



The Feast of the Departure
of the Righteous



ST. JOSEPH

THE CARPENTER



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The incarnation of the Logos and His birth dyed the family with a heavenly like trait. The depth of both St. Mary and St. Joseph were raised as if to the heavens and their minds became occupied with the Divine presence.

This family opened the door of every heart and every family for the Savior to enter and establish His Kingdom inside as is in every home (Lk 17:21).

If the purpose of the fast of St. Mary and her feast is to raise the heart of the believer to the heavens and in silence and tranquility, all the being of the believer is liberated in heavenly praise, then the link between the feast of St. Joseph and the fast of the virgin and her feast unfetters every believing family to practice the life of communion with the Lord to become “the family of God’s House” (Ep 2: 19).

JOSEPH, A VEIL FOR HIS BROTHERS

When the signs of pregnancy appeared on St. Mary, it was the right of St. Joseph according to the laws to accuse her to the priests.

This was enough to propagate anger, and the laws give him the right to present her to the priests for punishment and stoning. Yet, through his dealings with her, he experienced her purity and marveled at her holiness and the enflaming of her with the divine love. However, it was never heard throughout all of history, from Adam to his time, that a girl becomes pregnant without the seed of man. He did not hurt her feelings with one word, and in pity and kindness, he did not open the subject with anyone, nor the saint herself. He did not think of banishing her, but he thought of letting her go in secret without shaming her (Mt 1:19). He practiced the gospel’s commandments while he was still living in the age of the law. The sign of his hidden righteousness is his veiling of what he sees with his eyes. However, since he was righteous, he became extremely troubled.



St. Jacob of Serugh comments about this noble action from St. Joseph, saying:

[The elder looked at her abdomen, she who is engaged to him, and the saint marveled!

He saw a shy wise girl, and his mind became confused!

Her appearance was humble, yet her abdomen is full, and he did not know what to do!

Her appearance is pure, and her countenance is calm, but He who is in her womb is moving!

Pure in body, but her pregnancy is showing, he was puzzled at her chastity and the glory that she had, and because of her pregnancy, he was angry...

The righteous was saddened by the pregnancy of the pure virgin, and wanted to ask her but was ashamed... and thought to divorce her in secret¹.]

Maybe some will ask, is it necessary to let her go secretly? St. Jerome answers saying that the signs were clear, so if he does not let her go, he becomes an offender according to the Law, for it is not only he who commits sin that carries its punishment, but he who sees it and does not take action against it².

“But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” (Mt 1:20)

When God saw the confusion of this righteous man and his wise and graceful actions, He wanted to comfort him. He sent him an angel in a dream to reveal to him the mystery of the pregnancy. He did not offer him a vision while awake, [for he was very increasing

1- Monastery of the Syrians: Manuscript 208, Contemplations on the Nativity, January 1985 AD, Page 11 (in Arabic).

2- In Matt. 1



in faith and had no need for the vision³], according to the saying of **St. John Chrysostom**.

St. Jerome comments about the angel calling St. Mary, Joseph's wife, saying, [we know that it is the custom of the Holy Bible to give this title to those engaged. This is evident in the following example from the book of Deuteronomy: "If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you"⁴] (Dt 22:23-24, see also Dt 20:7).] **St. John Chrysostom** says, [Here, he calls the betrothed a wife and the Bible customarily calls the betrothed, spouses even before marriage. And what is meant by "take"? It refers to protecting her in your home, for he with intention took her out. Protect her whom you have taken out, as she was committed to you from God, and not from her parents⁵].

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Behold, the virgin shall be with Child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" [Mt. 1:21-23].

The angel gave Joseph the righteous this honor to practice fatherhood, despite the Lord Christ not being of his seed, and gave him the right to name Him, even if the name is not from him, but rather through divine revelation. He is "Jesus" Who in Hebrew means, "God saves", and as the angel says, "For He delivers His people from their sins." St. John Chrysostom says, [His people

3- In Matt. Hom 4:10

4- The ever-virginity of St. Mary 4

5- In Matt. Hom 4:10



are not the Jews alone, but it includes all who draw near to Him, and accept the knowledge that is revealed about Him⁶].

As for the word "virgin", in Hebrew "Olmah", and it pertains to a virgin girl who could be betrothed but not married, and it was befitting St. Mary precisely⁷.

JOSEPH AND HOLINESS

It was not possible, after the signs of pregnancy appeared on St. Mary, to leave her in his house. If he, in his meekness and righteousness, did not hand her to the priests to investigate her situation and apply what the laws deem to be a punishment, yet on the other hand, he could not leave her in his house separated from him. The believer in the Holy God cannot stand sin in his heart, his mind, nor his house. He wanted to release her in secret, meaning divorce her in secret, and she would have no place in his house.

I cannot forget what happened with St. Paul (Bolos) the Simple, when he was an old man; he entered his house and found his wife sinning with a man. He did not rebuke her nor insult her, but rather left immediately and went to live in a cave under the guidance of St. Anthony.

On more than one occasion, a man would come to complain about his wife because he found her at home committing sin. I remember one of the women cried bitterly, and she could have said that he is imagining things, yet in tears she said, "I am ready to confess my sin before the church and the court, and he can take a permit to remarry for I am a sinner." But, her husband cried and said, "in my youth, I sinned many times in thought and the Lord concealed for me, so I too, will conceal your sin." After about ten years, I met her and asked how she was doing, she answered saying, "since the time we met with you till today, he did not even

6- In Matt. Hom 4:14

7- The author: St. Mary in the orthodox understanding