

## “Joseph”

The Rev Drew Willard  
UCC@The Villages, FL  
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Gen. 37:17b-30a

Matt. 1:18-25

‘...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife...”’

Matt. 1:20b

Let us pray... O God,

Help us to be open to those who can envision your Kingdom

as a ‘beloved community’ that is possible to become a social reality.

Amen

Everything is still very new for us here

and that goes for my preaching and teaching with you –

for you to hear my interpretations about the basic things

of our faith as a basis for our congregational life together.

I started with the three Wisemen – the Magi

and how their journey to Bethlehem is our journey, too.

Last Sunday, I spoke of Mary and her significance to us

as protestant Christians and that we, like her,

are vessels for carrying God’s love into the world.

Today’s sermon for the third Sunday in Advent is about “Joseph” –

a Biblical character who figures prominently at the beginning

of Jesus’ life story only to disappear later on.

Quinn Caldwell is Associate Minister of Old South Church in Boston

and a frequent contributor to the Stillspeaking devotionals.

In his essay, “Shoutout to All the Abbases” – which in hipster talk means,

“Greetings to All you Dads!”, Caldwell says,

‘Much is made of motherhood during Advent, as well it should be.

But too often, Joseph recedes into the background...

So I always try to remind myself... about the dads in this story.’

He makes the point that fatherhood is important

in shaping a young person growing up.

And he acknowledges that all fathers are not good.

So –in a negative way, this also teaches us the need for good fathers.

As Caldwell puts it,

‘Those of us *without* good fathers know the same thing,

but have learned it in a much harder way.’

Still, some people cannot accept calling God as ‘Father’

because of their experiences growing up.

Willard, p.2

Then Caldwell reminds us that Jesus often referred to God as 'Abba'  
an intimate form of the word 'Father' – like 'Daddy'  
and that Jesus cried out to his 'Dad' when he was on the cross;  
So, Joseph must have been an exceptional father  
for Jesus to continually speak of God throughout his life as 'Father'.

So, who is this 'Joseph'? According to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke,  
he is technically Jesus' stepfather and in our lesson today, we learn  
the story of how he comes to "adopt" Jesus as his own son;  
And how Joseph was influenced to do so by a dream  
in which an angel gives him insight that this child  
will save humankind by fulfilling God's promise to be with us.

Just as Mary had Miriam the sister of Moses for her namesake,  
in the same way, Joseph's namesake is the 11<sup>th</sup> of the 12 sons of Jacob.  
This is the Joseph who was a dreamer, too –  
which earned him open hostility from his brothers  
who were already jealous of the 'coat of many colors'  
that their father Jacob had given him because Joseph was his favorite.  
And in our Jewish Testament lesson today,  
we heard the story of the brother's plot – and surprising twist.  
Reuben had talked the other brothers out of killing Joseph  
and had suggested selling him into slavery.  
But when a caravan of merchants discovers Joseph in the well,  
they carry him off and his brothers have no idea  
what happened to him.

I had the good fortune this week to hear once again the Muslim version  
of this story about Joseph as told by my dear friend,  
Imam Wilmore Sadiki, when he and Emily Harris and I  
performed as storytellers at the Advent Gathering retreat  
for the Roman Catholic educators, and  
youth & young adult ministers of the St Petersburg area.  
From the 12<sup>th</sup> Sura – or chapter of the Qur'an and other traditional sources,  
we learn some slightly different details in basically the same story.  
My favorite part of the Islamic version, is that we get a chance to  
learn more about the official's wife called Zuleika  
who tried to seduce Joseph when a slave in her household  
and that in time, they become legally united as a couple.  
So, this ancient uncle of the Gospel's Joseph signifies righteous integrity  
and emotional self-control that are qualities that both share.

Willard, p.3

This is true for Joseph

who does not even touch the official's wife Zuleika,

And it is true for Joseph

who does not touch his betrothed wife Mary

until after the birth of God's son.

So, both Josephs are examples of people throughout history

who cooperate with God's will.

And there is another quality they share – as dreamers

who can envision God's will for them.

The Joseph of Genesis incites his father and brothers

when telling them about his dreams in which they will bow to him.

This is eventually brought about through a remarkable string of events

that take Joseph from slavery to prison

and finally to a position as a trusted official of Pharaoh.

And it is in that situation that he was guided to save his people

along with the people of Egypt during a terrible famine –

and be reconciled with his brothers in the process.

The Joseph of the Gospel of Matthew is attentive to his dreams

and sets aside his pride and desire to protect

Mary and her unborn child in a society that could be very harsh to women and children who were alone.

He stays with Mary and allows the child to be named according

to his dream – 'Jesus' as a synonym for God's saving presence

in our midst.

And Joseph listens and obeys the warning in a dream

to take his family into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod the Tyrant

who tried to destroy the child who threatened his kingdom.

Another 'dreamer' – Martin Luther King,

happens to be pictured on the cover of our bulletin

and like that earlier Joseph, someone said about him,

'Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him...'

Gen. 37:19b-20a

How often do we 'kill' – in a figurative sense,

those who come to bring new visions that threaten to upset

the proverbial apple cart of our nice, neat, predictable way of doing things – of which Christianity itself

has been far too often susceptible.

Willard, p.4

We don't know what cost there may have been to Joseph  
for his decision to stay with Mary  
for the dream he had of Christ to come true.

If we speculate that their baby came early,  
we might well imagine that the words 'Joseph's son'  
were spoken with disdain by the people of Nazareth.

Martin Luther King followed up on the accomplishments  
of Abraham Lincoln to re-vision American society  
and bring equal rights for African-American people.

And both of them were literally killed in the process –  
but that doesn't stop a dream that is real.

The vicious cycle of envy, naming, blaming, and punishing  
always seems to be at work to keep things the same,  
but that is what Jesus Christ the Son of God  
came to save us from.

Advent is the season for new visions and re-imagining what is possible  
and remembering that that is what our forefathers –  
and mothers did for progress to take place.

We don't have to fight the battle of becoming 'open & affirming'  
for we stand on the shoulders of giants who came before us.

None of what we have as a church would be here  
if someone hadn't had a vision that didn't help folks break out  
of the way they were used to doing things  
to try something new on the way to what was even better.

In a few weeks on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, we will re-dedicate our new building  
now that our seasonal members are back.

We will re-live and celebrate the dream of having our own house of worship  
and the accomplishment of that dream.

And soon we will have our Annual Meeting when we review where  
we came from over the course of a year  
and consider new destinations for where we are headed.

So, let us look ahead with confidence  
for what God through Christ has in store for us next –  
for new visions that God will send to guide us  
beyond the horizon of what is familiar and safe  
to what is open & growing –  
like a father who takes our hand to walk with us.

Amen

Gen. 37:17b-30a

17...Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan.

18They saw him from a distance,  
and before he came near to them,  
they conspired to kill him.

19They said to one another,  
'Here comes this dreamer.

20Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits;  
then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him,  
and we shall see what will become of his dreams.'

21But when Reuben heard it,  
he delivered him out of their hands, saying,  
'Let us not take his life.'

22Reuben said to them,  
'Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness,  
but lay no hand on him'—  
that he might rescue him out of their hand  
and restore him to his father.

23So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe,  
the long robe with sleeves that he wore;

24and they took him and threw him into a pit.

The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat;  
and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites  
coming from Gilead, with their camels  
carrying gum, balm, and resin,  
on their way to carry it down to Egypt.

26Then Judah said to his brothers,  
'What profit is there if we kill our brother  
and conceal his blood?

27Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites,  
and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother,  
our own flesh.'

And his brothers agreed.

28When some Midianite traders passed by,  
they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit,  
and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.  
And they took Joseph to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the pit  
and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes.

30He returned to his brothers, and said,  
'The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn?

Inspired by Matthew 1:18-25

SO, THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST, THE MESSIAH,  
CAME ABOUT LIKE THIS:  
HIS MOTHER, MARY, WAS ENGAGED TO JOSEPH –  
WHO HAPPENED TO DISCOVER...  
HER BELLY HAD A BABY IN IT.  
THIS WAS BEFORE THEY HAD SLEPT TOGETHER,  
YET THE RESULT OF THE POWER  
OF THE GREAT SPIRIT OF HOLINESS.

BUT, JOSEPH, HER HUSBAND,  
WANTING TO DO THE RIGHT THING –  
YET NOT WANTING TO PUT HER TO SHAME,  
CONSIDERED JUST LETTING HER GO AWAY  
SECRETLY.

AND WHILE HE REFLECTED ABOUT THIS...  
LOOK HERE!  
AN ANGEL OF THE ONE WHO IS GOD  
SPOKE TO HIM IN A DREAM, SAYING,  
*“JOSEPH, SON OF DAVID !  
DO NOT BE AFRAID TO KEEP MARY AS YOUR WIFE.  
FOR THAT WHICH IS WITHIN HER  
COMES FROM A SPIRIT THAT IS HOLY.  
SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON  
AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME ‘JESUS’.  
FOR HE WILL BE ‘THE ONE WHO SAVES’ HIS PEOPLE  
FROM THEIR SELFISH THOUGHTS AND DEEDS.  
ALL THIS HAS COME ABOUT TO COMPLETE THE WORDS  
SPOKEN BY THE ONE WHO IS GOD  
THROUGH THE PROPHETS, SAYING:  
“LOOK HERE!  
A YOUNG GIRL WILL CARRY AND BRING FORTH A SON,  
AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME “EMMANUEL” –  
WHICH IS TRANSLATED AS ‘WITH US, IS GOD’.”*

SO, JOSEPH GOT UP FROM SLEEP,  
DID WHAT THE ANGEL OF THE ONE WHO IS GOD  
DIRECTED HIM TO DO,  
AND ACCEPTED HIS WIFE –  
YET WITHOUT SLEEPING WITH HER  
UNTIL A SON HAD BEEN BORN TO HER.  
AND THEY WOULD CALL HIS NAME ‘JESUS’.

