

This past Monday we celebrated the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. Saint Joseph is known as the Protector of the Universal Church. His powerful intercession is highly praised by Popes and Saints alike, and he is honored in a special way in every Mass: at every Mass we ask for the prayers of all the Saints, but in a particular way the Church invokes Our Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph, Her spouse, by name. At first glance we might think all this praise and honor is quite extraordinary, for in all of the Bible there is not one recorded word that Saint Joseph ever spoke. Sacred Scripture attests that Saint Joseph is a righteous man and Tradition holds him up as a model of humility, of faith, and of obedience and all of this without him uttering a single word. The Angel of the Lord spoke to Saint Joseph in a dream, commanding him to take the infant Christ and Mary to Egypt to protect them and when Saint Joseph awoke, he simply did what the Angel commanded him. Yet his silence is, itself, a lesson in the spiritual life for us.

Our world is often too noisy. Scripture tells us that God often speaks to us in the silence. One great example of this is when Elijah the Prophet was told to go up a mountain and there he would encounter God. Elijah obediently went up the mountain and there he saw a strong and violent wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but the Lord was not in any of these noisy and destructive forces. Elijah then heard a gentle whisper and in the gentle whisper the Prophet recognized the voice of Almighty God.

At times we can get so busy about so many things that we forget that we are called to seek God first and foremost in our lives. Sometimes we can even get caught up in doing good things, and fail to take time to be still before the Lord and simply listen to God. Our relationship with God is just that: a relationship. We must spend time talking to God, but we must also listen and seek His will. A dangerous trip in the middle of the night was not likely on Saint Joseph's wish list, yet He was obedient to God and never complained or questioned God's holy will.

We, like Saint Joseph, are called to seek God's will at each and every moment in our lives. Yet we must take time out of our busy and noisy lives in order to hear God speak to us and inspire us. God wants to speak to each one of you; but He does not shout. He does not force us to listen. He patiently waits for us to stop and make room for Him.

Lent is a time when we try to set aside some things that we might legitimately enjoy and offer that as a sacrifice to God and that is a good thing to do. A good sacrifice we might make this Lent is to carve out some time to offer to God. This can be a difficult thing. Sitting in silence with God might take courage. It might be especially difficult if we are not used to it. Spending time in silence requires humility. Rather than always going to God with our thoughts, we should, at times, allow Him to communicate to us. Give Him the space of silence to work in your heart.

Sometimes the idea of going deeper in our relationship with God can be intimidating. We aren't sure what God might ask of us. We might be afraid that the path could be difficult. Saint Joseph's journey with the Lord was not always easy: he had to flee to Egypt with Jesus and Mary; he listened to the Prophecy of Simeon that Jesus would be a source of division and that a sword of sorrow would pass through the soul of Mary; and together with Mary he sought the Lord, sorrowing, when the Child Jesus stayed behind in the Temple. In every life there are difficulties, we cannot escape the cross. The important thing to keep in mind is that when we put ourselves into God's hands we put ourselves into the hands of Him Who loved us so much that He sent His Son to die so that we could have Eternal Life. God desires our true happiness. With courage, faith, and humility let us place our trust in God, as Saint Joseph did. In silence let us seek God and allow Him to lead us and direct us. Faithful Spouse of the Virgin Mary, inspire us

through your example of silence and obedience, help us to find quiet in our lives so that we can hear God's voice and follow where it leads. Saint Joseph pray for us! Amen.