



Reading 1 - [Isaiah 7:10-14](#)

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying: Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!" Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6](#). - R. (7c and 10b) Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

Reading 2 - [Romans 1:1-7](#)

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the gospel about his Son, descended from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles, among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel - [Matthew 1:18-24](#)

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

St. Joseph & the Love of the Father

In a homily for the Feast of St. Joseph in 1963, St. Jose Maria Escriva referred to St. Joseph in light of his silence, as *“a master of the interior life”* — and in light of his actions as the father of Jesus, *“can teach us because he is an ordinary man, a family man, a worker who earned his living by manual labour.”* Joseph is a man who remains silent before God in scripture, which helps us to focus on the importance of being a father who listens to God. Joseph stands as the model of all human fatherhood. And Jesus, by his obedience to a human father, elevated and confirmed the true fatherhood of Joseph. In Joseph, all fathers — natural, adoptive, and spiritual alike — are reminded of the dignity and magnitude of their calling.

Today’s Gospel from St. Matthew focuses our attention on this part of the story of how Jesus came to us, on the role of St. Joseph and how he comes to intentionally assume his role as father to Jesus. St. Joseph, though not the natural father of Jesus, is invited by God into true fatherhood of His Son, not merely in imitation of natural fatherhood (and therefore, by analogy, to the generative fatherhood of God) but by direct reference to the Fatherhood of God by whom we are all, through baptism, made adopted sons and daughters of the Father. Bringing this back to Joseph, the kingship of Christ in the Davidic line comes to Jesus precisely through adoption. The genealogy of Jesus laid out at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew makes this clear: Jesus is accounted to be of the Messiah, the son of David, through Joseph.

The silent “fiat” of Joseph becomes loud and clear as the story of the Holy Family and our salvation unfolds in the Gospels. Joseph was not immaculately conceived. In his dream, the Angel did not refer to him as full of grace. He was an ordinary person like the rest of us who had to have faith and trust in God before being able to assent to whatever God asked of him. The secret to his holiness, and the example he gives to every Christian man, is to be a man who listens for the voice of God and uses all his strength and abilities to heed this Voice. Joseph becomes *“the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father.”* As every father ought to be. As such, God the Father gives to Joseph the authority to name His Son, to have authority over him. Though we don’t ‘hear’ St. Joseph pronounce our saviors name, it is he who first announced it publicly among the people of Israel. And it was in the home of Joseph that the Incarnate Word practiced obedience: *“He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.”*

So, who is this, Joseph? What do we know? According to scripture, Joseph was a man of deep faith, a man who loved God. He was a righteous man who heeded the voice of God and kept the law. As a man of prayer, the Temple in Jerusalem was the center of his life of faith. To be righteous is to be humble before God, to be especially close to God. A closeness which predisposed him to hearing the angel’s message with an open heart. He was able to set aside his own fears, to take the next step in his life in accord with God’s will, because his righteousness established in him the habit of doing the right thing, of being charitable, and ready always to assume responsibilities in accord with faith. All men, whether fathers now, those who want to become fathers, ought to have a deep desire to be like Joseph, to be a father to their children in such a way that they grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

Children need us to be that man. Children need us to be that man, to be like Joseph. We don’t need proof from God that this is true. We only need to look around. We only need to read the studies over the last decades that show the importance of righteous fatherhood and what happens when it’s absent. Does the silence of St. Joseph in scripture matter to our learning from him, not so much. St. Joseph, even in his silence, shows us something essential about the nature of marriage itself, namely, that the procreative end of marriage extends beyond the begetting of children to their education and formation.

His actions speak volumes and in Jesus as a man, we see the effects of the formative and educative words of his human father. We see manifested in his son as a man what he would have said to his son as a boy growing up. Every child is in some ways the image and likeness of their parents, that's why we say the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. And, as many a young person has said I'm not going to be like my dad in that way, I'm not going to be like my mom, will eventually, particularly after having a kid or two, look in the mirror and say, "When did I become my dad?" What Joseph did as a father, what he said is woven into the fabric of the humanity of Jesus. Joseph taught him what he needed to learn as a human being. Like all of us, we're not, as some would say, blank slates that need to figure it out ourselves. We are images and likenesses of God, sacred beings who need to learn, who need to be formed in the ways of God. And the family is the first place where that is meant to happen. The Holy Family is the supreme example.

Parents have a much greater influence and effect on their children than they often realize, and fathers more so. It's greater than most realize and statistically proven. Fathers even more so. For all you fathers, know that the single greatest indicator that a child will continue in the faith and go to church is the practice of faith in their father and the father's attendance at church. That is the single biggest indicator, the most important factor. Moms and grandmas may pray. Moms and grandmas may bring us to church. And that matters to us in an interior way, often sentimentalized. But the father, if he's righteous, if he's striving in God, and if he's modeling that for his children, that makes a profound difference. And it doesn't matter whether you're a natural father, a spiritual father, or an adoptive father like Joseph.