Matt. 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way.

When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph,  
but before they lived together,

she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man  
and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace,  
planned to dismiss her quietly.

20 But just when he had resolved to do this,  
an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,  
'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife,  
for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus,  
for he will save his people from their sins.'

22 All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord  
through the prophet:

23 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means,  
'God is with us.'

24 When Joseph awoke from sleep,  
he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him;  
he took her as his wife,

25 but had no marital relations with her  
until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Joseph (son of Jacob)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*For the New Testament Joseph, see [Saint Joseph](#).*

Joseph or Yosef (**Hebrew**: יוֹסֵף, **Standard Yosef Tiberian** *Yôsēp̄*, **Arabic**: يوسف, *Yusuf*; "May **Yahweh** add"<sup>[1]</sup>) was the eleventh of **Jacob**'s twelve sons in the **Hebrew Bible**.<sup>[2]</sup> Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, but rose to become the most powerful man in **Egypt** after Pharaoh. He then brought his entire family down to Egypt, where they were settled in the land of **Goshen**. The story has been of great importance in later Christian, Jewish and Muslim culture.



Joseph and his brothers by [Charles Thévenin](#).

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[\[edit\]](#)Name

The Bible relates the birth of Joseph at [Genesis 30:22-24](#):

God remembered Rachel: God heeded her and unclosed her womb. She conceived and bore a son, declaring, "God has removed my disgrace." She named him Joseph, meaning "May **Yahweh** add another son for me!"<sup>[3]</sup> The verse gives two explanations of Joseph's name: the first, from the **Elohist** source, bases it on the root /'sp/, meaning "taken away," while the second, from the **Jahwist**, cites the similar root /y'p/, meaning "add."<sup>[4]</sup>

[edit]Biblical narrative

[edit]Family

Joseph was the eleventh of the twelve sons of **Jacob** and the first of the two sons of **Rachel**. He was the favorite son of his father, who arrayed him in a "**coat of many colors**",<sup>[5]</sup> but his brothers' hatred was excited by his father's favoritism and Joseph's own dreams which predicted that they would one day bow down to him.(**Genesis 37:2-11**)

[edit]From slavery to viceroy



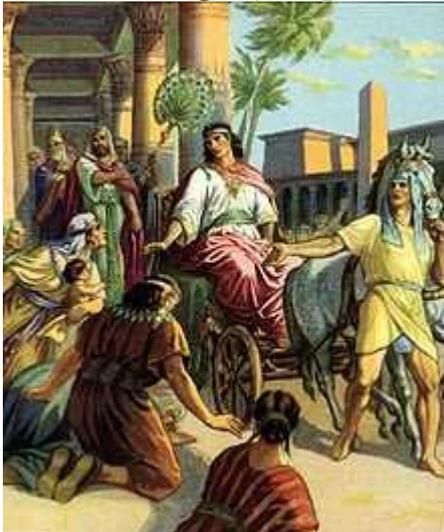
5

Joseph interpreting the dreams of the baker and the butler, by **Benjamin Cuyp**, ca. 1630.

One day, when Joseph was seventeen,<sup>[6]</sup> his brothers plotted to kill him. But **Reuben**, the eldest brother, advised them to throw Joseph into a pit, intending to rescue him later.<sup>[7]</sup> And so the brothers stripped Joseph of the coat of many colours and threw him into the pit. A caravan of **Ishmaelites** passed by, and Judah, another of the brothers, suggested that they sell Joseph to the merchants. Some **Midianites** were passing by and took Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver and they took him to Egypt.<sup>[8]</sup> When Reuben came back to the pit he found Joseph gone. The brothers dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of a goat and showed it to Jacob, who mourned for Joseph, believing him dead.<sup>[9]</sup> The Midianites (or Ishmaelites, at **39:1**) sold Joseph to **Potiphar**, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.<sup>[10]</sup> (The confusion as to the events leading to Joseph coming to Egypt

as a slave exists in the biblical text itself, and is also reflected in the **Septuagint**.)

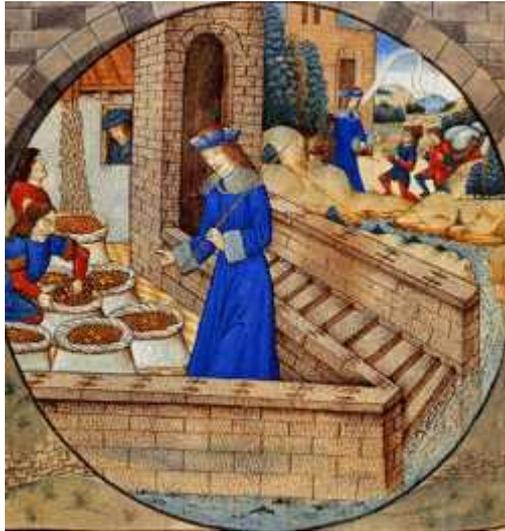
Potiphar appointed Joseph superintendent of his household, and they both prospered.<sup>[11]</sup> But Potiphar's wife said she wanted to have sex with Joseph, and, when her advances were repulsed, brought a false accusation against him before her husband, and Joseph was thrown into prison.<sup>[12]</sup> The warden put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners,<sup>[13]</sup> and soon afterward Pharaoh's chief cup bearer and chief baker, who had offended the king, were thrown into the prison.<sup>[14]</sup> One morning they both told Joseph their dreams of the previous night, which they were unable to interpret, and Joseph told them that the chief cup bearer would be reinstated within three days but that the chief baker would be hanged.<sup>[15]</sup> Joseph requested the cup bearer to mention him to Pharaoh and secure his release from prison,<sup>[16]</sup> but the cup bearer, reinstated in office, forgot Joseph.<sup>[17]</sup>



Joseph made ruler in Egypt, early 1900s Bible illustration

After Joseph was in prison for two more years, Pharaoh had two dreams which disturbed him. He dreamt of seven lean cows which rose out of the river and devoured seven fat cows; and, of seven withered ears of grain which devoured seven fat ears. Pharaoh's wise men were unable to interpret these dreams, but the chief cup bearer remembered Joseph and spoke of his skill to Pharaoh. Joseph was called for, and interpreted the dreams as foretelling that seven years of abundance would be followed by seven years of famine, and advised Pharaoh to store surplus grain during the years of abundance. Before Joseph was 30 years old, Pharaoh made him viceroy over Egypt,<sup>[18]</sup> renamed him **Zaphnath-Paaneah** and married him to **Asenath**, the daughter of **Potipherah**, priest of On.<sup>[19]</sup> Joseph had two sons with Asenath, **Manasseh** and **Ephraim**,<sup>[20]</sup> and Egypt became prosperous under his care.

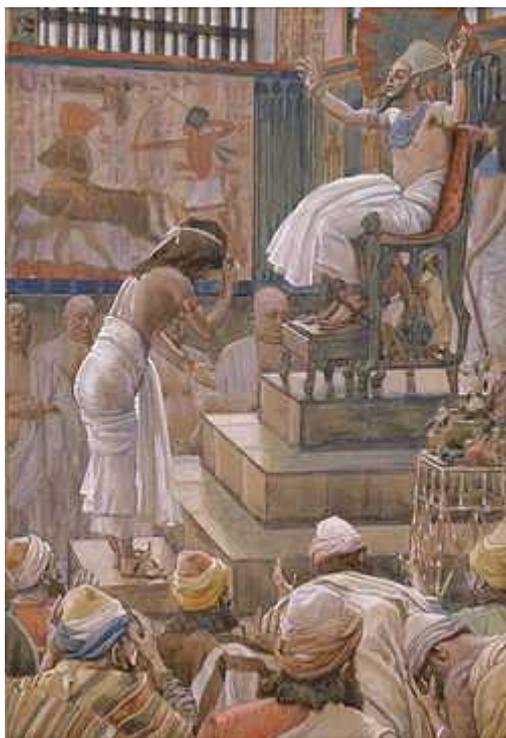
[edit]Family reunited



Joseph gave orders to his servants to fill their sacks with wheat: **illuminated Bible** by Raphaël de Mercatelli, **Ghent**, late 15th century

The years of famine arrived, and people came from the surrounding lands to Egypt to buy grain.<sup>[21]</sup> Among those who came were ten of Joseph's eleven brothers, the youngest, Benjamin, remaining with their father Jacob in Canaan.<sup>[22]</sup> Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Joseph received them roughly, accused them of being spies, sent them back to their father and, keeping Simeon as hostage,<sup>[23]</sup> demanded that they return with Benjamin. And so the brothers returned to Jacob in Canaan, with Reuben lamenting that they had not listened to him and spared the life of their brother Joseph.<sup>[24]</sup>

Jacob sent his sons again to Egypt for grain. As Joseph had commanded them not to appear before him again without Benjamin, Jacob was compelled to let Benjamin go with them. And they were amazed when this time the viceroy received them kindly, and took them to feast in his own house, inquiring after their father and their youngest brother Benjamin.<sup>[25]</sup> But while they feasted, Joseph gave orders to his servants to fill their sacks with wheat and put his silver goblet in Benjamin's sack. On the following morning the brothers departed, but before they had gone far a messenger overtook them, accusing them of stealing the goblet. And when the messenger searched their sacks he found the goblet in Benjamin's sack, and ordered them to return. In front of Joseph, whom he still did not know, Judah pleaded that Benjamin be allowed to return to his father, and he himself kept in Benjamin's place.<sup>[26]</sup>



Joseph and His Brethren Welcomed by **Pharaoh**, watercolor by **James Tissot** (ca. 1900).

