THE JUSTICE, INDUSTRY AND HUMILITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

Bp. Michał Stobnicki

Beloved in Christ the Lord. Today we celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

When we come to think and speak of Saint Joseph, we come to think and speak of an exceptional person, of a model of virtue. And if Saint Joseph lived in our times, then at the sight of how people behave today his heart would surely break from pain and sorrow. Saint Joseph, my dear brethren, a model of virtue, is so utterly out of place in the modern world. The example that Saint Joseph left us, that he gives us, is rejected and despised by modern men infected with the virus of liberalism. And all the more must we gaze upon Saint Joseph and ask him to help us, against the sons of this world, to form in ourselves the virtues of which he is the model and example.

Today I wish to point to three traits, three virtues of Saint Joseph, which we ought in a special way to imitate today.

First, my dear ones, we have just heard a passage of the Gospel which described Saint Joseph with a single adjective: a just man. Saint Joseph is venerated by the Church. In the litany there is the invocation: "Joseph most just" (*Ioseph iustissime*). This justice is something that distinguishes Saint Joseph. One might say that he shines with the radiance of justice.

But what exactly is justice? Justice is nothing other than the constant, unchanging desire to give to each what is due to him. When we look at the life of Saint Joseph, when we reflect on what he did in his life, we immediately understand why the Gospel describes him by precisely this word: a just man. To everyone he gave what was due. First of all he gave worship and glory to God. To God, whose will he desired to fulfil without any exception. To God, to whom he devoted everything, his plans, his dreams, desiring to fulfil the will of God to the very end.

We see further this justice of Saint Joseph also toward his neighbours, above all toward the Most Blessed Mother, toward the Child Jesus. Saint Joseph became the head of the Holy Family, the guardian and provider of the Son of God. And we see, my dear ones, how he fulfils these fatherly duties toward the Lord Jesus with extraordinary zeal and solicitude; how he did not hesitate to set out for Egypt with the Most Blessed Mother, with the Divine Child, in order to protect the Lord Jesus from the designs of Herod and his henchmen. For he understood perfectly what his duty was as head of the family, as guardian and protector of the Son of God.

MODERN INJUSTICE

And when we think of the example of Saint Joseph, when we realise how much he was a just man, who gave to each what was due to him, at the same time we realise how unjust are the people living today. People who do not see that they have duties, who live in the conviction that they have nothing but rights. People who do not give worship to God, who are not in the least interested in God's law, in God's will. People who despise God, and people who despise their neighbours as well. For whoever despises God is not able to truly love another human being. There is no true love of neighbour without the love of the Lord God.

And we see, my dear ones, this rising wave of injustice in the modern world. We see, my dear ones, spouses who count their marital duties for nothing. We see parents who count their parental duties for nothing. We see, my dear ones, how injustice devours the whole of modern society. How we are sinking into the depths of injustice. We are not ready to give others what is due to them. Because we live in this liberal conviction that everything is due to us. We attribute everything to ourselves. We are the beginning and the end of all things on earth. That, after all, is just

what the Second Vatican Council taught: man is the source and summit of all things on earth.

INDUSTRY AND PENITENTIAL WORK

Further, my dear ones, looking at the example of Saint Joseph, we admire his industriousness. Saint Joseph is a model of working men. All his life he worked hard in the sweat of his brow. All his life he worked in order to support the Holy Family, to support the Most Blessed Mother and the Divine Child Jesus. He did not shun work, but zealously performed the duties of his state, the duties of a father, the duties of the provider of the Holy Family.

My dear ones, we must realise what most Catholics do not remember, do not know, perhaps have never heard, because there is no one to tell them. Work is a consequence and a punishment of sin. Work in the sweat of the brow is a punishment for sin. And that means, my dear ones, that work is for man an opportunity for penance, for atoning for sins.

And look, my dear ones: when we look at Saint Joseph the Carpenter, the hard-working father of a family, and when we think of modern people who would like to have money for nothing, to earn without having to work. And we Catholics, my dear ones, have completely lost this notion, this conviction, that work has a penitential dimension, that work in the sweat of the brow is a punishment for sin, and therefore an opportunity for satisfaction. But who today will think of this? Who will think of this anywhere in these welfare states, in which money is owed for nothing, in which laziness is promoted, in which doing nothing is promoted?

HUMILITY AND TRIUMPHALISM

Further, my dear ones, the third trait, the virtue that distinguishes Saint Joseph, is his humility. After all, after the Most Blessed Mother he was the person closest to the Lord Jesus. Imagine, he became the guardian of the Son of God. He was called to protect and care for the physical body of our Lord Jesus Christ here on earth. What a great distinction, an unfathomable distinction. And yet about Saint Joseph you will find on the pages of Holy Scripture barely a few verses. He stands entirely in the shadow, and yet he would have had a title to boast of the distinction he received from the Lord God. He would have had a title to boast of what a vocation the Lord God gave him. But Saint Joseph remains entirely in the shadow. He is a humble man. He knows perfectly well what he was called to, and knows perfectly well that the Lord God loves the humble, that this vocation of his life demands humility, for had he fallen into pride, had he fallen into self-love, he would not have fulfilled this vocation.

And again, my dear ones, we look at the humility of Saint Joseph, we look at how he always stands in the shadow, fulfilling his duties as a father, the head of the family, caring for the Lord Jesus, and we think of modern people, of so-called Catholics, so-called traditional Catholics, who are only too happy to puff out their chests to have medals pinned on them, who are only too happy to boast of all they have done for the Church, for tradition, for the Holy Mass. The various fraternities compete with statistics: who has baptised more children, who has given more communions. Such a Protestant gospel of success. And yet the Lord God looks not at quantity but at quality.

