

Reverend Canons, Candidates, and dear Faithful; my dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I thank Canon Stein for once again graciously inviting me to preach here at St. Joseph's Shrine. It is always a sincere pleasure for me to be with you in this beautiful church and to celebrate with you this Novena during this Special Year dedicated to our holy patron.

Throughout this Novena, various priests will be preaching on the virtues of St. Joseph and how these virtues help us to overcome the vices that are present in our world today. His holy life and example will fortify us as we face the many challenges that we encounter each and every day. St. Joseph will be our guide on our pilgrimage of life.

This evening, let us address the topic: *In a World of Envy, Joseph Iustissime*

And as we have just celebrated the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas on Monday, perhaps we should look then at what the Angelic Doctor has to say about Envy.

St. Thomas teaches that Envy is sorrow or sadness over another's good, precisely because that good is regarded as something that has been withheld or taken away from the envious person's excellence or reputation. It is something that is seriously sinful because it is in conflict with the precept of Charity. And as it can be a fruitful source of other sins, it is listed as one of the capital sins. Sadness or sorrow over another's good, lacking in charity, and leading us into other sins. This is what envy is all about.

Perhaps, if we are honest with ourselves, we can see that this occurs at times in our own lives. Has there ever been a situation, when perhaps at work, we have been passed over for a promotion or a pay raise? Perhaps someone else is given that position or that raise over us? Perhaps this has happened in the lives of our young people. Perhaps you have been working very hard at your sport or at your studies, really giving it a good and heroic effort, and someone else is chosen as head of the class or captain of the team. How did you react to that? How did you look at that person who was chosen over you? What did it cause you to do? Perhaps each of us can think of times when envy raised its ugly head in our lives.

Truth be told, there may have been times when we even gave up certain moral principles that we held dear in order to achieve something that we desired. This disordered desire, this envious pursuit might cause us to make choices contrary to God just to obtain a particular office or position. Perhaps we may have done that ourselves, or we know of people who have. Envy is a very deadly thing because if we allow it, it can consume us and lead us away from God, because it takes us away from the life of Charity to which we are called.

So what does Joseph Iustissime, Joseph most Just teach us? St. Josemaria Escriva says:

St Joseph was an ordinary sort of man on whom God relied to do great things. He did exactly what the Lord wanted him to do, in each and every event that went to make up his life. That is why Scripture praised Joseph as "a just man." In Hebrew a just man means a good and faithful servant of God, someone who fulfils the divine will, or who is honorable and charitable toward his

neighbor. So a just man is someone who loves God and proves his love by keeping God's commandments and directing his whole life towards the service of his brothers, his fellow men.

Theologians building on principles of the ancient philosophers define the virtue of justice as "giving to another his due." First we are called to give God His due. Just as St. Joseph lived as a faithful follower of Judaism, by traveling to Jerusalem (quite a journey for him) three times a year for the various celebrations that they had, so are we to give God his due by traveling to Church and participating at Holy Mass and other devotions. So many of you travel, like St. Joseph, great distances to come here to this beautiful shrine.

After God, we are to give our neighbor his due. Instead of having a certain envy of others, we should be thankful for the blessings that others receive. In charity, we should look after other's interests rather than our own. The just man is just insofar as he is humble of spirit and so does not expect anything for himself (he does not take himself to be owed anything undue him). Thus when another gets a raise over him, he does not feel like something was stolen from him, since he never saw the raise as rightfully his to begin with. More than this, he rejoices in the good of his neighbor and in the workings of God's grace in others' lives. So he even feels good for his coworker who gets a raise over him, so long as that money is good for his friend's wellbeing (he recognizes the justice in God's choosing to bless his neighbor)

St. Joseph is just, not only because he does whatever God asks but also because he loved God enough to see that God wanted him to do as right and good. The just man sees what is owed to another as intrinsically motivating. He does what is just because he sees that what is just is good.

St. Joseph could have washed his hands of the events of the Incarnation. He could have gone his own way... in anger, in fear, in envy. But he did not. Out of love he took Mary to be his wife. He raised the child Jesus with a most special love. He humbled himself and accepted what God was asking him to do in his life.

St. Joseph calls us to humble ourselves and to live lives of charity. He calls us to treat others with love, respect and dignity. To see them as our brothers and sisters. Not competitors to be jealous of, as if life was some sort of game to be played, but rather, as collaborators in the mission of the Church. Making the presence of Christ known in the world. Justice calls us to live the Beatitudes in our lives, to follow the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To harbor the harborless;
- To visit the sick;
- To ransom the captive;
- To bury the dead.

- To instruct the ignorant;
- To counsel the doubtful;
- To admonish sinners;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive offences willingly;
- To comfort the afflicted;
- To pray for the living and the dead.

This is the life of the true follower of our Blessed Lord: A life of justice, a life of charity. The world may find itself consumed with envy. That may be the way of life for so many people caught up in the here and now, but it is not the life to which we are called. St. Joseph, the just man, who lived justice in charity, is our example and our guide as we journey through this pilgrimage here on earth.

Sancte Ioseph Iustissime...ora pro nobis.