

A TREATISE ON FATHERHOOD:
ST. JOSEPH THE FOSTER FATHER OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



JOSUE ROSALES



Guido Reni, *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*, 1640.

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Anton Raphael Mengs, *The Dream of St. Joseph*, c. 1773-1774.

A treatise on fatherhood: St. Joseph the foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ

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What does it mean to be a good man, a real, true man? What is the purpose of life? These two deeply interconnected questions are some of the most important we all face, not just men but every person seeking guidance and direction. The answers to these questions hold the highest stakes for how we understand and shape our lives. In this video, I will dive into the topic of fatherhood. I will begin by presenting the premise that all men are called to be *fathers*; then, I will analyze fatherhood in today's society in its two main forms—in the priestly vocation and the sacrament of Matrimony. After that, I will examine the life of a great saint who is the perfect embodiment of a true man and the idea of fatherhood. Finally, I will explore the fullness of this great calling to all men who, in the name of the Lord, were formed men and are called to be a direct reflection of Almighty God to the whole world: *perfect* and loving fathers.

All men are called to be Fathers

The true vocation and purpose of every single person is *to know, love, and serve Almighty God*—and for men, this is expressed through sacrificial fatherhood. Holy God has planted a father's heart in every man. Whether they have biological children or not, they are called to protect, lead, and love like a father. This intentional divine design is nothing other than *being* an image of our Heavenly Father Himself, a vessel for the life-giving Love of Almighty God the Father, Almighty God the Son, and Almighty God the Holy Spirit: the one Holy and Undivided Trinity, given through men to the whole world. In other words, fatherhood is simply living out the best plan of life for us; it is to exist for our Heavenly Father at all times forever and ever. Therefore, all men are called to lay down their lives for love of Him Who loved us first.

The Essential Role of Fatherhood

The role of fatherhood is indispensable because without it, there can be no life, and without life, there can be no love. Through men life enters into the world, no greater example of this is our Lord Jesus Christ, who became man to give light and life to the world.

At its core, a man is meant to reflect this truth and the life-giving love, embodying the purpose for which he was created and made a male. Furthermore, men were not created to be irresponsible or useless. They were created to work hard and produce good fruit. At the end of the day, the goal of men is doing that which allows them to fulfill their purpose in life: to love our Lord for His own sake; for Almighty God alone is important. In addition to working hard and providing good things for their families, men exist to be the vessels of the Grace of Almighty God and to reflect the manliness of the Heavenly Father to the entire world. By faithfully modeling fatherhood, men provide spiritual and moral guidance to all men. Men are not to redefine the sacred role of fatherhood designed by Holy God, but to faithfully abide by the truth of what a man is meant to be, this is best expressed in the life of Saint Joseph—a man who provided the life-giving love and protection, he first received from Almighty God, to the holy souls entrusted to him—our Lord Jesus and the Blessed Mother, whom he protected with his life, and by whom the authority of Holy God lead and cared for. In accepting his fatherhood, he brought order into the plan of salvation, for without order there can be no life. Saint Joseph demonstrates by his life that all men must be mission-driven, men of action and faith.

Perfect Model of Fatherhood

Saint Joseph was chosen to be the father of Holy God the Son Himself. This is the greatest honor any man would ever dream of. Neither St Peter, St. Paul, the great stigmatists, the doctors of the Church, nor even the most humble martyrs and saints were given the honor that our humble St. Joseph received. The choice for him to become a father was made for him by Almighty God. He simply accepted the Will of his heavenly Father as any trusting child would, a child who knows that he is a child and his father knows best. This is going to be very important later in the discussion because the greatest lie perpetuated by satan has been to make us believe that we men know better than Holy God; therefore, *we have a choice*. We do have a choice, to be and do that which we were

created to do—love Holy God above all things because He knows us. He wants truly only what is good for us men and women. Saint Joseph’s obedience is unparalleled, the love and trust he has in Holy God for him is undeniable. He reveals that true freedom and fatherhood come from faithfully accepting the role God has given us, men.

Holy Priesthood: Spiritual Fatherhood

Today, we face an undeniable crisis of fatherhood. This crisis affects both families and the church. If my claim is true, that all men are called to be fathers, then why do so many fatherless home exist? A key part of the problem lies in the fact that many men are either not taught or deceived into what the role of being a true man is. This is a crucial part of the problem, at least initially, because there is a crisis in the vocation that most closely represents the love of the Father: the Holy Priesthood. Although priests may not have the sweet burden of raising a holy household, they are in charge of spiritually fathering Almighty God’s people, especially men.

