

St. Joseph Shrine	
Detroit, MI	In World of Anger, Ioseph Speculum Patientiae
March 15, 2021	

“In your patience you shall possess your souls.”

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Dear Faithful:

The Holy Scriptures do not relate many words of Our Lady to us. In fact, it is only in the Gospels of St. Luke and of St. John that a few sayings of Mary are recorded for us, first of all at the moment of the Annunciation, then at the moment of the Visitation with her cousin Elizabeth, at moment of the finding of her son Jesus, in the Temple, and finally at the wedding Feast of Cana.

If we reflect a little, we can imagine that such was Mary's interior life and spiritual union with the mission of her son, that she spoke seldom, but that when she did speak, her words were of great value. We might expect the same of St. Joseph, who was the closest to Our Lady, and united with her in the

care of the Christ Child through marriage. Joseph undoubtedly spoke seldom, and when he did speak, his words were without doubt of great value.

However, what we might not expect, is that not a single word of St. Joseph is recorded for us in the Gospels. This man who, according to Pope Leo XIII, “approached nearer than any to the eminent dignity by which the Mother of God surpasses so nobly all created natures,” (Encyclical Letter *Quamquam pluries*, 3) is completely silent in the Scriptures. But if a picture says a thousand words, then let us consider the picture which Scripture paints of the Foster Father of Our Lord: it is a picture of a man perseverant in patience.

St. Thomas Aquinas, relying on St. Augustine, describes patience in terms of bearing with evil with an equal spirit (*Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae, Q. 136). In other words, patience is the virtue by which we are able, with the grace of God, to put up with the inconveniences, challenges, adversities and pains of this life with a tranquil spirit, and without succumbing to sadness or anger.

In Scripture, at almost every moment where St. Joseph appears, he is faced with some difficulty or painful situation.

Consider his pain when it was found that Mary was with child, as he considered whether to put her away quietly, for though he doubted not the virtue of his Spouse, he understood not the mystery before him. Consider the inconvenient and tiring journey to Bethlehem for the census, which he was required to make at the very time that Our Lady was due to bring forth the Savior of the world. Consider the pain he must have experienced, when no inn would welcome them, and they were obliged to lodge in a cave. Consider the flight he made to Egypt with Our Lady and Our Lord, which he had to take with only a moment's notice in order to save the Divine Child. Consider, finally, the pain of the loss of the twelve-year-old Christ Child in Jerusalem.

At each of these moments, Joseph is silent. Scripture records not a complaint, not a comment, not a single word of the Patriarch. However, Scripture does paint a picture of him: St. Joseph, confident in God's Providence, resigned to God's will, patient in tribulation.

The Apostle James, in his Epistle, says that “the trying of [our] faith worketh patience. And patience hath a perfect work; that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing” (James 1:3-4).

As for Our Lord, he says, “In your patience you shall possess your souls” (Luke 21:19).

Blessed Joseph passed the test. Patient in every trial, he was in complete possession of his soul.

We live today in a world of anger. For all the talk today of love, of justice, of tolerance and of peace, anger and violence are glorified not only by the entertainment media, but also, more and more, by our news media, even to the point of presenting anger and violence as a force promoting justice and peace. Anger is for the strong, we are made to believe, and patience is for the weak, for those too weak to assert themselves.

However, it is by patience that we possess our souls. Those who live in anger are dispossessed of their souls. They are slaves to their passions and basest impulses. Deprived of charity and steeped in anger, our society itself is dispossessed of its soul, and therefore we find no true love, no true justice, no true tolerance, and not true peace in it.

St. Joseph is a model of virtue and of manliness in a depraved world. “Virtue” translates the Latin word “*virtus*”, which also means “force” or “power”. Remember that contained within this Latin word “*virtus*” is the Latin word “*vir*”: “man.” The concept of virtue contains within itself the concept of manliness. St. Joseph exemplifies the virtue of patience; he exemplifies the power and force of patience as opposed to slavishly succumbing to the impulses of sadness and anger when faced with trial and contradictions.

Anger is weakness; patience is strength.

In the Litany of St. Joseph, we invoke St. Joseph with the title *Speculum Patientiae*: Mirror of Patience. How beautifully indeed he reflects the patience of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was committed to his care, and for him endured so many trials with admirable fortitude. As we continue to traverse this year dedicated to the Foster Father of Our Lord and the Patron of the Universal Church, and as we prepare for his Solemn Feast Day, let us seek to imitate in particular his patience both in our homes and when in the face of all trials and tribulations.

Amen.