***Monthly Spiritual Message***

**September 2023**

**THE LIFE OF ST JOSEPH**

by Maria Cecilia Baji, OSB

*Everything you read in this message about St Joseph is from a personal revelation to Mother Maria Cecilia Baji, OSB.[[1]](#footnote-1) We are reminded not to accept as verified anything we read in mystical writings or visions, even if there is nothing against the faith in those writings. Many written works by Catholic mystics add to the faithful’s pious knowledge and increase our sense of devotion. Some mystics have become canonized saints primarily for their holy lives, not necessarily for their mystical insights. This warning noted - the following is a precis of what Mother Maria Cecilia Baji tells us that the Lord Jesus explained to her about St Joseph.*

Saint Joseph’s father “Jacob” [[2]](#footnote-2) was born in Nazareth, and his mother “Rachel” was born in Bethlehem. Both his parents were from the royal line of King David.[[3]](#footnote-3) They lived in Nazareth. It seems that God, for a time, permitted their marriage to be unfruitful so that they would increase their prayers for a child. To this end, Jacob and Rachel visited the Temple in Jerusalem often[[4]](#footnote-4) and generously bestowed alms on the poor as they prayed to God for a blessed offspring. After one of their visits to the Temple, Rachel became pregnant and praised God for His blessing.

From an early age, the child Joseph was brilliant. When his parents began to teach him about the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, the infant would always add *“and Joseph!*”, including himself in the list. They were so delighted that they repeated it often to hear his response. Such was his relationship with God from his earliest years that little Joseph had the characteristic habit of directing his glance heavenwards, asking God for the grace necessary in all his undertakings so that he might carry them out according to the divine good pleasure. Joseph did this whenever he prepared to eat, sleep, speak, or go somewhere. We read that Joseph had two Guardian Angels who instructed him in his dreams about how to live a good life before God. While still a small child, if he saw the house servants causing trouble, he would ask God to help them live better lives, and since he was still a little child and could do nothing to correct them, his mother would find him in tears. Because of this, and under her direction, their home became a school of virtue.

When Joseph’s parents explained that God had promised the people of Israel a Messiah, Joseph began to pray fervently for the swift coming of the Holy One, who was to change everything for the better. Joseph told his mother he was praying the Messiah would come very soon because he wanted to see him and be his friend. His mother asked him, “*And what would you do, my son, if you were to have the great privilege of seeing the Messiah with your own eyes?*” Joseph, raising his hands to heaven, replied, “*What would I do? I would make a complete gift of myself to Him and* *offer to serve Him always. I would never leave Him.*” His mother, however, continued to question him. “*Don’t you realize,”* she said, *“that such service would take great effort?*” He replied, “*Not only would I be willing to make such an effort, but I would consider myself most fortunate if my serving Him even cost me my life.*”

As soon as Joseph could read, they began to teach him. He had always loved the biblical stories they told him, but as soon as he could read for himself, he focused his attention on the Psalms[[5]](#footnote-5) because they gave him the words to speak more easily with God.[[6]](#footnote-6) He greatly enjoyed reading the Hebrew Scriptures, and to this end, Joseph loved silence and being alone, so he could study and pray.[[7]](#footnote-7)

However, very soon, he came to the attention of the devil, who set about causing mischief and trouble. The devil moved some more worldly children to begin bullying Joseph whenever he went into the street and ran into them on his way. Joseph bore this torment in silence, offering his troubles to God and for their salvation. Even when his father Jacob found out about this bad behavior towards his child, Joseph pleaded with him not to do anything to stop it, explaining that God permitted it so that he, like the holy men of old, had something precious to offer up to God, to prove his faith. In this way, Joseph grew very quickly in virtue. Eventually, because he did not respond to their bad behavior, the other boys lost interest in tormenting him. They found other things to amuse themselves, and the devil was somewhat confounded.

As a young man, Joseph dedicated himself ever more fully to preparing himself to be of worthy service to the Messiah. To this end, he was inspired to make a vow of chastity and received a special grace from God not to be tempted against this virtue. However, the devil began to torment him even more to test his integrity in other areas of his life. Because of his deep humility, Joseph realized that he would be nothing and lost without God and so he retreated even more fully into a life of silence and prayer. He soon realized that the poor, the sick, and the dying were the focus of the devil’s greatest attention. So, Joseph, filled with compassion and love, committed himself to praying for them and doing all he could to help them without bringing unwanted attention to himself. To this end, Joseph petitioned his parents to assist people in great need, and they always responded to his requests for assistance to those most in trouble.