Through their guidance, they help shape men into competent heads of households, who in turn reflect the Image and transmit the love of Almighty God in their own homes. The priest may not know the intricacies of fatherhood in the married vocation; however, he knows what it is like to give up everything, carry his cross, and follow our Lord. He has chosen his bride - the Holy Mother church. Thus, his life models the most crucial aspect of manhood: complete love and obedience to Holy God. It is said that the more a man’s life assimilates the Holy Cross in principle, the more authentic and good his fatherhood is. Priests give an example of how to be generous, sacrificial, and hard working. They do embrace their calling while being joyful, gentle, kind, and caring —because they are the best version of who they were called to be: priests. As the priest meticulously cares for our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist, he gives examples on how a father should care for his children, and understands that his children belong to Almighty God alone first. The priest is the living sign of how much our Heavenly Father provides and protects us in the only thing that matters: the salvation of our souls. For through the hands and mouth of the priest, by the grace of Almighty God, does Life enter the world and in us. The priest teaches Holy God’s people how to become true and fearless soldiers of Christ; sons and daughters of Almighty God. Therefore, all men can rely on a good priest to help him become a good father.

Holy Sacrament of Matrimony

In the holy Sacrament of Matrimony, fatherhood once more finds its place as the foundation of married life. Some men are called to embody authentic Christian communities by building holy families through sacrificial love and leadership.

The man that is called to marry takes up the role of a protector and a provider ensuring a good life for his wife and his children; He puts Almighty God first and alone at the center of his heart before his spouse, and in doing so he puts his spouse or “best friend” *first*, not in the place of Almighty God, in the hierarchy of duties and responsibilities that the man has been given by Almighty God. The role of this man is to lead his wife and children into loving their Heavenly Father, for whom alone they all exist. He treats his wife as Almighty God would. Fatherly love is the source or foundation from which motherly love flows to her children—we cannot give what we have not received. Therefore, the child of a woman who is loved by the Father (through her husband as well) experiences the deepest kind of love and security he needs to grow healthy and secure. In other words, the love a mother has for her child depends solely on the relationship she has with her Heavenly Father through her husband, trusting and knowing that her Heavenly Father is always providing and protecting her through him. A father in holy matrimony ultimately provides, through the providence of Almighty God, for his family by offering his humble hard work, sacrifice, and prayer. He does this to build an environment that encourages each member of his family to fulfill their purpose in life to know, love, and serve Almighty God; this is the whole goal of fatherhood in marriage. Eventually, the husband will understand that it is Holy God Himself who may touch the face of His children through his earthly father’s hands.

Ultimate Vocations

In both forms of fatherhood, priesthood and marriage, the measure of a true man’s greatness is the measure of his love for Almighty God first. The success of a *father* is measured by his ability to do one thing: to instill in his *children* a total and unwavering love for our Heavenly Father above all things. This is not achieved by control or force, but by him being the witness of his own relationship with his God and Father. For true love is freely given and received, it is never forced. Children are the living fruit of a father, a sign of how much love a man has for Almighty God. The ultimate mission of any *father* is to make the truth be known and loved, to know that the joy of the saints is the opportunity to suffer for our Lord. Both of these men are entrusted with a bride and children to lead

them to live the happiest and most holy life possible here on earth and forever in Heaven.

St. Joseph: model of authentic manhood and fatherhood

All we know about St. Joseph is encapsulated in these words: obedient child of God. For many, St. Joseph was not a *learned* man; in fact, not a single word of his is recorded in scripture. Yet he is filled with graces and virtues. This makes him an intelligent and smart man; reading and writing any fool can do that but to serve our Lord faithfully at all times (to the best of their abilities) with integrity and humility, few have ever accomplished. Men exist to be intelligent, to be thinkers and doers. Like St. Joseph, true intelligence and awareness of what matters come from prayer. Only in prayer we can access Almighty God's presence and wisdom. He Who is the source of all Intelligence and Order made a simple man like St. Joseph *perfect*, strong, and capable of doing the one things he was asked to do: to love his Heavenly Father with his whole heart, soul, and mind; fulfilling the duties according to his state in life with joy, happiness, prudence, and peace. St. Joseph is the evidence that proves that a father's gift is the opportunity to sacrifice for the souls entrusted to him, and to do what is difficult. St. Joseph protected the Holy Family and was in charge of being the living image of Almighty God to Almighty God Himself! He was a hard worker, quiet, and an obedient man. His qualities in our society are not appreciated or valued. Today, many men are wasted, seeking true rest in comfort and distractions when true rest is only found in the presence of Holy God. Good fathers are needed in the church as much as they are needed in society. True men go into silent mode, like St. Joseph, trying to hear the call that can