Overcome by Judah's appeal, Joseph disclosed himself to his brothers, assuring them that in treating him as they did they had been carrying out the will of God. He then urged them to return home quickly and bring all their families to Egypt, to live in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh, when he heard of this, rejoiced, and gave to Joseph and his brothers the best that Egypt could offer.<sup>[27]</sup>

And so Jacob and all his family came to Egypt, seventy persons plus their wives.<sup>[28]</sup> All except for Joseph and his sons settled in the **Land of Goshen**.<sup>[29]</sup> Then Joseph presented Jacob and five of his brothers to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.<sup>[30]</sup>

And as the famine continued in Egypt, Joseph bought up all the land, which became Pharaoh's, and the people farmed it for Pharaoh, giving him one-fifth of the produce.<sup>[31]</sup>

### [edit]The blessing of Jacob

After being settled for 17 years in Egypt, when Jacob felt his end was approaching he called Joseph to him, and made him swear to bury him not in Egypt, but with his fathers.<sup>[32]</sup> Jacob blessed **Manasseh** and **Ephraim**, the sons of Joseph, giving them equal inheritance with his own sons. But despite protests by Joseph, Jacob blessed Ephraim the younger first above Manasseh.<sup>[33]</sup>

Jacob then gave his blessing upon all his sons.<sup>[34]</sup> Though he blessed them in order by their age, the blessing he gave Joseph was greater than the others:

'Joseph is a fruitful tree by a spring, whose branches climb over the wall. The archers savagely attacked him, shooting and assailing him fiercely, but Joseph's bow remained unflinching and his arms were tireless by the power of the Strong One of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd of Israel, by the God of your father-so may he help you! By God Almighty-so may he bless you with the blessings of heaven above, and the blessings of the deep that lies below! The blessings of breast and womb and the blessings of your father are stronger than the blessings of the eternal mountains and the bounty of the everlasting hills. May they rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of him who was prince among his brothers.'

Joseph had Jacob's body **embalmed** and taken back to Canaan, with the twelve sons carrying their father's coffin and many Egyptian officials accompanying them, (**Genesis 50:1-14**) and Jacob was buried in the cave of **Machpelah**, which Abraham had bought, and in which Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob's first wife Leah were buried. Then Joseph's brothers implored his forgiveness for their past actions, but Joseph allayed their fears and promised that he would continue to provide for their wants. (**Genesis 50:15-21**)

[edit]**Epilogue**

Joseph lived to the age of 110, living to see his great-grandchildren. Before he died, he made the **children of Israel** swear that when they left the land of Egypt they would take his bones with them, and on his death his body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. (**Genesis 50:22-26**)

The children of Israel remembered their oath, and when they left Egypt during **the Exodus**, **Moses** took Joseph's bones with him. (**Exodus 13:19**)

The bones were buried at **Shechem**, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of **Hamor** (**Joshua 24:32**), which has traditionally been identified with site of **Joseph's Tomb**, before Jacob and all his family moved to Egypt. Shechem was in the land which was **allocated by Joshua** to the **Tribe of Ephraim**, one of the tribes of the **House of Joseph**, after the **conquest of Canaan**.

[edit]**Later traditions**

In one Talmudic story, Joseph was buried in the Nile, as there was some dispute as to which province should be honored by having his tomb within its boundaries. Moses, led there by an ancient holy woman named **Serach**, was able by a miracle to raise the sarcophagus and to take it with him at the time of the Exodus.

Joseph is commemorated as one of the Holy Forefathers in the **Calendar of Saints** of the **Armenian Apostolic Church** on July 30. In the **Eastern Orthodox Church** and those **Eastern Catholic Churches** which follow the **Byzantine Rite**, he is known as "Joseph the all-comely", a reference not only to his physical appearance, but more importantly to the beauty of his

spiritual life. They commemorate him on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (two Sundays before **Christmas**) and on **Holy and Great Monday** (Monday of **Holy Week**). In **icons**, he is sometimes depicted wearing the **nemes** headdress of an **Egyptian vizier**. The **Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod** commemorates him as a patriarch on March 31.

Joseph ("Yusuf") is regarded by **Muslims** as a prophet (Qur'an, suras vi. 84, xl. 36), and a whole chapter (sura xii.) is devoted to him. He is told to have been very beautiful. Muhammad is believed to have once said, "One half of all the beauty God apportioned for mankind went to Joseph; the other one half went to the rest of mankind."<sup>[35]</sup> One significant departure in the Qur'an is the use of an unspecified King in place of the Biblical Pharaoh. The story has the same general outlines as the Biblical narrative, but with a wealth of additional detail and incident.<sup>[36]</sup> In the Qur'an the brothers ask Jacob to let Joseph go with them.<sup>[36]</sup> The pit into which Joseph is thrown is a well with water in it,<sup>[36]</sup> and Joseph was taken as a slave by passing-by travellers (Qur'an 12:19). In one account, Joseph's face possessed such a peculiar brilliancy that his brothers noticed the different light in the sky as soon as he appeared above the edge of the well, and came back to claim him as their slave.<sup>[36]</sup> This same peculiarity was noticeable when they went to Egypt: although it was evening when they entered the city, his face diffused such a light that the astonished inhabitants came out to see the cause of it.<sup>[36]</sup>

In the Bible, Joseph discloses himself to his brethren before they return to their father the second time after buying corn.<sup>[36]</sup> The same in the Islamic story but they are compelled to return to Jacob without Benjamin, and the former weeps himself blind.<sup>[36]</sup> He remains so until the sons have returned from Egypt, bringing with them Joseph's garment healed the patriarch's eyes as soon as he put it to his face (Qur'an 12:96).<sup>[36]</sup>

[edit]Biblical criticism

Nineteenth century **source criticism** divided the Joseph story between the **Jahwist, Elohist** and **Priestly sources** of the **documentary hypothesis**.<sup>[37]</sup> In the early 20th century **Hermann Gunkel** demonstrated that, unlike the Abraham-Isaac-Jacob stories, the Joseph story formed a single unitary story with literary rather than oral origins,<sup>[38]</sup> while in 1953 **Gerhard von Rad** made a detailed assessment of its literary artistry and drew attention to its identity as a Wisdom novella,<sup>[39]</sup> and in 1968 **R.N. Whybray** argued that unity and artistry implied a single author.<sup>[40]</sup> All three insights are now widely accepted,<sup>[41]</sup> and the majority of modern biblical scholars date the Joseph story in its current form to the 5th century Persian era at the earliest.<sup>[42]</sup> There have been many attempts to trace the story's redaction history, and that of **Donald Redford** may be taken as one influential example: a first "Reuben version" of the story originated in the northern kingdom of Israel and was intended to justify the domination of the "house of Joseph" over the other tribes; this was

followed by a later “Judah-expansion” (chapters 38 and 49) elevating Judah as the rightful successor to Jacob; and finally various embellishments were added so that the novella would function as the bridge between the Abraham-Isaac-Jacob material in **Genesis** and the following story of **Moses** and the **Exodus**.<sup>[43]</sup>

[edit]Literature and culture

**Thomas Mann** retells the Genesis stories surrounding Joseph in his four novel omnibus, ***Joseph and His Brothers***, identifying Joseph with the figure of **Osarseph** known from **Josephus**, and the pharaoh with **Akhenaten**.

The long-running musical ***Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*** by **Andrew Lloyd Webber** and **Tim Rice** is one of the few major British musical theatre shows with hardly any spoken dialogue, being sung-through almost completely

In 1995, **Turner Network Television** released the made-for-television movie **Joseph** starring **Ben Kingsley** as Potiphar, **Lesley Ann Warren** as Potiphar's wife, and **Martin Landau** as Jacob. There is also an animated film on the story made by ***DreamWorks Animation*** titled ***Joseph: King of Dreams***.