When his beloved parents died, Joseph left Nazareth and moved to Jerusalem so that he could live closer to the temple and spend time there in prayer. In Jerusalem, he found a man who took him as an apprentice carpenter. Joseph was allowed to sleep in the workshop. Eventually, Joseph owned the little workshop and was joyful, living close to the temple. The devil continued to try to break Joseph’s spirit, even to get some people to try and get him married. Joseph was not interested because he had made a vow of virginity to be of complete service to the Messiah. In all his vicissitudes, Joseph, as a young man, found his refuge in an ever deeper relationship with God.

When Joseph reached the age of 30, and because of his constant visits to the Temple, he became aware that a virgin of great renown was living there. Also, Mary began to hear about the virtue of Joseph, the carpenter who had come from Nazareth and spent so much time praying in the temple. Both of them privately had made a vow of virginity, so it did not enter their heads what God had planned for them.

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1. **FOOTNOTES:** John Cooper OFM Cap

 Mother Maria Cecilia Baji, OSB (Order of St Benedict) was Abbess of the Benedictine Monastery of St Peter in Montefiascone, Italy, from 1743 to 1766. Her writings are found in the book, *“The Life of St Joseph”, as manifested to her by Our Lord Jesus Christ.* Published by Intercessory Prayer Centre, Kariyad. Printed by Divine Printers & Publishers, Muringoor, Kerala, India. This book has a *Nihil Obstat* (Nothing against the faith) and an *Imprimatur* (Permission to print) from a bishop. It is published to increase our devotion to St Joseph. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The name, “Jacob”, is listed in the Genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:16) as Joseph’s father. Matthew's purpose was to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. However, Luke names Joseph’s father as “Heli” (Lk. 3:23). The different names for Joseph’s father are not explained. Luke's purpose was to show from Mary's genealogy that she also came from the bloodline of King David. Her lineage back to the High Priest Aaron, the brother of Moses, is established by the Archangel Gabriel calling her the “kinswoman” of Elizabeth, John the Baptist’s mother (Luke 1:36). The name of Joseph’s mother “Rachel” is not given in the scriptures, only here in this mystical message. Also, however, the parents of the Virgin Mary “Joachim & Anne” are not mentioned in the four gospels either, but they are mentioned in the apocryphal Gospel of James, which was discarded by the early Church as among the non-authentic so-called gospels. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Jewish Royal and Priestly families kept a record of their lineage. The Romans took control of Judea in 64 BC when Pompey the Great conquered the country. Herod the Great was made King of the Jews in 39 BC by the Roman Senate. He was in fact an Arab on both sides of his family. He was not of the Jewish royal family line of King David, and he sort to kill all who could make that claim. Herod died in Jericho in 4 BC. His son, Herod Antipas (21 BC – 39 AD), became Tetrarch of Galilee when the kingdom was divided among the three sons of Herod the Great. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. If Jacob and Rachel lived in Nazareth, it would take about 30hrs (137.7 km) to walk from Nazareth to Jerusalem. (via Ramallah-Nablus Route 60) This is the most direct route. The longer trip would be via Jericho (167km). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. There is nothing so very unusual here because the Old Testament would have been the core reality of a dedicated Jewish family and the Psalms were the very heart of the prayer life of the people of Israel, especially so in the Temple in Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The text at one point tells us that the child Joseph was so brilliant because at some point in his life, possibly at his birth or his presentation in the Temple, God granted him the extraordinary grace of freedom from the effects of original sin. He also received many other extraordinary graces in his intense and very private life of prayer and devotion to God.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Among Jewish families, even today, to be considered fully Jewish, your mother must be Jewish. It seems that Jewish people realized that you always know who the mother of a child is, but you might not know exactly, who is the father. Joseph’s mother, according to this source, was born in Bethlehem, the birthplace of King David, and she claimed royal lineage. Since such a claim was extremely dangerous in the time of King Herod the Great, who killed the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem out of fear of a Jewish heir to the throne of David, this family would have lived very privately and preferably not in Bethlehem, the birthplace of King David. So, it would not be surprising for this Jewish family to be very careful about their origins and it would be somewhat necessary for them to live an isolated life. Their lineage was perhaps only verifiable in the Temple records, but even this would be dangerous in the time of Herod the Great. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)