We are, in so many ways, images of our parents (whether natural or adoptive) – therefore it is essential that as parents, as fathers we are ourselves growing in holiness. Joseph's role was more than just as guardian. Jesus, God though he was, learned from Joseph, grew under his tutelage, and was obedient to him. The fatherhood of St. Joseph highlights the responsibility to form and to educate children in God in faith for love of God, to know they are loved by God, and that that gives the meaning and purpose to their entire being; to help them know they are the image and likeness of God and what that means. So that when they do face the challenges of the world and the enemy, the challenges in their own head, the ways in which the world wants to educate and form them. They will have a firmness of root in identity in God. And they will see manifested in you that which they are called to be. It's essential.

Jesus, obedient to both God the Father and his father St. Joseph, learned this virtue of obedience from St. Joseph who himself manifested, as St. Paul calls it, "obedience of faith". Jesus, as he often said, does the will of his Father in heaven which was not exclusive of doing the will of his father Joseph. Joseph teaches the Son and the Son teaches us. If Christ is our Lord, if we are his followers, his missionary disciples, then we will believe in him and show the firmness of that belief being obedient to him... as his Father in heaven told us, "*this is my Son, listen to him*". Joseph believed in God, and so he fulfilled God's will. That's the "obedience of faith."

Gentlemen, as the last days of the this Advent season come to an end, we are all called to look into ourselves and to increase our preparation for the coming of the Lord, born of your personal metanoia, choose to make a profound and personal "Fiat" to God, as did Joseph. Your heartfelt "yes" to God's plan, trusting God despite uncertainty. This Christmas, present Jesus with the gift your ascent, "*Let it be done to me according to Your word.*"

in all those important ways, especially the daily way that God comes to us and in particular as we come upon Christmas, the nativity of our Lord, the beginning of our salvation, that men who are or would be fathers and women who raise sons exercise that parenthood, that role given to them by God with humble obedience, with faith, developing wisdom and discernment, growing in relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in particular according to their vocation. Next weekend, we'll celebrate the Holy

Family, the totality of the Holy Family. But Matthew finds it important for us this weekend as we come upon the nativity of our Lord to look closely at Joseph to learn from his silence and how loud his silence is by gazing on Jesus. In so doing the celebration of Christmas will be joyous and festive, but more than anything, it will be a solemn participation in the depths of the love of God, who sent his only begotten Son to be like us in all things but sin, to reconcile us to the Father and to lead us into the glory to which we're called.

Glossary of Key Terms and Figures

Term / Figure	Definition (Based on Source Context)
Ahaz	A king from the house of David to whom the LORD spoke through the prophet Isaiah. He refused to ask God for a sign, stating he would not tempt the LORD.
Apostle	A title used by Paul to describe himself, meaning one who is "called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God." The grace of apostleship is received through Jesus Christ to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.
Emmanuel	A name for the son promised in Isaiah's prophecy, which means "God is with us." The Gospel of Matthew explicitly states that Jesus's birth fulfills this prophecy.
Fiat	A Latin term for "let it be done." It refers to the silent "yes" or assent given by Joseph to God's plan, which becomes "loud and clear" as the story of salvation unfolds. Christians are called to make their own personal "Fiat" to God.
Gentiles	The non-Jewish nations. Paul describes his apostleship as a mission to bring about the "obedience of faith" among all the Gentiles.
Holy Family	The family unit of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. It is presented as the supreme example of the family as the first place where children are formed in the ways of God.
Isaiah	The prophet through whom the LORD spoke to King Ahaz. He delivered the prophecy that "the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel."
Jesus Christ	The Son of God. He was conceived through the Holy Spirit, descended from David according to the flesh, and named Jesus because "he will save his people from their sins." As a boy, he was obedient to his earthly father, Joseph.
Joseph	The husband of Mary and adoptive father of Jesus. Described as a "righteous man," a "son of David," and a model for all fatherhood. His obedience to the angel's message in a dream was essential to God's plan.
Mary	The mother of Jesus, betrothed to Joseph. She was "found with child through the Holy Spirit" before she and Joseph lived together. The prophecy in Isaiah refers to her as "the virgin."
Obedience of Faith	A phrase from Paul's letter to the Romans, describing the response to the gospel. St. Joseph is presented as a primary example of this, as he believed in God and therefore fulfilled God's will by taking Mary as his wife.
Paul	A "slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle" who wrote the letter to the Romans. He preaches the gospel promised in the Scriptures about Jesus Christ.
Righteous Man	A description of Joseph, meaning he was a man of deep faith who loved God, kept the law, and was known to be "especially close to God." This righteousness predisposed him to hear God's will and established in him the habit of doing the right thing.
Son of David	A messianic title. The angel addresses Joseph as "son of David," and Jesus's genealogy at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel establishes his lineage as the son of David precisely through his adoption by Joseph.

The Role of St. Joseph and the Model of Fatherhood

Executive Summary

This summary analysis reveals St. Joseph as the archetypal model for all forms of fatherhood—natural, adoptive, and spiritual. His character is defined by a profound righteousness, understood as a deep closeness to God, which enables him to hear and obey the divine will. Joseph's scriptural silence is interpreted not as an absence but as a powerful testament to his interior life and his focus on action over words. His "obedience of faith" in accepting Mary and the divine child demonstrates a model of trust in God amidst uncertainty.

