, as a means of personally participating in the building of a better world. Charitable giving makes us more human, whereas hoarding risks making us less human, imprisoned by our own selfishness. We can and must go even further, and consider the structural aspects of our economic life. For this reason, in the midst of Lent this year, from 26 to 28 March, I have convened a meeting in Assisi with young economists, entrepreneurs and change-makers, with the aim of shaping a more just and inclusive economy. As the Church's magisterium has often repeated, political life represents an eminent form of charity (cf. Pius XI, Address to the Italian Federation of Catholic University Students, 18 December 1927). The same holds true for economic life, which can be approached in the same evangelical spirit, the spirit of the Beatitudes.

I ask Mary Most Holy to pray that our Lenten celebration will open our hearts to hear God's call to be reconciled to himself, to fix our gaze on the paschal mystery, and to be converted to an open and sincere dialogue with him. In this way, we will become what Christ asks his disciples to be: the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt 5:13-14).

— ***Francis***

The March Prayer Intention

Worthily Observe Lent

We pray to align ourselves with Jesus Christ and use this time for true conversion and purification.

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Francis, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be to the Father.