And why boast that so many priests have been ordained? When afterwards no one has the courage to say that one, then another, has left. One became a rabbi, another broke up a family, went off with a woman into the blue yonder. And then, my dear ones, suddenly this triumphalism is gone. Suddenly silence falls, and it is a very scandalous silence. Why? Because surely traditional Catholics, traditional priests, the superiors of traditional congregations ought to know that if a priest falls, one should ask, one should call everyone to prayer for him. If he has fallen into the snares of Satan, then he must be helped to get out of them, and not to fall silent and pretend that there is no problem.

ASKING SAINT JOSEPH

Dear faithful, on this feast of Saint Joseph we wish to ask him fervently to help us in forming, in growing in

the virtues. We wish to ask him that with his help we may always be just men, that we may give worship to God, that we may fulfil our duties toward our neighbours, especially in the family. Those household duties whose performance so often comes hard to us. Second, my dear ones, we must ask for perseverance in the work we undertake and that we may understand that work is an opportunity for penance, that we may offer our efforts in the sweat of our brow as reparation for our sins. And third, my dear ones, we must ask that we remain humble, that we do not fall into the trap of pride, that we, my dear ones, do not ascribe to ourselves great merits, for if we have any merits, it is only thanks to the grace of God. And it is better, my dear ones, that we receive our reward in the life to come than here on earth.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

And my dear ones, thinking of the example of Saint Joseph, it is worth that, as we direct to him, best of all daily, if only a brief sigh, a short aspiration, we have before our eyes two Gospel scenes. Two beautiful Gospel scenes that show what kind of man Saint Joseph was, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

First, my dear ones, when you pray to Saint Joseph, consider the scene of the flight into Egypt. A scene that shows the courage of Saint Joseph and his prudence. Saint Joseph realised that as guardian of the Son of God he was responsible for His safety, that he had to protect the Lord Jesus from Herod and other servants of the devil. And this prudence commanded him to flee from the Promised Land to Egypt. This prudence commanded him not to wait, not to take risks, but to hide the Lord Jesus. And he did not lack courage either, not to abandon the Most Blessed Mother and the Lord Jesus in danger. Saint Joseph goes, leads the Holy Family to Egypt, and when the time comes, when the angel instructs him, he returns with the Holy Family, returns to Nazareth.

A very important lesson for all of us, for just as Saint Joseph cared for the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the safety of the Child Jesus, so too he cares unceasingly for the safety, for the preservation, of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, which is the Church. And we must invoke Saint Joseph in a special way in these times, in which we see how the Herods of today try to destroy, to wipe out the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. When we look at all these Judeo-Masonic plots against the Catholic Church, who could be a better defender of the Church, whose help we should invoke, than Saint Joseph, he who saved the Child Jesus from the hatred of Herod 2000 years ago.

FOUND IN THE TEMPLE

And second, my dear ones, the second Gospel scene that is worth our considering: the finding of the Lord Jesus in the Temple. Look, Saint Joseph, so tender, so caring a guardian, and the Most Blessed Mother, when they realised that the Lord Jesus was not there, that He had remained somewhere in Jerusalem, that a twelve-year-old boy was lost, what great fear, dread, anxiety they must have felt in their hearts. For three days they searched for the Lord Jesus, asked where Jesus was.

And after all, this fear, this anxiety for the Lord Jesus accompanies us who are living through this Good Friday of the Church. And we ask ourselves, where is the Lord Jesus today? For we cannot find Him where He has been until now. You cannot find Him in your parish church. He is not there. And this anxiety rises in us, this suffering, this pain of the soul, this fear. What has happened to the Lord Jesus? Where is He now? Where is He to be found? And can anyone understand better the anxiety of our heart, the pain of our heart, this unrest, than Saint Joseph, who searched anxiously for the Child Jesus, because he realised that he is his guardian, that he is responsible for the Lord Jesus, that he has toward the Lord Jesus the duty of ensuring His safety, of saving Him from evil men serving the devil? So if in our hearts too this unrest, fear, dread, anxiety about tomorrow arises, then we have no better friend, no better companion in these troubles of ours than Saint Joseph, who lived through this anxiety, this fear for the Lord Jesus in his own heart, and who wishes to accompany us today in our fear, in our misery.

THE JOSEPHITE VIRTUES

Dear faithful, let us contemplate the life, the example of Saint Joseph. Let us ask him to help us in forming the virtues. He is a model of virtue, especially for men. How different the modern world would look if Catholics, especially Catholic men, imitated the example of Saint Joseph. And as long, my dear ones, as we Catholics do not begin to live by the Josephite virtues, so long will the world be sunk in gloom and darkness. So long will the servants of the devil continue their plot, their schemes against the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Holy Church. So long as Catholics do not at last begin to live by the Josephite virtues, so long will the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ have the upper hand, will be winning the victory.

So we must ask Saint Joseph today fervently for the rescue of the Church, which will come by this road, that Catholics at last begin to lead virtuous lives. They will become just men, industrious, persevering in work, they will become humble men. From this will come the renewal of the Church. In this way Saint Joseph saved the Child Jesus, and in this way we can today save the Lord Jesus from this Judeo-Masonic criminal hand which would like to put Him to death anew.

Saint Joseph, spouse of the Mother of God, pray for us.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.