

BREVIARY LESSONS

ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

(Dominican Rite)

Lesson i.

Genesis 39:1-5



AND Joseph was brought into Egypt, and Putiphar an eunuch of Pharao, chief captain of the army, an Egyptian, bought him of the Ismaelites, by whom he was brought. And the Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man in all things: and he dwelt in his master's house, who knew very well that the Lord was with him, and made all things that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found favor in the sight of his master, and ministered to him: and being set over all by him, he governed the house committed to him, and all things that were delivered to him: and the Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian for the sake of Joseph.

Responsory i. The Lord was with Joseph, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief keeper of the prison: * Who delivered into his hands all the prisoners. *Verse.* Whatsoever was done under him: for the Lord was with him, and made all that he did to prosper.—Who delivered into his hand all the prisoners.

Lesson ii.

Genesis 41:37-40

The counsel of Joseph pleased Pharao, and all his servants. And he said to them: Can we find such another man, that is full of the spirit of God? He said therefore to Joseph: Seeing God hath shown thee all that thou hast said, can I find one wiser and one like unto thee? Thou shalt be over my house, and at the commandment of thy mouth all the people shall obey: only in the kingly throne will I be above thee.

Responsory ii. When the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to the king, asking for food. And he said to them: * Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you. *Verse.* The famine increased daily in all the land: and Joseph opened all the barns, and sold to the Egyptians.—Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.

Lesson iii.

Genesis 41:41-44

And again Pharao said to Joseph: Behold, I have appointed you over the whole land of Egypt. And he took his ring from his own

hand, and gave it into his hand: and he put upon him a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck. And he made him go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should bow their knee before him, and that they should know he was made governor over the whole land of Egypt. And the king said to Joseph: I am Pharaoh; without thy commandment no man shall move hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

Responsory iii. The Lord has made me as it were a father to the king, and lord of his whole house: fear not; * For God hath sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation. *Verse.* Come to me, and I will give you all the good things of Egypt, that you may eat the marrow of the land.—For God hath sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation.—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.—For God hath sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation.

Lesson iv.

Sermon of S. Bernard

Who and what manner of man this blessed Joseph was, you may gather from the name by which—a dispensation being allowed—he deserved to be so honored as to be believed and to be called the father of God. You may gather it also from his own proper name, which you should interpret as Increase. At the same time be mindful of that great man, the former Patriarch who was sold into Egypt, and know that he (the spouse of Mary) not only inherited his (the Patriarch's) name, but received as well his chastity and equalled his grace and innocence.

Responsory iv. Joseph went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: * Because he was of the house and family of David. *Verse.* To be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife.—Because he was of the house and family of David.

Lesson v.

If then, that Joseph, who was sold through fraternal envy and was carried into Egypt, foreshadowed the selling of Christ: this Joseph, flying from the envy of Herod, carried Christ into Egypt. The former (Joseph), keeping faith with his master, would have no relations with his (master's) lady: the latter (Joseph), knowing his own lady, the Mother of his Lord, to be a virgin, and being himself chaste, guarded her faithfully. To the former (Joseph) was given discernment in the mysteries of dreams: to the latter (Joseph) it was given to know and to share in the mysteries of heaven.

Responsory v. Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt, * And be there until I shall tell thee. *Verse.* That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called My Son.—And be there until I shall tell thee.

Lesson vi.

The former (Joseph) stored up wheat, not for himself, but for all the people: the latter (Joseph) received the Living Bread from heaven, to preserve it both for himself and for the whole world. There is no doubt that Joseph, to whom the Mother of the Saviour was espoused, was a good and faithful man. A faithful and a wise servant, I say, whom the Lord appointed as a consolation to His Mother, as a guardian of His own body, and finally as the only and most faithful helper upon earth of the great plan (i.e., the Incarnation).

Responsory vi. When His parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the Law, * *Simeon took Him in his arms, and blessed God. *Verse.* And His father and mother were wondering at those things, which were spoken concerning Him.—Simeon took Him in his arms, and blessed God.—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.—Simeon took Him in his arms, and blessed God.

Reading of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Lesson vii.

Matthew 1:18-21

When Mary the Mother of Jesus was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. And the rest.

Homily of S. Jerome.

Why was He conceived of an espoused virgin, rather than of one that was free? Firstly, that by the geneology of Joseph the lineage of Mary might be shown. Secondly, lest she should be stoned by the Jews as an adulteress. Thirdly, that she might have a comforter when fleeing into Egypt. The Martyr Ignatius even added a fourth reason why He should have been conceived of an espoused virgin: That His birth, he says, might be concealed from the devil, since he would suppose that He had been born, not of a virgin, but of a married woman.

Responsory vii. The Mother of Jesus said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? * Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee

sorrowing. *Verse.* And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me? did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?—Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.

Lesson viii.

“Before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” She was found by Joseph only, not by anyone else; as he, with almost the privilege of a husband, knew all that concerned his future wife. Now because it is said: ‘Before they came together,’ it does not follow that they came together afterwards; but the Scripture indicates what had not been done.

Responsory viii. Jesus went down with them, and came to Nazareth: * And was subject to them. *Verse.* He advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.—And was subject to them.

Lesson ix.

“Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.” If anyone is joined to an adulteress, he becomes one body with her; and, according to the Law, not only those who commit such a sin, but also those who have knowledge of it are held guilty. How then could Joseph be described as just, if he had concealed the sin of his wife? But this is evidence for Mary; for Joseph, knowing her chastity, yet wondering what had happened, kept silence about a mystery he did not understand.

Responsory ix. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost: * And she shall bring forth a Son: And thou shalt call His name Jesus. *Verse.* When Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.—And she shall bring forth a Son: And thou shalt call His name Jesus.—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.—And thou shalt call His name Jesus.