

The Pray More Lent Retreat Study Guide

St Joseph: Protector and Father with Scott Powell

Reflective Questions

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” –Luke 2:7

1. Joseph and Mary are legally married at the time of The Annunciation. When he finds out that she is with child, he decides that the best thing to do is quietly divorce her. Scott shares the reverential view of Joseph’s response wherein Joseph trusts that Mary would never be unfaithful to him and he understands that God is using Mary in a profound way. In this view, Joseph decides to take himself out of the equation out of humility and respect for the actions God is taking in Mary. In Joseph’s case, God sends St Gabriel the Archangel to calm his fears and tell him to continue being married to Mary. Has God sent you peace-giving people or opportunities in a troubling time of your life? Do you trust that God listens to you when you share your fears and worries with him?

2. As the patriarch of the family, Joseph needed to be registered in his hometown of Bethlehem. Scott believes that Joseph takes Mary and Jesus with him on his journey to protect them. Who are the people God has entrusted to you to safeguard? Consider how you might physically and emotionally protect those in your care.

3. The Holy Family is not excluded from a Best Western, they are likely excluded from staying in the house of Joseph’s kin. To add insult to this injury, Joseph was the heir to the throne of David and Mary was 9 months pregnant! They were probably excluded due to their bad reputation (many people did not believe that Jesus was the son of God). The birth of Our Lord was surrounded by people who were ashamed to be associated with Him. Have you ever been in a situation where people jeered at you for following God’s will? “Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they

shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.”—Luke 6:22

4. Though everyone around Joseph thought he was a humiliation, he humbly absorbed that shame and protected his wife and son. There was indeed suffering during the Nativity of Our Lord. It certainly would have been easier for Joseph to lay low for the census in Bethlehem without Mary and Jesus being present. Joseph takes up his cross years before his son, Jesus Christ, would. What are the insults and persecutions I am unwilling to endure in this life? How can I absorb more of this shame and continue to share the goodness and charity of the Lord? In this Lenten season, ask Joseph (terror of demons!) to pray to God that you might be courageous in the face of adversity and diligent in following His will—even when doing so goes against the grain of society.