

“St. Joseph as a role model for trusting in God’s guidance in life”

As we enter the final week before Christmas, let ask the Lord to help us truly to spend this week in reflection, deeper prayer, and acts of charity into order to give ourselves more fully to Him on Christmas day and beyond.

1. Do we have a great trust in the Lord, or is there a lack of trust in all honesty? As we hear today in the book of the Prophet Isaiah, **we humans weary God with our lack of trust**. God wants us to ask Him for what we need, to expand the desires of our hearts in charity and goodness. Yes, it is true: He knows what we need before we ask Him, but wants us to be part of the process of growing in holiness, so He desires us to ask Him in humble prayer. TRUSTING in the Lord’s love and care for us is the key to growing in holiness on a daily basis.
2. As a corollary to the virtue of **trust**, St. Paul calls us today in the 2nd Reading to the virtue of having an ever more **obedient faith** in the Lord. **The true test** of our obedience to the Lord and His will - as manifested to us **objectively** through our Catholic faith and **subjectively** through our personal relationship with the Lord - is how we deal *with spiritual darkness, anxiety, trials and suffering* (see all the writings of **St. John of the Cross**, whom we honored on December 14). These trials and sufferings and spiritual darknesses can come through: *our family and work situations, through our personal struggles with sin, weakness, and frailty, or just from the fact that we live in a fallen, sinful world with people that to a greater or lesser degree have not fully embraced the grace of Redemption that Christ won for us on the Cross.* **The call to grow in holiness is a daily battle: sometimes of monumental proportions!** But always remember the grace is there to do so! Or as the old true sayings go, “*No pain, No gain*”; “*No Cross, No Crown*”; “*No Calvary, No Resurrection.*” The sufferings and challenges of this life are the tools God uses to mold us into saints. How else can God form us in obedience and trust and holy patience except under the chisel of suffering? To change our all too often lazy weakened wills, darkened minds, and hardened hearts into a reflection of His

goodness, truth and beauty. It is a painstaking process, but leads to humility, self-discipline and most of all charity which is the very reflection of God's own being.

3. All I have said so far is exhibited in a beautiful way in the life of **St. Joseph**, the foster-father of Jesus and the husband of Mary. **St. Joseph is a model for us of trust, humility and obedient faith in the Lord and His often mysterious designs for our lives.** Try to put yourself in His shoes today in the Gospel. He in all likelihood experiences the thoughts and emotions of *confusion, anxiety, worry, sorrow, probably anger, and most of all temptations against trust*, when he finds out Mary is pregnant with a child, and he has NO IDEA how this came about! But what does He do? Does he flip out? Fly off the handle? Attack Mary and her character? No!! From the Gospel account, clearly he **steps back, reflects and prays**, and as a result God rewards his TRUST in Him by giving him a dream in which the TRUTH of the matter of Mary's pregnancy is made know to St. Joseph. *It was indeed through the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary is pregnant with the baby Jesus!* Joseph awakens and does what the Angel in the dream commanded him. What a beautiful example of trust in the Lord! Let's ask St. Joseph to help us to do the same in our life, in ways big and small, to always step back, reflect, pray, and entrust all to the Lord! Our life is not without a plan or meaning; all the struggles and sufferings, the dark moments and times of confusion are stepping stones leading us closer to God - but only if we abandon all to Him in trust.

Everything is in His Providential care, and nothing happens in our life without God ordaining it or permitting it for our eternal Good (see St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 8). As we move toward Christmas day, may each of us resolve to *trust* God more, be more *obedient* in Faith, and cultivate a greater devotion to *St. Joseph* in our life, to take care of any problems quietly in the Lord, and make the next good step toward deeper union with the Blessed Trinity; as he is **the protector of the Holy Church of God**, and the saint whom we turn to, in trust, asking for **the special grace of a provided death** (receiving worthily the last Sacraments of the Church), so that some day each of us may die a holy death in the loving arms of the Holy Family. St. Joseph, pray for us. God bless you.