

## Conference #9: St Joseph

In preparation for our Diocesan Marian Congress , in the last three weeks, I have given 8 conferences, today's homily being the 9<sup>th</sup> in preparation for our Diocesan Marian Congress Tomorrow.

In these past conferences we have made a phenomenological study in order to derive the unique characteristics of three types of loves: Paterno-filial, Fraternal and Spousal Love.

In the hope of establishing a Covenant of Love with Mary, we then began to apply these three forms of love in relationship to Mary: Mary as our Mother, our Friend and our "Ideal companion" (*ezer kenegdo*).

Today, May 1, we conclude our Easter Marian Retreat with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in honor of Saint Joseph.

St. Joseph is the prototype of how to relate to Mary as a Mother, Friend and Ideal Companion. In a special way, St Joseph was the first to establish a Covenant of Love with Mary.

We honor him today as the patron of workers. And what great work he accomplished as the living icon of God the Father to the child Jesus. A mission he was only able to accomplish as he collaborated with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As Christians, we are re-born into Christ Jesus. The child Jesus is in each one of us. Just as he was entrusted the earthly mission to raise the child Jesus into adulthood, so too he continues to live out his mission to help us grow the child Jesus in each one of us into full adulthood.

But in order to accomplish this great work, he needs our permission and the collaboration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Earlier today, at 3pm, Archbishop José Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, renewed the Consecration of the United States of America to the Virgin Mary. And tomorrow with our Bishop Gregory Parkes, we will likewise renew [or make] our consecration to the Virgin Mary.

But for today, I would like to highlight the importance of taking, not just Mary into our homes, like the Beloved Disciple did, but also Saint Joseph!

Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic and the suspension of all public liturgies, the “stay at home mandate” has become a gentle way in which the Father has forced us to renew our understanding of the Domestic Church.

Each family nucleus is a cell of the Mystical Body of Christ. Each home is a domestic Church. Each house should be a little church in which we celebrate the mystery of “Emmanuel,” “God with us.”

I have been encouraging families to dedicate a central location of their home to the Holy Family to help in the work of raising the child Jesus into full maturity into each individual member of the family.

But for the Domestic Church to become like the Holy Family, not only do we need Jesus Christ and Mary, but also Saint Joseph.

Not only to raise the child Jesus into full adulthood, but also to mature as families in holy communion in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Eucharist. But the Mystery of Holy Communion remains ready at hand for all of us.

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist points to and it is the union of Christ for His Church, His Bride, which is all of us. This union of Christ to His Church, this Holy Communion, can be experienced in our homes even if we are not able to receive the Holy Eucharist at this moment.

Yesterday, Bishop Parkes send a communication announcing his hope to resume public worship during this month of May. But we should not waist this period of "Eucharistic Fast" to be the context in which we deepen in the mystery of the Holy Communion.

Saint Joseph and Mary did not have the privileged to receive the Holy Eucharist as a family. But they received into their homes the ultimate source of the Eucharist, Jesus Christ our Lord.

You too can receive Jesus Christ in each of your family members.

Receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ in each other!

In the measure in which you strengthen your family bond, you are strengthening the Holy Communion we all have in Christ Jesus.

By civil mandate we have been forced to stay home. And although it has truly brought about many challenges in our lives, it has nevertheless given you the opportunity to strengthen your Holy Communion as a domestic Church.

I hope you did not waiste this opportunity as to reap the first fruits of the greater good in the Father's Divine Plan when He allowed this great pandemic.

Soon enough, perhaps just in few weeks we will once again gather at the Eucharistic Altar of our Lord. But I pray and hope, not as we used to, but renewed in the mystery of the Holy Communion at Home.

You at home with your family are the Domestic Church. A cell in the greater Mystical Body of Christ. You still have few weeks to deepen in the mystery of the Holy Communion at home with your family members. Do not let it go to waste!

Bring Saint Joseph to your homes, together with Mary and the Child Jesus. Work with St Joseph "The Worker" to build a home that reflects the mystery of the Holy Communion we all have in Christ Jesus.

Collaborate with the Holy Family as to consummate the love of God within your families.

Within the virginal communion of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary, there was never a conjugal act that consummated their marriage.

Nevertheless, they validly consummated their love as they became one body, one blood, one spirit in Christ Jesus.

You too at home have the great potential to consummate your love with Christ Jesus the Bridegroom, by the little and great sacrificial acts of love you do for each other.

Do make a Covenant of Love with the Blessed Virgin Mary. But when you do and you take her into your homes, bring along with her Saint Joseph her beloved spouse and learn from them how to consummate your Holy Communion with Jesus Christ our Lord.