[edit]See also

**Torah portions** on Joseph: **Vayeshev**, **Miketz**, **Vayigash**, and **Vayechi**.

**Tribe of Joseph**

**Islamic view of Joseph**

[edit]References

<sup>^</sup> verse, note and commentary on **Genesis 30:24**, *The Anchor Bible*, Volume 1, *Genesis*, 1964, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York

<sup>^</sup> **JewishEncyclopedia.com - JOSEPH**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 30:23-24**, *The Anchor Bible*, Volume 1, *Genesis*, 1964, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York

<sup>^</sup> Richard Elliott Friedman, "The Bible With Sources Revealed", HarperSanFrancisco, (2003), p.80

<sup>^</sup> Another possible translation is "coat with long sleeves" - see "A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature", 1903. **ISBN 1-932443-20-7**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 37:2**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 37:18-22**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 37:25-28**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 37:29-35**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 37:36**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 39:1-6**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 39:7-20**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 39:21-23**

<sup>^</sup> **Genesis 40:1-4**

**^ Genesis 40:5-22**

**^ Genesis 40:14-15**

**^ Genesis 40:23**

**^ Genesis 41:40-44**

**^ Genesis 41:45-46**

**^ Genesis 41:50-52**

**^ Genesis 41:53-57**

**^ Genesis 42:1-5**

**^ Genesis 42:24**

**^ Genesis 42**

**^ Genesis 43:47**

**^ Genesis 44**

**^ Genesis 45**

**^ Genesis 46:26-27**

**^ Genesis 46**

**^ Genesis 47:1-11**

**^ Genesis 47:13-26**

**^ Genesis 47:28-31**

**^ Genesis 48:1-22**

**^ Genesis 49**

**^ Tottli 2002, p. 120**

**^ a b c d e f g h Differences of Tradition**

**^ Hermann Gunkel, "Genesis" (Mercer University Press, 1997 trans. ed. Mark E. Biddle) pp.387 ff.**

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**^ Michael V. Fox, "Wisdom in the Joseph Story" (Vetus Testamentum, Brill, 2001)**

**^ R.N. Whybray, "The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study" (Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) pp.54-55**

**^ J.A. Soggin, "Notes on the Joseph Story", in "Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson" (JSOTSupp 153, Sheffield Academic Press, 1993)**

**^ J.A. Soggin, "An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah" (1998, trans. John Bowden, SCM Press, 1999) p.102-3**

**^ Donald Redford, "A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50)" (VTSupp 20, Brill, 1970)**

## Saint Joseph

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*For other uses, see [Saint Joseph \(disambiguation\)](#).*

### Saint Joseph



Saint Joseph with the Infant Jesus, [Guido Reni](#)(c. 1635)

<b>Died</b>	<a href="#">Nazareth</a> (traditional)
<b>Feast</b>	March 19 - <a href="#">Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary</a> ( <a href="#">Western Christianity</a> ), May 1 - <a href="#">St. Joseph the Worker</a> ( <a href="#">Western Christianity</a> ), The Sunday after the <a href="#">Nativity of the Lord</a> ( <a href="#">Eastern Christianity</a> )
<b>Attributes</b>	Carpenter's square or tools, the infant Jesus, staff with lily blossoms.
<b>Patronage</b>	The Universal Church, unborn children, fathers, immigrants, workers, against doubt and hesitation, and of a happy death, Vietnam. Many others; see <a href="#">[3]</a> .

Saint Joseph (**Hebrew** יוֹסֵף, "Yosef"; **Greek**: Ἰωσήφ), often clarified as Saint Joseph the Carpenter is an important figure in **Christian** belief as the husband of the **Virgin Mary** and the stepfather of **Jesus Christ**. According to Christian tradition he was not the biological father of **Jesus**, but acted as his foster-father<sup>[1]</sup> and as head of the **Holy Family**. According to Christian tradition, Jesus was referred to as the son of Joseph during his public life,<sup>[2]</sup> though in Mark he is referred to as Mary's son (Mark 6:3).<sup>[3]</sup> Joseph is venerated as a **saint** in the **Roman Catholic**, **Eastern Orthodox**, and **Anglican** faiths. Matthew and Luke each have a **genealogy that traces Joseph's lineage** back to King David. **Matthew** says that Joseph's father was called Jacob,<sup>[Mt. 1:16]</sup> but **Luke** says he was a son of **Heli**.<sup>[Lk. 3:23]</sup> **Matthew** and **Luke** are the only Gospels which include the **Infancy Narratives**, the stories of Jesus' birth and infancy. In Matthew, Joseph lives in Bethlehem, the city of David, where Jesus is born, and then moves to Nazareth with his family. In Luke, Joseph lives in Nazareth, but travels to Bethlehem in compliance with the requirements of a Roman census. He then lives in Bethlehem for an unspecified period (perhaps two years) until King Herod's **massacre of the innocents** forces him to take refuge in Egypt with his family; on the death of Herod he brings his family back to Israel, and settles in Nazareth.

The gospels describe Joseph as a "tekton" (τέκτων); traditionally the word has been taken to mean "**carpenter**",<sup>[4]</sup> though the Greek term is much less specific. It cannot be translated narrowly; it evokes an artisan with wood in general, or an artisan in iron or stone.<sup>[5]</sup> Very little other information on Joseph is given in the Gospels, in which he never speaks. He is mentioned in the Gospels as present on the visit to **Jerusalem** when Jesus was 12, but no mention can clearly be placed later than that one. Christian tradition, though vague on the time and place of his death, represents Mary as a widow during the adult ministry of her son.<sup>[Jn. 19:26-27]</sup><sup>[6]</sup> In **Roman Catholic** and other traditions, Joseph is the **patron saint** of workers and has several **feast days**. He was also declared to be the patron saint and protector of the Catholic Church by **Pope Pius IX** in 1870, and is the patron of several countries and regions. With the growth of **Mariology**, the theological field of **Josephology** has also grown and since the 1950s centers for studying it have been formed.<sup>[7]</sup><sup>[8]</sup>

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[edit]Paul and the canonical Gospels



Holy Family with the **Holy Spirit** by **Murillo**, 1675-1682.

[edit]**Joseph in the New Testament**

The oldest of all the witnesses to Jesus are some of the **epistles of Paul**, from roughly 51-58 AD. These mention Jesus' mother (without naming her), but never refer to his father. Joseph first appears in the **Genealogy of Jesus**, which appears only in the **Matthew** and **Luke**. Luke names Joseph's own father as Eli, but Matthew names him as Jacob, in keeping with that gospel's depiction of Jesus as a second **Moses**.<sup>[3]</sup> This theme is developed further in the **infancy narratives**, which, like the genealogies, have the function of establishing Jesus as the promised Messiah, the descendant of David, born in

Bethlehem. Like the genealogies the infancy narratives appear only in Matthew and Luke, and take different approaches to reconciling the requirement that the Messiah be born in Bethlehem with the tradition that Jesus came from Nazareth. In Matthew, Joseph, already living in Bethlehem, obeys the direction of an angel to marry Mary and then to **flee to Egypt** to escape the **massacre of the children of Bethlehem** planned by **Herod the Great**, the tyrant who rules Judea.<sup>[9]</sup> Once Herod has died, the angel tells him to return to the land of Israel, but to Galilee instead of to Bethlehem, and so Joseph takes his wife and the child to Nazareth and settles there.<sup>[10]</sup> Thus in Matthew, the infant Jesus, like Moses, is in peril from a cruel king, like Moses he has a (fore)father named Joseph who goes down to Egypt, like the Old Testament Joseph this Joseph has a father named Jacob, and both Josephs receive important dreams foretelling their future.<sup>[3]</sup> In Luke, Joseph already lives in Nazareth, and Jesus is born in Bethlehem because Joseph and Mary have to travel there to be counted in a census. Luke's account makes no mention of angels and dreams, the Massacre of the Innocents, or of a visit to Egypt.

The last time Joseph appears in person in any Gospel is the story of the **Passover visit to the Temple** in Jerusalem when Jesus is 12 years old, found only in Luke. Like the infancy narratives the story is didactic, emphasising Jesus' awareness of his coming mission: here Jesus speaks to his parents (both of them) of "my father," meaning God, but they fail to understand.<sup>[11]</sup>

None of the Gospels mentions Joseph as present at any event during Jesus' adult ministry. The **synoptic Gospels**, however, share a scene in which the people of **Nazareth**, Jesus' hometown, doubt Jesus' status as a prophet because they know his family. In **Mark**, the first Gospel to be written (about 70 AD), they call Jesus "Mary's son" instead of naming his father - tantamount to calling him illegitimate.<sup>[3][12]</sup> A Joseph (Joses) is named in Mark, but as one of Jesus' brothers.<sup>[13]</sup> In the next Gospel, **Matthew**, the townspeople call Jesus "the carpenter's son," again without naming his father, and again he has a brother named Joseph,<sup>[14]</sup> only in Luke does he become "the son of Joseph," and Luke makes no mention of any brothers.<sup>[15]</sup> In Luke the tone is positive, whereas in Mark and Matthew it is disparaging.<sup>[16]</sup> This incident does not appear at all in John, but in a parallel story the disbelieving Jews refer to "Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know".<sup>[17]</sup>

Joseph is not mentioned as being present at the **Wedding at Cana** at the beginning of Jesus' mission, nor at the **Passion** at the end. If he had been present at the **Crucifixion**, he would under Jewish custom have been expected to take charge of Jesus' body, but this role is instead performed by **Joseph of Arimathea**. Nor would Jesus have entrusted his mother to John's care had her husband been alive.<sup>[18]</sup>

## [edit]Gospel harmony

A sample **Gospel harmony** of the episodes of the life of Saint Joseph in the **canonical Gospels**, in summary form of harmonies for the four gospels. <sup>[19][20][21]</sup> See the gallery below for artistic depictions of some of these events.