only come from the mouth of Holy God. All calls to fatherhood are meant to reflect the Heavenly Father's love and protection for others. Men were given the ability to bend their knees and give thanks for the opportunity to serve Almighty God, and rest in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Call For Action: Once called, always called; Your Existence.

I would like to conclude with a call for action. If you are a male, you can be the man/father that Almighty God intended for you to be. Only men can be fathers. If there is one thing I suggest you take from this short reflection on the calling of fatherhood is that once you are called, you are always called. For even though the divine calling for us is experienced within this temporal world, it comes from Him Who is outside of time. The calling is eternal. Our Heavenly Father does not ask you to do anything other than what is best for you, which in turn is best for those who are dearest to you: to simply follow the plan of life He has set apart for you. You can never go wrong in knowing, loving, and serving your Heavenly Father.

Conclusion

To be a good man, a real man is to be like our Lord: one who knows, loves, and serves the only Person whom we exist: Almighty God the Father, Almighty the Son, and Almighty God the Holy Spirit. You Father, my Father; Our Father. To be a good man is to say from the bottom of your heart, "Heavenly Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for You." To know, love and serve Almighty God above all forever and ever.

A treatise on fatherhood: St. Joseph the foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Josue Rosales

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Have you ever wondered what it means to be a *good* man or a good father? I can only assume, from my own personal experience, that many have asked themselves this question; and many, including myself, have been left wanting. While the majority of men, nowadays, show signs of not being truly *good* men, there is a minority who **leave room for hope in the establishment of true manhood in all society for the common good of all people - good fathers and priests.** These men despite the two different vocations express a powerful and deeply theological vision of masculinity rooted in spiritual and moral responsibility better known as *fatherhood*, which will be the central focus of my essay. In this essay, I will dive into what is truly the vocation of all man: *fatherhood -either through natural marriage and family or through spiritual leadership and service*, the crisis of fatherhood and the holy expressions of this humble calling, what living this vocation entails, and most importantly, what is the social, spiritual, and moral effect in the lives of human beings when fatherhood is ordered in the light of the Gospel. Furthermore, in this paper, I will call this essential calling the *overarching male vocation*.

There is no doubt that in our day and age the topic of fatherhood is highly scrutinized and deeply distorted. In fact, many times, the question of what the role of men or fathers in our society is, is avoided or left unanswered. In many circles, masculinity traits of men are under direct attack and the qualities of manhood once celebrated - strength, leadership, decisiveness, protectiveness, etc.- are now viewed with suspicion and disdain and called “toxic” or “controlling” etc.; Therefore, this persecution and the inability of men to socially and spiritually respond to their vocation ends up in confusion and men are unsure how to act and afraid to lead, are reluctant to step into their God-given roles: becoming good strong men and fathers, ready to

protect and provide for others. The attack on masculinity is an attack on manhood and fatherhood as well, and the result is a false fatherhood. Men are left to deduce for themselves what it means to be a good man or a good father. Unfortunately, with no firm grounding on theological truth, men comply and come to conclusions based on the examples that are made available to them in social media or movies, etc.; Thus, men feel pressured to choose between two extremes: liberalism and conservatism. Sadly, the vast examples of “desirable” masculinity in the mainstream media—the greatest source of influence in our modern culture—are completely detrimental to the development of healthy families which are the essential foundation of healthy societies. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to shine light on the masculinity crisis, which is a fatherhood crisis, and explore why it is essential for cultivating back manly virtues - virtues that can only be fully realized through living the Christian way of life. It is through this path that men become who they are called to be: fathers, good men, vessels of the Fatherly love to all mankind.