The sources emphasize that Joseph's authority, bestowed by God the Father, is most clearly exercised when he names Jesus, thereby establishing Jesus's lineage in the Davidic line through adoption. Beyond being a mere guardian, Joseph is presented as the educator and formator of Jesus's humanity. The document highlights the direct and statistically proven impact of a father's faith practice on his children's continued adherence to the faith, positioning Joseph as an essential and relevant example for contemporary fathers. The central call to action is for men to emulate Joseph's humble obedience and make their own personal "Fiat" ("Let it be done") to God's will.

St. Joseph: An Archetype of Righteous Fatherhood - The provided commentaries extensively analyze the character of St. Joseph, presenting him as a "master of the interior life" and the definitive model for human fatherhood. A defining characteristic of St. Joseph in scripture is his silence; he has no recorded words. This silence is interpreted as a powerful indicator of his character, emphasizing action and a profound internal relationship with God.

- **A Focus on Listening:** Joseph's silence allows the focus to shift to his role as a father who listens intently to God. His righteousness predisposed him "to hearing the angel's message with an open heart."
- **Actions Louder Than Words:** While he does not speak in the text, his actions are decisive and immediate. When he awoke, "he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him." The effects of his unrecorded "formative and educative words" are seen in the person of Jesus as a man. His silent "fiat" (yes to God) "becomes loud and clear as the story of the Holy Family and our salvation unfolds."

Righteousness as Closeness to God - The Gospel describes Joseph as a "righteous man." This is not merely a statement of moral uprightness but a description of his relationship with God.

- **Definition:** To be righteous is to be "especially close to God," humble before God, and to heed His voice and keep the law.
- **Habit of Virtue:** This closeness to God established in Joseph "the habit of doing the right thing, of being charitable, and ready always to assume responsibilities in accord with faith." It allowed him to set aside his own fears and act in accordance with God's will.
- **An Ordinary Man's Holiness:** The commentary emphasizes that Joseph was not immaculately conceived or "full of grace" like Mary. He was "an ordinary person like the rest of us who had to have faith and trust in God." His holiness stemmed from his commitment to listening to God and using all his strength to heed that voice.

The Authority and Responsibility of Fatherhood - Joseph's role transcends that of a simple guardian; he is given true authority by God the Father and tasked with the formation of the Son of God. He becomes, as described in the homily, "the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father."

The authority given to Joseph is most clearly demonstrated in the act of naming the child, a significant act in Hebrew culture.

- **Naming as Authority:** The angel instructs Joseph, "you are to name him Jesus." In most cultures, including Hebrew tradition, naming is an act of authority. By naming Jesus, Joseph publicly exercises the authority given to him by God the Father.

- **First Public Proclamation:** Though his pronunciation of the name is not recorded, Joseph was "the first to publicly say the name" of the savior among the people of Israel.

The Formation and Education of Jesus

Joseph's fatherhood was integral to the human development of Jesus, who was "obedient to them" (Joseph and Mary).

- **More Than a Guardian:** Jesus, "God though he was, learned from Joseph, grew under his tutelage, and was obedient to him." The home of Joseph was where the "Incarnate Word was educated and formed."
- **A Father's Lasting Influence:** The impact of Joseph's fatherhood is "woven into the fabric of the humanity of Jesus." The commentary uses the proverb "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" to illustrate that every child is an image of their parents, and what Joseph said and did is reflected in the person of Jesus.

Theological Significance and Modern Implications - The role of St. Joseph is not only historically significant but also carries profound theological weight and direct applications for contemporary life, especially for fathers.

Fulfillment of Prophecy and Davidic Lineage - Joseph is the crucial link through which key Messianic prophecies are fulfilled.

- **Adoption and Kingship:** Jesus's kingship in the Davidic line comes "precisely through adoption." The genealogy presented at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel establishes Jesus as a "son of David" through Joseph.
- **Obedience of Faith:** Jesus learned the virtue of obedience from Joseph, who himself manifested the "obedience of faith" that St. Paul speaks of. Jesus's obedience to his Father in heaven was not exclusive of his obedience to his earthly father, Joseph.

The Call to Modern Fathers - The commentaries issue a direct call for men to model their lives on St. Joseph, citing both theological and sociological evidence for the importance of righteous fatherhood.

- **A Profound and Proven Impact:** The sources state that "the single greatest indicator that a child will continue in the faith and go to church is the practice of faith in their father and the father's attendance at church." This is described as a "statistically proven" and "most important factor."
- **The Need for Righteous Men:** The text argues, "Children need us to be that man, to be like Joseph." The negative consequences of the absence of righteous fatherhood can be seen by simply "look[ing] around" and reading studies from recent decades.
- **Advent as a Time for a Personal "Fiat":** As the Advent season concludes, men are called to prepare for Christmas by making "a profound and personal 'Fiat' to God, as did Joseph," presenting Jesus with the gift of their ascent to His will. This act of parenthood should be exercised with "humble obedience, with faith, developing wisdom and discernment."