Number	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1	Joseph lived in Nazareth			<a href="#">Luke 2:4</a>	
2	Genealogy of Joseph	<a href="#">Matthew 1:1-17</a>		<a href="#">Luke 3:23</a>	
3	Joseph Betrothed to Mary	<a href="#">Matthew 1:18</a>			
4	Angel visits Joseph (1st dream)	<a href="#">Matthew 1:20-21</a>			
5	Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem			<a href="#">Luke 2:8-15</a>	
6	<a href="#">Birth of Jesus</a>	<a href="#">Matthew 1:25</a>		<a href="#">Luke 2:6-7</a>	
7	<a href="#">Temple presentation</a>			<a href="#">Luke 2:22-24</a>	
8	Angel tells Joseph to flee (2nd dream)	<a href="#">Matthew 2:13</a>			
9	<a href="#">Flight into Egypt</a>	<a href="#">Matthew 2:14-15</a>			
10	Angel tells Joseph to return to Nazareth (3rd dream)	<a href="#">Matthew 2:19-20</a>			
11	<a href="#">Joseph and family settle in Nazareth</a>	<a href="#">Matthew 2:21-23</a>		<a href="#">Luke 2:39</a>	
12	<a href="#">Finding Jesus in the Temple</a>			<a href="#">Luke 2:41-51</a>	
13	<a href="#">Holy Family</a>				<a href="#">John 6:41-42</a>

## [edit]Professional life



St. Joseph the Carpenter, by **Georges de La Tour**, 1640s.

Jesus is identified in the **Gospel of Matthew 13:55** as the son of a τέκτων (*tekton*) and the **Gospel of Mark 6:3** states that Jesus was a *tekton* himself. *Tekton* has been traditionally translated into English as "carpenter", but is a rather general word (from the same root that gives us "technical" and "technology") that could cover makers of objects in various materials, even builders.<sup>[22]</sup> But the specific association with woodworking is a constant in **Early Christian** tradition; **Justin Martyr** (d. ca. 165) wrote that Jesus made **yokes** and **ploughs**, and there are similar early references.<sup>[23]</sup>

**John Dominic Crossan** puts *tekton* into a historical context more resembling an itinerant worker than an established artisan, emphasizing his marginality in a population in which a peasant who owns land could become quite prosperous. Other scholars have argued that *tekton* could equally mean a highly-skilled craftsman in wood or the more prestigious metal, perhaps running a workshop with several employees, and noted sources recording the shortage of skilled artisans at the time.<sup>[24]</sup> **Geza Vermes** has stated that the terms 'carpenter' and 'son of a carpenter' are used in the Jewish **Talmud** to signify a very learned man, and he suggests that a description of Joseph as 'naggar' (a carpenter) could indicate that he was considered wise and highly literate in the Torah.<sup>[25]</sup>

At the time of Joseph, Nazareth was an obscure village in **Galilee**, about 65 km from the Holy City of **Jerusalem**, which is barely mentioned in surviving non-Christian texts and documents.<sup>[3][26][27][28][29]</sup> **Archaeology** over most of the site is made impossible by subsequent building, but from what has been excavated and tombs in the area around the village, it is estimated that the population was at most about 400.<sup>[30]</sup> It was, however, only about 6 kilometres from the city of **Tzippori** (ancient "Sepphoris"), which was destroyed by the Romans in 4BC, and thereafter was expensively rebuilt. Analysis of the landscape and other evidence suggest that in Joseph's lifetime Nazareth was "oriented towards" the nearby city,<sup>[31]</sup> which had an

overwhelmingly Jewish population although with many signs of **Hellenization**,<sup>[32]</sup> and historians have speculated that Joseph and later Jesus too might have traveled daily to work on the rebuilding. Specifically the large theatre in the city has been suggested, although this has aroused much controversy over dating and other issues.<sup>[33]</sup> Other scholars see Joseph and Jesus as the general village craftsmen, working in wood, stone and metal on a wide variety of jobs.<sup>[34]</sup>

### [edit]Modern appraisal

The name of Joseph is found almost exclusively in the genealogies and the infancy narratives,<sup>[35][36]</sup> and both are regarded with scepticism by modern scholars.<sup>[37]</sup> The genealogies are artificial,<sup>[37]</sup> (Matthew divides Joseph's ancestors into three sets of fourteen, the number symbolising the name of David and Jesus' Messiahship,<sup>[38]</sup> while Luke counts 77 ancestors, symbolising the forgiveness of sins), and the infancy narratives as legendary (it is impossible that both birth narratives are accurate and improbable that either one is,<sup>[39]</sup> and the group of scholars making up the **Jesus Seminar** viewed them as late additions to the Jesus tradition with little historical value).<sup>[36]</sup>

### [edit]Later apocryphal writings



### ***Christ in the House of his Parents***, by **John Everett Millais**

The canonical gospels created a problem: they stated clearly that Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus, and that Joseph was not his father; yet Joseph's paternity was essential to establish Jesus' Davidic descent, and he and Mary were so much husband and wife that only divorce could dissolve their union (Matthew 1:19).<sup>[40]</sup> The theological situation was complicated by the gospel references to Jesus' "brothers and sisters" (repeated in Paul, where James is called the "brother of Christ"), and by the fact that he was described unambiguously by John and Mark as "Joseph's son" and "the carpenter's son."<sup>[40]</sup> From the 2nd century to the 5th writers tried to explain how Jesus could be simultaneously the "son of God" though Mary as the "son of Joseph".<sup>[40]</sup>

The first to offer a solution was the apocryphal **Protoevangelium of James**, written about 150 AD, was . The original gospels never refer to Joseph's age, but James presents him as an old man chosen by lot (i.e., by God) to watch over the Virgin. Jesus' brothers are presented as Joseph's children by an earlier marriage, and his years and righteousness explain why he has not yet had sex

with his wife: "I received her by lot as my wife, and she is not yet my wife, but she has conceived by the Holy Spirit."<sup>[41]</sup>

The Protoevangelium was extremely popular, but it leaves open the possibility that Joseph might have had relations with Mary after the birth of Jesus ("she is not yet my wife..."). A few centuries later the developing doctrine that Mary was a virgin not only at the time of the conception and birth of Christ, but throughout her life, meant that this possibility had to be excluded. The apocryphal **History of Joseph the Carpenter**, written in the 5th century and framed as a biography of Joseph dictated by Jesus, describes how Joseph, aged 90 (the Protoevangelium had not given Joseph a specific age), a widower with four sons and two daughters, is given charge of the twelve year old Mary, who then lives in his household raising his youngest son James the Less (the supposed author of the Protoevangelium) until she is ready to be married at age 14½. Joseph's death at the age of 111, attended by angels and asserting the **perpetual virginity of Mary**, takes up approximately half the story.<sup>[42]</sup>

Modern positions on the question of the relationship between Joseph and the ever-Virgin Mary vary. The **Eastern Orthodox Church**, which names to Joseph's first wife as **Salome**, holds that Joseph was a widower and merely betrothed, but never married, to Mary;<sup>[43]</sup> the position of the **Catholic Church**, derived from the writings of **Saint Jerome**, is that Joseph was the husband of Mary but that the term "brothers" should be understood as meaning cousins; in both cases the doctrine of the Perpetual Virginity means that Joseph and Mary never had sexual relations. The Protestant churches, following the tenet of Virgin Birth but not that of Perpetual Virginity, hold no strong views on the subject.<sup>[44]</sup>

[edit]Sainthood

*Main articles: **Holy Family** and **Josephology***

A series of articles on  
[Josephology](#)



General articles

St. Joseph • [Holy Family](#) • [Saint Joseph's Day](#)

Prayers & Devotions

[Prayer](#) • [Novena](#) • [Chaplet](#) • [Scapular](#) • [Cord](#)

Organizations

[Sisters of St. Joseph](#) • [Josephite](#)

Fathers • Oblates of St. Joseph  
Papal Documents  
Redemptoris Custos • Quamquam Pluries

Together with the **Blessed Virgin Mary** and the **Child Jesus** Joseph is one of the three members of the **Holy Family**; since he only appears in the birth narratives of the Gospels, Jesus is depicted as a child when with him. The formal veneration of the Holy Family began in the 17th century by Mgr **François de Laval**.

**Pope Pius IX** proclaimed Saint Joseph the patron of the Universal Church in 1870, the unofficial patron against doubt and hesitation, as well as the patron saint of fighting **communism**, and of a happy death<sup>[citation needed]</sup>. Having died in the "arms of Jesus and Mary" according to Catholic tradition, he is considered the model of the pious believer who receives grace at the moment of death, and prays especially for families, fathers, expectant mothers (pregnant women), travelers, **immigrants**, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, **engineers**, and working people in general.