Men in truth must be the vessels of Love for the entire world; without *Love*¹ there is no *Life*² and without *Life* there is no *Love*. Men are called to become instruments of Almighty God’s Grace and Love which is essential for everyone to be able to *know, love, and serve Almighty God in this world and be happy with Him forever in Heaven.*³ It is *only* through fatherhood, which is the providing and protecting of the Love of our Heavenly Father in the lives of all individuals who cross their path home towards Heaven, that a man lives out his manhood his true vocation as a father.

I contend that a *real* man is a true father, and a true father is a good man. What is a good man? A good man is *he* who loves his Father with his whole heart,

¹ 1 John 4:8 (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition). “God is Love.”

² John 14:6. “I am the way, and the truth, and the *life*. No one

comes to the Father except through me.”

³ The Catholic Primer, “The Baltimore Catechism of 1891,” Q.6, 8. This is the purpose of mankind.

whole soul, and whole mind: being a father (or “he who has been called to be one thing: a lover of God in the act of providing and protecting and placing his entire life and effort to the service of the souls entrusted to him; simply being a father”). In addition, a father is the living image and example of Almighty God to the entire world.

From The Father comes order and from Him alone comes love to all mankind - that is the role of a father. Without our Heavenly Father we would not exist or live; furthermore, without Fatherhood, we would not be in need of becoming an offering to Him, perfect in His eyes. Our Lord Jesus comes to reveal the love of the Father (quote Jesus). Thus, I claim that in this revelation, every man is called to be a father—whether physically, spiritually, or sacramentally—because he is created in the image of God the Father, the origin and destiny of all love. The male vocation is rooted in self-giving love, protective authority, and priestly guardianship. Drawing from Scripture, Church tradition, sociology, I further assert that the life of Saint Joseph and his work as a father and priest will show that the true masculinity finds its fullness and full realization in fatherhood, which mirrors the life-giving, guiding, and protecting nature of God Himself.

Being an “okay” man is not good enough, and additionally, striving for perfection is required for a healthy society to exist, no good society exists without healthy fathers. Ultimately, a good father is measured by his ability to do one thing: *to engender in the lives of those entrusted to him the total and utter love of no one else other than our Heavenly Father: Almighty God.*

The Crisis of Modern Society: Fatherless Families

In our society we often see a great emphasis on the love of a mother. Which is very much essential in the healthy development of children as seen by the greatest Mother; the Blessed Mother. However, there is no greater love than the love of a father. Now, I am completely aware of the importance of a mother’s love and I am not writing to diminish that but to put it in its proper light for no one can contend that the child of a loved woman is more deeply loved and this love comes from the father who provides his absolute attention and protection to his spouse who is pregnant with his son or daughter. Furthermore, our Lord came to reveal

The Father.⁴ Hence motherly love has been given life through fatherly love: for we cannot give what we do not have. Fatherless households might have a very kind and loving mother, but sadly, statistics show that when fathers are absent or incompetent, the whole family suffers, and consequently, society also suffers. There is more delinquency and mental struggles in children of fatherless homes. Yet, society continues to put more emphasis on the love of a mother, yet we do not see changes in those homes.

It is important to acknowledge that there are many fathers out there, men, who are giving their children what society at large would consider *good things*: a home, time for recreation, food, education, personal time, and more. They teach their children basic manners, and they acquire some degree of virtue, whatever degree that the fathers themselves possess. They instruct them in dealing with social situations *outside the home in an efficacious manner that protects the natural privacy of the household*. There are even those who are “Christian men” and who instruct their children in the theology of their home—even in Protestant homes.

All of these things are aspects of a good fatherhood but *they are not the measure of a good father, a good man*. For our Lord said,

*Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*⁵

A good father is measured by his ability to do one thing: to instill in their children a total and unwavering love for our Heavenly Father above all things. This undoubtedly means to teach the children to keep our Lord's Commandments which can only be fully lived out and kept in His Church: the one Holy and Apostolic Catholic Church instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. We as Catholics know that Almighty God provides natural and spiritual order in life; a stability in goodness and holiness. We know that fathers are vessels of the life-giving Love of Almighty God in which order is found. We need to look no further to assert the utmost importance of Fatherhood in our society. A society mostly *lost* in sin and disorder, a society which

⁴ Matthew 11:27. “All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

⁵ Matthew 7:9-11.

suffers immensely and has no clue as to why or how to make the right move. It is right to say that evil exists when *good men* do nothing, it is even more proper to say that evil exists when fathers are absent and when men choose to deny their manhood, their sole vocation: fatherhood. They abandon their calling, priestly or biologically, and the hurts/wounds in children are exponentially devastating as time goes by. In fact, in a study conducted in 2022 in the UK on 8409 children determined that,

