

Saint Joseph's Place in the Earthly Trinity by Aaron Joseph

“...so that **all** may grow in devotion to the Patron of the Universal Church...”

- Pope John Paul II (1978-2005)

Fr. Jean Gerson (1363-1429), the founder of *Josephology* (a branch of theology that studies the life and mission of Saint Joseph), coined the name “*Earthly Trinity*” centuries ago while teaching that devotion to Saint Joseph is linked to devotion to Jesus and Mary. Patron in Latin is *patronus*, from *pater*, father.

“By Saint Joseph we are led directly to Mary, and through Mary to the fountain of all holiness, Jesus Christ, Who sanctified the domestic virtues by His obedience to Saint Joseph and Mary.”

- Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922)

While obedient to Joseph and Mary, “Jesus advanced in wisdom **and age** and grace.” (Luke 2:52) The Son of God increasingly manifested wisdom and grace **as He aged** to show what the fruit of devotion to Joseph and Mary should be. “Take up **My yoke** upon you and **learn from Me**....” (Matthew 11:29) “If any man comes to Me, and hates not his **father and mother**..., he cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

“God commanded man, saying: ‘Of every tree of paradise you shall eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat; on the day that you shall eat of it, you shall die the death.’” Then “the serpent said to the woman: **‘No, you shall not die the death.’**” (Genesis 2:16–17, 3:4) Like Judas after her, “the mother of all the living” (Genesis 3:20) **betrayed the word of God** by taking to heart the word of the father of lies, a murderer from the beginning. (John 8:44) *Mortal sin* is “a grave infraction of the law of God that **destroys the divine life in the soul of the sinner** (sanctifying grace), constituting a turn away from God.” (CCC, Glossary) *Eve passed on Satan’s life-destroying wisdom* to Adam (man), **and he espoused it**. By the exercise of their wills, Adam and Eve cooperated in destroying the divine life in their souls. *Our Lord stated that we must hate our father and mother. He is telling us that we must not seek to be like our first parents.* By His example, Jesus is directing us to be devoted to *His parents* – to Joseph as our father-in-spirit and Mary as our Queen Mother. Imitate *the Son of man* (a term that Jesus often used). The “God-man” walked on Earth as both the Son of God *and the Son of Joseph and Mary*, and “he that says he abides in Him (Jesus) ought himself also to walk even as He walked.” (1 John 2:6)

“The personal charism of some witnesses to God’s love for men has been handed on, like ‘the spirit’ of Elijah to Elisha and John the Baptist, so that their followers may have a share in this spirit.”

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2684

Let us love Saint Joseph as our *father-in-spirit* and Mary as our *Queen Mother*. Mary, the immaculate disciple of the Word of God, took to heart (espoused, conformed to) Jesus’ life-nurturing wisdom – His law of grace. *Our Lady* then passed on Jesus’ life-nurturing wisdom to *our patron*, and he espoused it. Jesus loved Mary as *His Queen Mother*; we are to love her as *our Queen Mother*. Mary is to pass on to “man” the King’s law through prayer. We are to listen and conform to what “the New Eve” is to teach. Jesus, being the only begotten Son of God, did not love Joseph as *His father by generation*. Rather, He loved *this* “just man” (Matthew 1:19) as *His father-in-spirit* (Jesus loved Saint Joseph as a father). “**Is not this the Son of Joseph?**” (Luke 4:22) We are all to love Mary’s spouse as *our father-in-spirit*: we are to take “the spirit” (love/devotion) of our patron to heart. Saint Joseph’s most intimate relationship with Jesus, divine life in flesh and blood, was through *devotion to Mary*. **Let us imitate Saint Joseph’s spirit by listening and conforming to Mary.** By listening to Mary in prayer, we should advance in life-nurturing wisdom; by conforming to her in action, we should advance in sanctifying grace (divine life).

“The patron saint provides a model of charity (love); we are assured of his intercession.” (CCC, #2156)

- We are to love the New Eve as our Queen Mother, and Saint Joseph is *the model of devotion to her*.
- Jesus loved *this* “just man” as *His father-in-spirit* (He loved Saint Joseph as a father), and we are to imitate “the Son of man” by walking on Earth as children of God *and children of Joseph and Mary*.
- *The Magisterium* teaches that Mary’s spouse, whom Jesus loved as a father, is our *universal patron*.