The earliest records of a formal devotional following for Saint Joseph date to the year 800 and references to him as *nutritor Domini* (educator/guardian of the Lord) began to appear in the 9th century, and continued growing to the 14th century.<sup>[45][46][47]</sup> Saint **Thomas Aquinas** discussed the necessity of the presence of Saint Joseph in the plan of the Incarnation for if Mary had not been married, the Jews would have stoned her and that in his youth Jesus needed the care and protection of a human father.<sup>[48][49]</sup>

In the 15th century major steps were taken by Saint **Bernardine of Siena**, Pierre d'Ailly and **Jean Gerson**.<sup>[45]</sup> Gerson wrote *Consideration sur Saint Joseph* and preached sermons on Saint Joseph at the **Council of Constance**.<sup>[50]</sup> In 1889 **Pope Leo XIII** issued the encyclical **Quamquam Pluries** in which he urged Catholics to pray to Saint Joseph, as the patron of the Church in view of the challenges facing the Church.<sup>[51]</sup>

**Josephology**, the study of the *theology of Saint Joseph*, is one of the most recent theological disciplines.<sup>[52]</sup> In 1989, on the occasion of the centenary of **Quamquam Pluries** Pope **John Paul II** issued **Redemptoris Custos**, i.e. *Guardian of the Redeemer* which presented Saint Joseph's role in the plan of redemption, as part of the "redemption documents" issued by John Paul II such as **Redemptoris Mater** to which it refers.<sup>[53][54][55][56]</sup>

[edit]**Feast days**

*Main article:* **Saint Joseph's Day**



Holy Family by **Raphael**, 1506.

March 19, Saint Joseph's Day, has been the principal **feast day** of Saint Joseph in **Western Christianity**,<sup>[57][58]</sup> since the tenth century, and is celebrated by Catholics, **Anglicans**, many **Lutherans** and other denominations.<sup>[59]</sup> In **Eastern Orthodoxy**, the feast day of Saint Joseph is celebrated on the First Sunday after the **Nativity of Christ**.

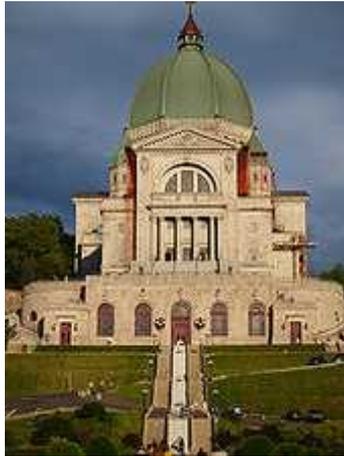
In 1870 **Pope Pius IX** declared Joseph patron of the universal Church and instituted another feast, with an octave, to be held in his honour on Wednesday in the second week after Easter. This was abolished by **Pope Pius XII**, when in 1955 he established the Feast of "St. Joseph the Worker", to be celebrated on 1 May. This date counteracts **May Day**, a union, workers and socialists holiday and reflects Joseph's status as what many Catholics and other Christians consider the "patron of workers" and "model of workers." Catholic and other Christians teachings and stories about or relating to Joseph and the Holy Family frequently stress his patience, persistence, and hard work as admirable qualities which believers should adopt.

**Pope John XXIII** added the name of Joseph to the **Canon of the Mass**. The 19 March feast is a Solemnity and so is transferred to another date if impeded (for instance, if it falls on a Sunday within **Lent**). The 1 May celebration is an optional Memorial, and so is omitted if impeded. (For example, St. Joseph the Worker was celebrated on 2 May in 2008 because 1 May was Ascension Thursday.)

**[edit]**Places, churches and Institutions

*Main articles: **St. Joseph's Cathedral**, **List of churches named after Saint Joseph**, and **List of places named after Saint Joseph***

*See also: **Saint Joseph's** and **São José***



### **Saint Joseph's Oratory, Montreal.**

Many cities, towns, and locations are named after Saint Joseph. According to the **National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency**, the **Spanish** form, **San Jose**, is **the most common place name in the world**. Probably the most-recognized San Joses are **San José, Costa Rica**, and **San Jose, California, United States**, given their name by **Spanish colonists**. Joseph is the patron saint of the **New World**; of the countries **China, Canada, Korea, Mexico, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Peru, Vietnam**; of the regions **Carinthia, Styria, Tyrol, Sicily**; and of several main cities and dioceses.

Many churches, monasteries and other institutions are dedicated to Saint Joseph. **Saint Joseph's Oratory** is the largest church in Canada, with the largest dome of its kind in the world after that of **Saint Peter's Basilica** in **Rome**. Elsewhere in the world churches named after the saint may be known as those of *San Giuseppe*, e.g. **San Giuseppe dei Teatini**, *San José*, e.g. **Metropolitan Cathedral of San José** or *São José*, e.g. in **Porto Alegre**, Brazil.

The **Sisters of St. Joseph** were founded as an order in 1650 and have about 14,000 members worldwide. In 1871, the **Josephite Fathers** of the Roman Catholic Church were created under the patronage of Joseph, intending to work with the poor. The first Josephites in America re-devoted their part of the Order to ministry within the newly-emancipated African American community. The **Oblates of St. Joseph** were founded in 1878 by St. **Joseph Marello**. In 1999 their Shrine of Saint Joseph the Guardian of the Redeemer was named after the Apostolic exhortation **Redemptoris Custos**.<sup>[60]</sup>

[edit]**Prayers and devotions**



Altar of St. Joseph, **Billafingen**, Germany.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, during the **feast day** of Saint Joseph the following hymn is chanted:

Verily, Joseph the betrothed, saw clearly in his old age that the foresayings of the Prophets had

been fulfilled openly; for he was given an odd earnest, receiving inspiration from the angels,

who cried, Glory to God; for he hath bestowed peace on earth.

In the Catholic tradition, just as there are prayers for the **Seven Joys of Mary** and **Seven Sorrows of Mary**, so there are also prayers for the seven

joys and seven sorrows of Saint Joseph; these include prayers for daily protection, vocation, happy marriage, happy death, and hopeless

cases;<sup>[61]</sup> specific prayers, **novenas** and devotions include the **Prayer to Saint Joseph** and the **Novena to Saint Joseph**.<sup>[62]</sup> **St. Francis de Sales**

included Saint Joseph along with **Virgin Mary** as saints to be invoked during prayers in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*,<sup>[63]</sup> **Saint Teresa of Avila**

attributed her recovery of health to Saint Joseph and recommended him as an advocate,<sup>[64]</sup> and **Saint Therese of Lisieux** stated that for a period of

time, every day she prayed to "Saint Joseph, Father and Protector of Virgins..." and felt safe and protected from danger as a result,<sup>[65]</sup> and **Pius X** composed a prayer to Saint Joseph which begins:<sup>[66]</sup>

Glorious St. Joseph, pattern of all who are devoted to toil,

obtain for me the grace to toil, in the spirit of penance,

in order to thereby atone for my many sins...

There is a belief that planting a statue of St. Joseph on a house will help sell the house.<sup>[67]</sup> This belief is held by some theists as well as atheists, but traditional

Christian teachings view it as superstition and not a devotion.<sup>[68]</sup>

[edit]In art



☞ Nativity by **Martin Schongauer** (1475-80)

Up to about the 17th century Joseph tends to be depicted as a man advanced in years, with grey hair, often balding, occasionally frail and with **arthritic fingers** and a sharp nose, a comparatively marginal figure alongside Mary and Jesus if not entirely in the background, passive other than when leading them on their flight to Egypt. Joseph is shown mostly with a beard, not only in keeping with Jewish custom, but also because – although the Gospel accounts do not give his age – later literature tends to present him as an old man at the time of his wedding to Mary. This depiction arose to allay concerns about both the **celibacy** of the newly wedded couple,<sup>[69]</sup> the mention of brothers and sisters of Jesus in the canonical Gospels,<sup>[70]</sup> and Joseph's other children spoken of in apocryphal literature – concerns discussed very frankly by **Jean Gerson** for example, who nonetheless favoured showing him as a younger man.<sup>[71]</sup> In recent centuries – in step with a growing interest in Joseph's role in Gospel exegesis – he himself has become a focal figure in representations of the Holy Family. He is now often portrayed as a younger or even youthful man (perhaps especially in **Protestant** depictions), whether going about his work as a carpenter, or participating actively in the daily life of Mary and Jesus as an equal and openly affectionate member.<sup>[72]</sup>



☞ Saint Joseph sleeping, Nativity by **Gentile da Fabriano**

Full cycles of his life are rare in the Middle Ages, though the scenes from the **Life of the Virgin** or **Life of Christ** where he is present are far more often seen. The **Mérode Altarpiece** of about 1425, where he has a panel to himself,

working as a carpenter, is an early example of what remained relatively rare depictions of him pursuing his métier. Some statues of Joseph depict his staff as topped with flowers, recalling the non-canonical **Protoevangelion's** account of how Mary's spouse was chosen by collecting walking sticks of widowers in Israel, and Joseph's alone bursting into flower, thus identifying him as divinely chosen. Several **Eastern Orthodox Nativity icons** show Joseph tempted by the **Devil** (depicted as an old man with furred wings) to break off his betrothal, and how he resists that temptation. There are some paintings with him wearing a **Jewish hat**. Joseph is normally associated with the colours black, or, as in more modern depictions, green; this is similar to his wife's association with blue. Accordingly, *Sacrenoire* is the analogue to the old French curse **Sacrebleu**.<sup>[73]</sup>

[edit]Gallery of life in art



Joseph and Joachim, **Dürer**, 1504



At work in the **Mérode Altarpiece**, 1420s



Joseph's dream, **Rembrandt**, c. 1645



Ma...  
Virg...  
c. 14...



Nativity of Jesus, **Marten de Vos** 1577



Temple presentation, **di Fredi**, 1388



Dream of Flight, **Daniele Crespi**, c. 1625



Flig...  
Egy...  
14th



Finding in the Temple, **Book of Hours**, 15th c.



Holy Family, **Claudio Coello**, c. 1650



Death of Joseph, **St. Martin's at Florac**



Cor...  
Jos...  
Lea...