*Early...childhood father absence was strongly associated with increased odds of offspring depression and greater depressive symptoms at age 24 years. Early childhood father absence was associated with higher trajectories of depressive symptoms during adolescence and early adulthood compared with father presence.*⁶

In another study conducted in South Africa among men who reported fatherlessness in their upbringing concluded that four themes emerged: (1) *emotional pain and coping*, (2) *perceived loss of masculine identity and self-worth*, (3) *strained financial and psychosocial support*, and (4) *acceptance and closure*.⁷

The absence of a father does not necessarily mean physical absence. At one point in our lives, we all have been physically present, yet mentally absent. Without awareness of this fact, men become incapacitated to act and true awareness comes from being in a state of Grace: being one with the Father. So while a father is present physically, yet spiritually absent, he fails completely in his role in forming saints and saving his soul in the process - the reason for his marriage (or priestly ordination). Almighty God did not create men to be absent but present, and the most important presence is in the spiritual life of the household. A tree that grows crooked is a tree that was never tended to or was only partially tended. Society is like a giant feedback loop, it feeds upcoming generations that have been allowed and tolerated disorderly ideas. If society can be assimilated to the tree in the latter analogy, we can say that it grew crooked because whoever was tending it stopped, and in the family unit, this duty belongs to fathers who have been given the authority by Almighty God to do so in His Name. Yet, many fathers leave, and this causes

an intense wound. The wound of fatherlessness is then generational, for no one can give what one has not received; but with Almighty God, anything is possible. Only with Him can men choose to make the only choice they can: the next right choice to be the father they never had, to be the man they were never taught to be by following our Lord's example-the best true Man and true God. It only takes Almighty God's Grace to remove and heal the most profound generational sin of fatherlessness. It can be ended, but men must choose to accept their calling in life; to be open and to accept the greatest plan of their life put together by Almighty God. For one reason they were born males and masculine: to be fathers.

I would like to bring to light the following truth and explain its deep-rooted implications in fatherhood—manhood: *the physical is the expression of the spiritual*. If a father could only choose to teach his son one name, if he were a real man as our Lord was and is (true God and true man), he would choose to teach him the name of Jesus Christ, sacrificing his own name in the life of his son knowing that his son is truly first and foremost the child of Almighty God and who has been entrusted to him; one so that they son may know the Father and so the father may know the Father. Truly a good father knows that at the end of the day, the only thing that matters is knowing, loving, and serving Holy God; the salvation of one's soul. Nothing else matters. The prioritization of the spiritual life is expressed and manifested in the physical life. A father who makes the Church in the life of the household the most important place on Earth, will also go above and beyond through sweet and heavy burdens to provide the physical needs his family has in the name of Jesus Christ. If he were to find the Love of the Father, he would be joyful and tempered, strong yet kind and gentle. His physical life would express his spiritual life -like in the example of St. Joseph -he would pray as devoutly and piously as the saints and work as efficiently and hard as the greatest craftsmen: he would follow in our Lord's footsteps; he would be like Him. So that no matter the financial circumstances he may find himself in he would never forget that prayer and work go hand in hand. To be poor and to be holy is to be happy; to be rich and holy is to be happy; to be happy is to serve Almighty God. St. Joseph knew this. St. Joseph, the foster father of our Lord who was entrusted to the example of Almighty

⁶ Culpin I;Heuvelman H;Rai D;Pearson RM;Joinson C;Heron J;Evans J;Kwong ASF, "Father Absence and Trajectories of Offspring Mental Health across Adolescence and Young Adulthood: Findings from a UK-Birth Cohort," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, accessed July 28, 2025, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35842065/>.

⁷ Campion Zharima et al., "'to Have a Father, Maybe I Was Going to Be a Better Person': A Qualitative Study Exploring the Effects of Biological Father Absence on Young Men in South Africa - *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*," SpringerLink, May 30, 2025, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43151-025-00181-2?utm_source.

God the Father to Almighty God the Son; he who taught our Lord how to be a man by becoming a vessel of the Fatherhood of our Heavenly Father.

