



By any earthly measure, Peter, James, and John had difficult lives. Peter and James would die as martyrs while John would spend much of his life incarcerated. They knew betrayal, persecution, torture, hunger, danger, sleepless nights, and the tragic death of loved ones. At the same time, Peter, James, and John lived with courage and profound hope which enabled them to suffer -- even to suffer joyfully -- for our Lord. They had a peace that surpasses knowledge, a peace that conquers the world, the peace of Christ!

In today's Gospel, Jesus fortifies Peter, James, and John with a special gift: they see with their own eyes Jesus transfigured and hear with their own ears the voice of God the Father. In reference to the Transfiguration of the Lord, St. Bede wrote, "Our lord, in a loving concession allowed Peter, James and John to enjoy for a very short time the contemplation of the happiness that lasts forever, so as **to enable them to bear adversity with greater fortitude**" (*In Conv.* 12.2).

How do we bear adversity? St. Peter, writing many years after he witnessed the Transfiguration, counsels us:

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. Moreover, **we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.** (2 Peter 1:16–19)

Like Peter, James, and John we have received a prophetic message which is our "lamp shining in a dark place" and we "do well to be attentive to it," especially in times of personal darkness. No, we did not see with our eyes Jesus transfigured, nor did we hear the Father's voice with our ears, but we can see His majestic glory and hear His powerful voice if we but take the time and make the effort to look and listen with the eyes of faith. Remember, Jesus said to doubting Thomas, "Blessed are those who do not see, yet believe."

St. Paul teaches us how to bear adversity:

So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but **bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.** He saved us and called us to a holy life. (2 Tm 1:8,9)

Today our Lord invites us to look upon Him as He is in glory: infinite in beauty, peace, goodness, and love, and to be reminded that we will one day share in this sublime beauty if only we remain faithful through all the tribulations of life. Accordingly, St Paul encourages us:

"Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For **this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen**; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor 4:16–18).

This is the powerful, life-changing, message of the mystery of the Transfiguration which invites us to see beyond what is seen – to see the infinite beauty and glory of God which remains constant through all the trials and difficulties of life – like a lamp shining in a dark place. Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see!

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples

How Do We Bear Adversity?

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Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary

Feast Day: March 19

Born: First century

From: Nazareth, Israel

Patron: Universal Church, fathers, carpenters and a happy death

Joseph was betrothed to Mary, a young woman from Nazareth, in an arrangement likely made by their families. However, their relationship faced an early challenge when Mary was found to be pregnant before they had lived together. Joseph, described as a righteous man, was initially troubled by this news and considered divorcing Mary quietly for her to avoid possible consequences such as public disgrace, stoning, or family rejection. At this critical moment, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name of Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Demonstrating his faith and obedience, Joseph accepted the divine message and took Mary as his wife.

Joseph demonstrated unwavering faith by accepting Mary’s miraculous pregnancy and following divine guidance. He consistently obeyed God’s instructions, even when they required significant sacrifices. His initial reaction to Mary’s pregnancy showed his caring nature and desire to protect her from public shame. Joseph accepted his role as the early father of Jesus without seeking recognition or glory. While not Jesus’ biological father, Joseph is considered his true father in every other sense. Joseph worked as a carpenter, a profession that would later be passed on to Jesus.

Joseph’s life exemplifies faith, obedience, and selfless love. His role as the husband of Mary and earthly father of Jesus places him at the heart of the Christian narrative. Through his quiet strength and unwavering commitment, Joseph provides a powerful model of father, faith, and righteousness for believers across generations.

Tradition holds that Joseph died peacefully in the presence of Jesus and Mary. This “happy death” is considered ideal for believers – to pass away comforted by loved ones and in a state of spiritual readiness. Joseph’s death occurring before Jesus began his public ministry, is seen as a model for how Christians should approach their own mortality. Joseph’s patronage reminds Christians not to fear death, but to see it as a transition to eternal life. His example encourages living a life of service to God and others, which leads to a “happy death”.

Joseph was a descendant of the house of King David, which was significant in fulfilling Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah’s lineage. In 1962, Pope John XXIII inserted St. Joseph’s name into the first Eucharistic Prayer (Roman Canon). In 2013, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a decree called “Paternal vices” (Fatherly care), which extended the inclusion of St. Joseph to Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV. The decree was promulgated by the authority of Pope Francis, though the decision was originally made by Pope Benedict XVI and later confirmed by Pope Francis.

Reflection: The Bible tells us nothing of Joseph in the years after the return to Nazareth from Egypt except the incident of finding Jesus in the Temple. Perhaps this can be taken to mean that God wants us to realize that the holiest family was like every other family, that the circumstances of life for the holiest family were like those of every family, so that when Jesus’ mysterious nature began to appear, people could not believe that he came from such humble beginnings.