[edit]In music

Nicolas Chadeville (1696 - 176?): Joseph est bien Marié, a choral composition (1755)

[edit]See also



**Joseph**, the name  
**Solemnity of Saint Joseph**  
**History of Joseph the Carpenter**  
**Prayer to Saint Joseph**  
**Genealogy of Jesus**  
**The Gospel According to Jesus Christ**

[edit]Notes

<sup>^</sup> Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*. Zondervan, 1988. p. 68, 254-255

<sup>^</sup> "**St. Joseph**" *Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. VIII. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved October 11, 2009.]

<sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b c d e*</sup> Spong, John Shelby. *Jesus for the non-religious*. HarperCollins. 2007. **ISBN 0-06-076207-1**

<sup>^</sup> [1]

<sup>^</sup> **Google books** *Joseph, Mary, Jesus*, Lucien Deiss, Liturgical Press, 1996, **ISBN 0814622550**, 9780814622551

<sup>^</sup> The New Testament (John 19:26-27) implies that Mary was a widow because from the cross Jesus entrusted her to the care of **John the Apostle**, and Saint **Jerome** speaks of her as a widow in his treatise *On the Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary Against Helvidius* (§14 [2]).

<sup>^</sup> P. de Letter, "The Theology of Saint Joseph", *The Clergy Monthly*, March 1955, **Online at JSTOR**

<sup>^</sup> For the use of the term, see: *A Thomistic Josephology* by James J Davis 1967, University of Montreal, ASIN B0007K3PL4

<sup>^</sup> **Matthew 1:18-2:18**

<sup>^</sup> **Matthew 2:19-23**; **Luke 2:39**

<sup>^</sup> **Luke 2:41-51**

<sup>^</sup> **Funk, Robert W.** and the **Jesus Seminar**. *The acts of Jesus: the search for the authentic deeds of Jesus*. HarperSanFrancisco. 1998. "Matthew," p. 129-270

<sup>^</sup> **Mark 6:1-6**

<sup>^</sup> **Matthew 13:53-58**

<sup>^</sup> **Luke 4:16-30**

<sup>^</sup> Vermes, Geza "The authentic gospel of Jesus" (London, Penguin Books, 2004) Chapter 1: Narratives and commands, p. 1-37.

<sup>^</sup> **John 6:41-51**

<sup>^</sup> **Catholic encyclopedia on Saint Joseph**

^ **Gospels in harmony**

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^ Dickson, 47

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^ Laughlin, 192-194. See also Reed's Chapter 3, pp. 131-134.

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^ For example, Dickson, 47

^ Vermes, Geza. The authentic gospel of Jesus. London, Penguin Books. 2004. Epilogue. p. 398-417.

^ <sup>a b</sup> **Funk, Robert W.** and the **Jesus Seminar.** *The acts of Jesus: the search for the authentic deeds of Jesus.* HarperSanFrancisco. 1998. "Birth & Infancy Stories" p. 497-526.

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^ **John Nolland (2005), *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text*, Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, pp. 65–87, ISBN 9780802823892.**

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^ <sup>a b c</sup> **Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, Frederick W. Norris,** "Encyclopedia of early Christianity, Volume 1", article *Joseph*, p.629

^ **Luigi Gambero, "Mary and the fathers of the church: the Blessed Virgin Mary in patristic thought" pp.35-41**

^ **"The History of Joseph the Carpenter". *Comparative Religion*. Retrieved 2007-05-06.**

^ Holy Apostles Convent (1989). *The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos*. Buena Vista: Holy Apostles Convent and Dormition Skete. pp. 64. [ISBN 0-944359-03-5](#).

^ See, e.g., David Brown. "[Commentary on Matthew 13:56](#)". *Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Whole Bible*. Retrieved 2009-01-07. "An exceedingly difficult question here arises—What were these 'brethren' and 'sisters' to Jesus? Were they, *First*, His full brothers and sisters? or, *Secondly*, Were they His step-brothers and step-sisters, children of Joseph by a former marriage? or, *Thirdly*, Were they cousins, according to a common way of speaking among the Jews respecting persons of collateral descent? On this subject an immense deal has been written, nor are opinions yet by any means agreed. For the second opinion there is no ground but a vague tradition, arising probably from the wish for some such explanation. The first opinion undoubtedly suits the text best in all the places where the parties are certainly referred to (Mt 12:46; and its parallels, Mr 3:31; Lu 8:19; our present passage, and its parallels, Mr 6:3; Joh 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10; Ac 1:14). But, in addition to other objections, many of the best interpreters, thinking it in the last degree improbable that our Lord, when hanging on the cross, would have committed His mother to John if He had had full brothers of His own then alive, prefer the third opinion; although, on the other hand, it is not to be doubted that our Lord might have good reasons for entrusting the guardianship of His doubly widowed mother to the beloved disciple in preference even to full brothers of His own. Thus dubiously we prefer to leave this vexed question, encompassed as it is with difficulties."

^ <sup>a b</sup> *The liturgy and time* by Irénée Henri Dalmais, Aimé Georges Martimort, Pierre Jounel 1985 [ISBN 0814613667](#) page 143

^ *Holy people of the world: a cross-cultural encyclopedia, Volume 3* by Phyllis G. Jestice 2004 [ISBN 1576073556](#) page 446

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^ *Calendarium Romanum* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1969), p. 89

^ 19 March is observed as the Feast of Saint Joseph, Guardian of [Jesus](#), the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#), the [Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod](#), the [Wisconsin Synod](#), and the [Evangelical Lutheran Synod](#). Some Protestant traditions also celebrate this festival.

^ *Mention Your Request Here: The Church's Most Powerful Novenas* by Michael Dubruiel, 2000 [ISBN 0879733411](#) page 154

^ *Devotions to St. Joseph* by Susanna Magdalene Flavius, 2008 [ISBN 1435709489](#) pages 5-15

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^ *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales [ISBN 076610074X](#) Kessinger Press 1942 page 297

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^ *Saint Joseph: His Life and His Role in the Church Today* by Louise Bourassa Perrotta 2000 [ISBN 0879735732](#) page 130

^ cf. Mt 1:25a

^ cf. [Matthew 12:46-50](#), [Mark 3:31-35](#), [Luke 8:19-21](#); [Matthew 13:55](#), [Mark 6:3](#); cf. section above

^ Shapiro:6-7

^ [Finding St. Joseph](#) by Sandra Miesel gives a useful account of the changing views of Joseph in art and generally in Catholicism

^ "[St. Joseph: A Casual Analysis of His Traditional Garb](#)"

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**Saint Joseph** at Patron Saints Index

**Catholic Online Saints: St. Joseph\* Eastern Orthodox Tradition: The Righteous Elder Joseph The Betrothed, And His Repose**

**Holy Righteous Joseph the**

**Betrothed** Orthodox **icon** and **synaxarion** for the Sunday after Nativity  
**a Translation of Grimm's Legend No. 1 Saint Joseph in the Forest**

## Saint Joseph in the Forest

There once was a mother who had three daughters. The oldest was naughty and mean. The middle child was much better, although she, too, had her shortcomings. But the youngest was a pious and godly child. The mother was so peculiar that it was precisely the oldest daughter that she loved most and she could not suffer the youngest

one. That is why she often sent the poor girl into the big woods to be rid of her. She thought the girl would get lost and never more return. But like every good child, this girl had a guardian angel, who did not desert her. The angel always brought her back to the correct path. However, one day it seemed that her guardian angel was not guiding her by the hand for the child could not find its way out of the forest. The girl ran and ran until evening fell. Then she saw a light burning in the distance, ran toward it and came to a small hut. The child knocked and the door opened. Behind it, she found a second door, where she knocked again. An old man with a snow-white beard and venerable appearance opened the door. It was none other than the Blessed Saint Joseph. He spoke kindly to her “Come dear child, sit next to the fire on my little footstool and warm yourself. I’ll bring you a little clear water if you are thirsty. I don’t have anything for you to eat here in the woods except a few roots. You must first peel and cook them.”

Saint Joseph gave her the roots: the girl scraped them clean, then she took a piece of the pancake and bread her mother had given her and put everything in a little pot on the fire and cooked porridge. When it was finished Saint Joseph said “I am so hungry, give me a bit of your food.” The child was obliging and gave him more than she kept for herself. But God’s blessing was there and so the child’s hunger was satisfied. After they had eaten, Saint Joseph said “Let us go to bed: but I have only one bed. You lay down in it; I will lie on the straw on the ground.”

“No,” answered the child, “you stay in your bed; the straw is soft enough for me.”

Saint Joseph took the child in his arm and carried it to bed. The girl said her prayer and went to sleep. The next morning when she woke up, she wanted to say good morning to Saint Joseph but did not see him. She got out of bed and looked but could not find him in any corner. Finally she saw a sack with money behind the door. The sack was so heavy that the child could not carry it. On it was written that this was for the child who had slept there that night. The child took the sack and jumped away and returned happily to its mother. Because she gave her mother all the money, the woman had to be satisfied with the child.

The next day the second daughter also had an urge to go into the woods. The mother gave her a much larger piece of pancake and

bread. The same thing happened to her. In the evening she came to the little hut of Saint Joseph, who gave the girl roots to make porridge. When the girl was finished the Saint said “I am so hungry; give me some of your food.” The child replied “Both of us can eat from the porridge.”