St. Joseph: The Earthy Father of Almighty God

No one can deny the innate desire all men have to be fathers: to provide and protect for those who need them most—his family. After analyzing the social crisis of fatherlessness, I would like to turn to the greatest earthly father, and place him as the role model for all fathers or the standard for what Almighty God intended Fatherhood to be. I turn to no one other than the man responsible for the raising and forming of Jesus Christ—Almighty God the Son: St. Joseph the Foster Father of our Lord. It was St. Joseph who carried the weight of mankind on his shoulders by being made responsible for forming our Lord to know, love, and serve His Heavenly Father, by preparing Him for His Most Holy Passion. He taught our Lord how to be man, a true man, the best man ever, because he allowed himself to be a vessel for the Grace of Almighty God giving therefore not his fatherhood but the Fatherhood of God. While is and was God even as a child, he allowed Himself to be provided for and protected by a humble man— a man with the utmost love and reverence of Holy God. Many may say that to be the image of God the Father is quite impossible due to our fallen nature, but St. Joseph proves otherwise. How do we know? A craftsman is known by the quality of his work. What about a father? He is known by his children's love of Holy God. No one loves the Father more than our Lord, therefore we can deduce that man was created and given all the faculties necessary to make themselves sons of the Father in their obedience to His commandments. This is being a father: they will be done, thy kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven. That is to say may the Fatherhood of Almighty God come to Earth so that fathers may be like the Father in Heaven—by His Grace and our willingness.

We see that it is not necessary to be known for a man of many talents but to be a good friend to one's spouse, and a good example to one's children. St. Joseph did not speak a single word in the New Testament, but he formed the Word. Being the earthly image of Almighty God is not being a Harvard graduate or a CEO of a multi-million-dollar corporation, but being someone who gives and sacrifices themselves for the good of another. St. Joseph did not question his Father when he was asked to take the Blessed Mother as his most holy spouse (holy friend), nor did he when he was instructed to take the Holy Family to Egypt to avoid the wrath of Herod. It is estimated that he walked over 120 miles. He gave his life and sacrificed his own life for our Lord and his Mother. He

teaches us that fathers are men who give their best that is in being saints; the act of love is giving. We cannot give what we do not have. Fathers must be like Saint Joseph: Holy and striving for perfection, a perfection which is achieved one step at a time, can you take two steps at a time? No, our Lord has given us men as he gave St. Joseph, the opportunity designed to make use of men's God given talent to be able to focus on one thing alone and not get distracted, the thing would be: *thy will be done*, and the opportunity is the present moment. Our Lord said, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), St. Joseph was because he gave the best thing he and anyone of us could give: the Love of the Father. His love flowed to the Blessed Mother and Jesus, and from Our Lord Jesus it returned to the Father. Therefore a father is not only the earthly image of God to his children but to his spouse as head of the household from him life comes from Heaven unto earth and is distributed, by his self-emptying and obedience to his Father and His Commandments in joy and humility, to his spouse and anyone who he encounters.

Saint Joseph was not just a bystander; he was a *priest*, someone who offers sacrifice, and father, a man of constant prayer and deep righteousness. In him we see the self-emptying required of all fathers. He did not father Jesus biologically, but he modeled the love of the Father perfectly, as someone who simply wants one to do what is best for oneself. This love was not physical or romantic, but divine—true love. Joseph loved our Blessed Mother not as a false man does with desires for a woman, but as a man who loves his God and what He has entrusted to him. He was a true man who carried on the most blessed role of St. Joachim to provide and protect for our Lady, to help her love her Father with her whole heart, soul, and mind. Should this have required him to step away he would have done it in an instant, for as our Lord modeled love is not possessive but free—in His most Holy Passion. His desire for our blessed Mother and our Lord: to serve their Heavenly Father. All true love begins and ends in the Father. Saint Joseph teaches us that to love a family, a man must first love the Father with all his being. He must give his life, his name, his identity—not to possess, but to protect.