Let us take to heart the three persons of the Earthly Trinity: let us imitate Jesus (the Son of man) loving Saint Joseph (our father-in-spirit) and Mary (our Queen Mother), Saint Joseph (the “just man”) loving Mary (“the New Eve”), and Mary (our **model and pattern**) loving Jesus (divine life in flesh and blood).

From *The Mystical City of God* by Venerable Mary of Agreda (1602-1665)

“The Lord manifested to His Immaculate Mother great secrets of the scope of His new evangelical law. Wishing to write it entirely into her purest heart, the Most Holy Trinity appointed and destined her as His firstborn daughter and the first disciple of the Incarnate Word, and set her up as the model and pattern for all the holy apostles, martyrs, doctors, confessors, virgins and other just of the new Church and of the law of grace which the Incarnate Word was to establish for the redemption of man.”

“The teaching and instruction of her Son have exalted the Sovereign Mother.” “All the excellence and sanctity of our great lady is included in her having been molded by God as the image or living stamp of His own Son, being so well adjusted and refined in grace that she seemed another Christ by communication and privilege. Thus was established a singular and divine intercourse between her and her Son.” “In the plenitude of this divine science and grace, Christ our Lord attained all these sublime ends by teaching the Most Blessed Mother the mysteries of the evangelical law. In order that she might afterwards be herself the consummate teacher and mother of wisdom, the Lord used different means of enlightening her.” “She was aware that all this knowledge was given to her in order that she might be the teacher of the whole Church, for this was her office in the absence of her Most Holy Son after His ascension into Heaven. In her, the new children of the Church and the faithful engendered by grace were to have a loving mother, who carefully nourished them at the breasts of her doctrines as with sweetest milk, the proper food of infant children.”

From *The Life of Saint Joseph* by Mother Maria Cecilia Baij, OSB (1694-1766)

“Mary was being instructed by the Eternal Wisdom living within her, and though Joseph received a great deal of information through remarkable illuminations and inspirations, he now received additional instruction from her. She spoke relatively little during this period because of her general absorption in God, and because of her particular attentiveness to fostering interior conversations with her Divine Child. Her remarks were of a mysterious nature but were imbued with a most exalted wisdom. Hence, our Joseph listened attentively to everything his spouse said, and waited expectantly for these occasional discourses from her lips. He treasured them in his innermost heart and meditated upon them. They were a tremendous source of enlightenment for him.”

“The saint now occupies, in virtue of his virginity and great purity of soul, a most distinguished throne near to the unspotted Lamb of God and very close to that occupied by the Queen of angels and of men, whose faithful and pure spouse he had been in life and whom he had more closely resembled than had any other creature.”

From the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II *Guardian of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Custos)*

“I am convinced that by reflection upon the way that Mary’s spouse shared in the divine mystery, the Church—on the road towards the future with all of humanity—will be enabled to discover ever anew her own identity within this redemptive plan, *which is founded on the mystery of the Incarnation*. This is precisely the mystery in which Joseph of Nazareth ‘shared’ like no other human being except Mary, the Mother of the Incarnate Word. He shared in it with her; he was involved in the same salvific event; he was the guardian of the same love, through the power of which the Eternal Father ‘destined us to be His sons through Jesus Christ.’ (*Eph. 1:5*)” “Besides trusting in Joseph’s sure protection, the Church also trusts in his noble example, which transcends all individual states of life and serves as a model for the entire Christian community, whatever the condition and duties of each of its members may be.”

“Reform of life is what I ask as the sign and proof of my children’s love for me. God looks at the heart, and if it resembles the heart of His Divine Son, it is with the greatest pleasure He regards it. But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. From this pure and immaculate heart, you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the divine heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with infinite delight upon such souls and makes them Its Heaven upon Earth. Come to me, my children, come to me and learn. There is much I would teach you.” (Our Lady of America – the Immaculate Virgin, 1957)

Our patron is the model of devotion to Mary, for “love is the keeping of her laws.” (*Wisdom 6:19*) Let us love Mary in the spirit of Saint Joseph, and witness to his place as the Patron of the Church.

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