The Holy Priesthood and the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony

Fatherhood then is not only reserved for the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony, but it is also for the Holy Priesthood. Here these men are called in a way like no others to be fathers to the Church and its people. They offer up their lives for our Lord, and engage in

the spiritual warfare that torments His children, who become the priests spiritual children. Like St. Joseph priests are those that offer up sacrifice, primarily the Holy Mass, but their entire lives as well. In fact, priests are those that most closely resemble the Fatherhood of Holy God when they go into the depth of their calling in life without any hang ups or reservations. How? Well, although many may rightly say that the holy priesthood is not like holy marriage and that the father in the household has many more worldly affairs to deal with than the priest, the priest knows what it is like to give up their entire life for love of Almighty God to provide and protect for their Father's children. A fathers life is truly on course with his purpose when his life becomes more and more like the holy cross: a desire to do the Will of the Father through sacrifice. In fact, although priests may not have the sweet burden⁸ In raising an individual household they have been given the task of fathering the whole people of Almighty God including those who are heads of households ensuring that they form these spiritual sons into true men: soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ who are in truth strong men and hence gentle men. From the mouth of the priests is the love of the Father most vividly expressed in the greatest words any man can dare to utter: *This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*⁹ A son is the living sign of how much love a father has for Almighty God, hence the Son of Man is the sign of Fatherhood, and it through this Fatherhood that all mankind lives and fulfills his sole purpose in life to know, love, and serve Almighty God; to do what is best for themselves and in it find eternal salvation.

*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh (John 6:48-49)*¹⁰.

It is the priest that brings salvation into the world, it is the priest that brings Fatherhood into the world, and it is the priest who instructs men through the power of their example on how to be men:

*If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?*¹¹

In the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony fatherhood is like that of the priest in putting Almighty God first even before his spouse. In doing so, he will put his spouse or "best friend" first, not in the place of Holy God, but first in the hierarchy of duties—which are outside of his personal relationship with Holy God—that he has been given by His Father to truly love his wife: to help her love her Father with her whole heart, soul, and mind above all things. He does not end the presence of fatherhood in her life, but complete it and as the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament so does he fulfill the life-giving necessity of fatherhood in the life of his best friend, his holy sister¹². He treats her as Almighty God would treat her. He is always aware that what he wants should be that she simply love her heavenly father above all things. He instructs the son on how to treat his mother and all women (all of his dearly beloved sisters). He knows that men do not exist to be useless but to be useful, they do not present roadblocks to the present solutions, they do not exist to believe they deserve a vacation or rest but that they do not deserve the opportunity to labor and sacrifice for their Heavenly Father by tending to the souls entrusted to him. There is no complaint in the true man, only thanksgiving. He might say, "Thank you o Lord for allowing me to lay down my life for you." He keeps in mind the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."¹³ Once again, his children are the sign of how much love a father has for

⁸ It is common knowledge that raising a family is no cakewalk and asks for parents to go above and beyond in their efforts and sacrifices in the raising of a holy family (sanctity and true family are one and the same). However, what a gift it is to suffer for our Heavenly Father for whom we exist, and to do so by serving those who are dearest to us—those who have been entrusted to our care. For the joy of the saints is to be able to suffer for our Lord. The joy of the family is no different, they are meant to be saints who offer up their sufferings and sacrifices as religious communities do. Hence, it is a burden but it is a sweet burden and one that no man in his right mind would reject.

⁹ Luke 22:19. These are the words of Consecration at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is when these words are uttered by the priest

that the bread and the wine at the altar turn into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ yet remain under the appearance of bread and wine.

¹⁰ John 6:48-49, *The Bread from Heaven* discourse.

¹¹ Matthew 16:24-26.

¹² As is described in the book of Tobit, "Take your kinswoman; from now on you are her brother, and she is your sister" (Tobit 7:11). This is not biological whatsoever, but spiritual. It emphasizes the importance of the protective role of the father for his spouse whom he has assumed in the form of a covenant the responsibility of ensuring to the greatest degree possible the salvation of her soul and hence of the children.

¹³ Matthew 25:40.

his Heavenly Father watching over them as St. Joseph watched over and formed our Lord knowing that all children truly belong to Almighty God and parents are simply their caretakers who have been given the gift to participate in the life giving love of Almighty God through the example of living a holy life not in complaints or ingratitude but in praises and thanksgiving to Holy God.

St. Joseph was both priest and father. He was both a man of prayer and of work. He was a man who listened and needed not say a single word to form the Word of God which would speak to the world on behalf of St. Joseph expressing the love St. Joseph had and has now for his Heavenly Father. This is the love that makes true men and gives life to the entire world.

A Calling for all Men: A Real Man is a Good Father; The Overarching Male Vocation.

Now that we have examined the greatest calling bestowed upon men, men as humble imitators of Christ, I must now unfold the greatest power bestowed upon men. It is a power from heaven placed within the hearts of all men that enables them to participate in the fulfillment of their unique purpose. This is the divine power to be *open*. It sounds simple, yet many men refuse to do this. Here is where we fully answer the question: What does it mean to be a real father/ man? All that is required for a male to be a real man is to engage in that which is difficult¹⁴ - to be open to our Lord and to follow Him and quietly carry his own cross. No one is born perfect, except our Lord and Lady, but we were created *to be made perfect*.¹⁵ This is the truth. When we acknowledge the truth: we men (and women too) are a marvelous creation of Holy God alone made with the capability to freely choose to be spiritually and physically open or closed; when we OPEN our hearts to the Lord, *He begins to make us perfect*. There is nothing that we can do on our own that can “earn” graces or anything (we wish “our accomplishments” were ours!) - all that we are and have is a gift of God Most Holy. Yet, by His Grace alone, we hold the greatest power bestowed upon men, our *fiat*, our honest “YES” to Holy God’s Will.

That is how we let Him begin to work in our lives, and

that is how we begin to know the truth: we are made men, and our manhood is meant to reflect His image to the world, strong, sacrificial, humble, centered, faithful, etc. These masculine qualities are accessible to us through Him who always is. However, if we are not open to Holy God’s purpose for us, being chosen is useless. There is no credit in being chosen; the gift is in responding to that calling with a *Yes*, completing the Holy Plan of Almighty God for us. Some might wrongly think, “St. Joseph was chosen, and that is why he was able to please the Lord.” Regardless, if he was chosen or not (He was chosen), if he closed to the Will of Almighty God and refused to serve His Holy Father, I would not be writing about him 2,000 years later. He completed Holy God’s plan for him by staying OPEN to Him. He became a good man and a good father. All men are called to be fathers, if you are a biological male you are called to be a father. For no other reason are men born masculine than to be the living Image of Almighty God. Where do men start living out their overarching vocation? With themselves. How well do they provide and protect for their physical, and most importantly spiritual wellbeing? How certain are they that should they die today they would be ready to go home to Heaven? Are they their own best friends or their worst enemies? They begin and prepare as our Lord did under the care of St. Joseph and in the example of St. Joseph, in the present moment given to them, in their childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. They do this by using their will to turn to Almighty God and return it to Almighty God in place of His: by loving and serving Him. They will in turn prioritize their salvation and aid, not impede, the salvation of those closest to them: family—their father and mother, brother and sister. The way we treat our Heavenly Father is the way we will treat others. True men treat others as they would treat Almighty God. St. Joseph did this with our Lord—Almighty God the Son.

Once Called Always Called: You Cannot go wrong in Knowing, Loving, and Serving your Heavenly Father.

Almighty God does not make mistakes. If a person is alive, it is for a reason. He is still putting His chips on their table for him/her -still rooting for them. He is giving them life so that they might realize: once called,

¹⁴ Of all the difficulties in life nothing compares to prayer, the foundation for true Life. Nothing more difficult than to fight the good fight, in the sense that we will never cease to face resistance from the devil and his servants, and yet nothing more attainable and beneficial. For man has been created and given all the faculties necessary to do one thing: to know, love, and serve Almighty God. St. Joseph did this. He loved us so much because he loved his Heavenly Father above all things in holy obedience and humility (which is true

reverence of Almighty God). In doing so he was able to give us the example that not only is the Most Holy Will of Almighty God attainable, possible, and probable but it is the best plan of life that we can ever live out.

¹⁵ Matthew 5:48. “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

always called. Almighty God is outside of time, yet our existence is within time. We know that the things of this world fade away after time, they break down, and they cease to exist. However, this is not the case with our Heavenly Father. The calling of life comes from Almighty God, who is Eternal. Though manifested in our temporal world, life comes from outside of time and exists in the Eternity of our Father. That is why once our Lord calls *them*, *they* will always be called because the *calling* comes from Him who exists outside of time. The truth does not

depend on mankind's agreement or approval to exist, and this applies to the calling of men *to be fathers*. Furthermore, what do men truly have to lose in the pursuit of their Holy purpose? The loss of vice and weakness? Since when has that ever been considered negative? What is it to then be a good man, the best man? To be one with Almighty God, so that the best man may dwell in you and you in Him: our Lord Jesus Christ. It is simply, to know, love, and serve Almighty God above all now on Earth and forever in Heaven.