When afterward Saint Joseph offered his bed and wanted to lie down on the straw, the child replied “No, lay down on the bed, we both have enough room there.” Saint Joseph took the girl in his arm, laid her in bed and slept on the straw. In the morning the child awoke and looked for Saint Joseph. He was gone but behind the door the girl found a small sack with money. But the sack was only as large as the girl’s little hand. On it was written “For the child who slept here this night.” The child took the sack and ran home and gave it to its mother. But secretly the girl kept a few coins for herself.

Now the oldest daughter became curious and wanted to go into the woods the next morning. The mother gave her a pancake and as much bread and cheese as her heart desired. In the evening the girl found Saint Joseph in his little hut, just like the other two had found him. When the porridge was finished and Saint Joseph spoke “I am so hungry, give me some of your food!” the girl replied “Wait until I have eaten my fill.” Whatever I have left you can have.” But the girl ate almost everything and Saint Joseph had to scrape the bottom of the little bowl. The good man offered the girl his bed and wanted to lie on the straw. The child accepted this without hesitation, lay down in the little bed and left the hard straw for the old man. The next morning when the girl awoke, Saint Joseph could not be found. But the maid did not worry: she looked behind the door for the sack of money. She thought something was lying on the ground, but because she couldn’t really tell what it was, she bent over and hit her nose on the floor. Something stuck to her nose when she got up. To the girl’s horror it was a second nose sticking to her own. The girl began to scream and howl, but it didn’t help. She had to look at her nose and see how it protruded so very far from her face. She ran away screaming until she found Saint Joseph. She fell down at his feet and prostrated herself. Finally, in his mercy, he took away the nose and what’s more, gave her two Pfennigs. When the girl returned her mother stood in front of the door and asked “What presents have you received?”

The girl lied and said “A big sack full of money, but I lost it on the way home!”

“Lost it!” the mother cried. “We sure want to find it again.” And she took the girl by the hand and wanted to go out searching. First the girl started to cry and did not want to go. But finally she went along. On the way, the two were overcome by so many snakes and lizards, that they could not save themselves. They stung the child until she was dead, but the mother they stung in her foot because she had not raised the girl better.

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Shoutout to All the Abbas

Excerpt from [Luke1:5-25](#)

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord."

Reflection by Quinn G. Caldwell

Much is made of motherhood during Advent, as well it should be. But too often, Joseph recedes into the background, and Zechariah, who like Mary receives the annunciation of his special kid's birth, hardly gets mentioned at all. So I always try to remind myself to think about the dads in this story. Those of us with good fathers, even flawed good fathers, know how important good fathering is. Those of us without good fathers know the same thing, but have learned it in a much harder way.

I sometimes hear from people that they cannot refer to God as Father; they've experienced things with their human fathers that will not let them believe that a good God could be anything like them. So don't you think Joseph must have been a great dad? I mean, Jesus referred to God as Father more frequently than almost anything else, even going so far as to call God Abba, or "Daddy," on the cross. Don't you think Joseph must have been really extraordinary for that metaphor to work for Jesus? Don't you think Zechariah must have been something special to raise a kid like John? Don't you think the world needs as many good fathers in it as it can get?

Don't you think you ought to get in touch with a good Abba you know today and thank him for it?

Prayer

God, for every good dad you have sent into the world to shape and nurture it, we praise your name. Amen.



**About the Author**

**Quinn G. Caldwell is Associate Minister of Old South Church in Boston, Massachusetts.**

## **Surah 12. Yusuf (Joseph)**

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. A.L.R. These are the symbols (or Verses) of the perspicuous Book.
2. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an, in order that ye may learn wisdom.
3. We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of the) Qur'an: before this, thou too was among those who knew it not.
4. Behold! Joseph said to his father: "O my father! I did see eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrate themselves to me!"
5. Said (the father): "My (dear) little son! relate not thy vision to thy brothers, lest they concoct a plot against thee: for Satan is to man an avowed enemy!"
6. "Thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of stories (and events) and perfect His favour to thee and to the posterity of Jacob - even as He perfected it to thy fathers Abraham and Isaac aforetime! for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom."
7. Verily in Joseph and his brethren are signs (or symbols) for seekers (after Truth).
8. They said: "Truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we: But we are a goodly body! really our father is obviously wandering (in his mind)!"
9. "Slay ye Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, that so the favour of your father may be given to you alone: (there will be time enough) for you to be righteous after that!"
10. Said one of them: "Slay not Joseph, but if ye must do something, throw him down to the bottom of the well: he will be picked up by some caravan of travellers."

11. They said: "O our father! why dost thou not trust us with Joseph,- seeing we are indeed his sincere well-wishers?"
12. "Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and we shall take every care of him."
13. (Jacob) said: "Really it saddens me that ye should take him away: I fear lest the wolf should devour him while ye attend not to him."
14. They said: "If the wolf were to devour him while we are (so large) a party, then should we indeed (first) have perished ourselves!"
15. So they did take him away, and they all agreed to throw him down to the bottom of the well: and We put into his heart (this Message): 'Of a surety thou shalt (one day) tell them the truth of this their affair while they know (thee) not'
16. Then they came to their father in the early part of the night, weeping.
17. They said: "O our father! We went racing with one another, and left Joseph with our things; and the wolf devoured him.... But thou wilt never believe us even though we tell the truth."
18. They stained his shirt with false blood. He said: "Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you, (for me) patience is most fitting: Against that which ye assert, it is Allah (alone) Whose help can be sought"..
19. Then there came a caravan of travellers: they sent their water-carrier (for water), and he let down his bucket (into the well)...He said: "Ah there! Good news! Here is a (fine) young man!" So they concealed him as a treasure! But Allah knoweth well all that they do!
20. The (Brethren) sold him for a miserable price, for a few dirhams counted out: in such low estimation did they hold him!
21. The man in Egypt who bought him, said to his wife: "Make his stay (among us) honourable: may be he will bring us much good, or we shall adopt him as a son." Thus did We establish Joseph in the land, that We might teach him the interpretation of stories (and events). And Allah hath full power and control over His affairs; but most among mankind know it not.
22. When Joseph attained His full manhood, We gave him power and knowledge: thus do We reward those who do right.
23. But she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his (true) self: she fastened the doors, and said: "Now come, thou (dear one)!" He said: "(Allah) forbid! truly (thy husband) is my lord! he made my sojourn agreeable! truly to no good come those who do wrong!"
24. And (with passion) did she desire him, and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his Lord: thus (did We order) that We might turn away from him (all) evil and shameful deeds: for he was one of Our servants, sincere and purified.
25. So they both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from

the back: they both found her lord near the door. She said: "What is the (fitting) punishment for one who formed an evil design against thy wife, but prison or a grievous chastisement?"

26. He said: "It was she that sought to seduce me - from my (true) self."

And one of her household saw (this) and bore witness, (thus):- "If it be that his shirt is rent from the front, then is her tale true, and he is a liar!

27. "But if it be that his shirt is torn from the back, then is she the liar, and he is telling the truth!"

28. So when he saw his shirt,- that it was torn at the back,- (her husband) said: "Behold! It is a snare of you women! truly, mighty is your snare!

29. "O Joseph, pass this over! (O wife), ask forgiveness for thy sin, for truly thou hast been at fault!"

30. Ladies said in the City: "The wife of the (great) 'Aziz is seeking to seduce her slave from his (true) self: Truly hath he inspired her with violent love: we see she is evidently going astray."

31. When she heard of their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a banquet for them: she gave each of them a knife: and she said (to Joseph), "Come out before them." When they saw him, they did extol him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands: they said, "(Allah) preserve us! no mortal is this! this is none other than a noble angel!"

32. She said: "There before you is the man about whom ye did blame me! I did seek to seduce him from his (true) self but he did firmly save himself guiltless!....and now, if he doth not my bidding, he shall certainly be cast into prison, and (what is more) be of the company of the vilest!"

33. He said: "O my Lord! the prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me: Unless Thou turn away their snare from me, I should (in my youthful folly) feel inclined towards them and join the ranks of the ignorant."

34. So his Lord hearkened to him (in his prayer), and turned away from him their snare: Verily He heareth and knoweth (all things).

35. Then it occurred to the men, after they had seen the signs, (that it was best) to imprison him for a time.

36. Now with him there came into the prison two young men. Said one of them: "I see myself (in a dream) pressing wine." said the other: "I see myself (in a dream) carrying bread on my head, and birds are eating, thereof." "Tell us" (they said) "The truth and meaning thereof: for we see thou art one that doth good (to all)."

37. He said: "Before any food comes (in due course) to feed either of you, I will surely reveal to you the truth and meaning of this ere it befall you: that is part of the (duty) which my Lord hath taught me. I have (I assure you) abandoned the ways of a people that believe not in Allah and that (even) deny the Hereafter.

38. "And I follow the ways of my fathers,- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and

never could we attribute any partners whatever to Allah. that (comes) of the grace of Allah to us and to mankind: yet most men are not grateful.

39. "O my two companions of the prison! (I ask you): are many lords differing among themselves better, or the One Allah, Supreme and Irresistible?"

40. "If not Him, ye worship nothing but names which ye have named,- ye and your fathers,- for which Allah hath sent down no authority: the command is for none but Allah. He hath commanded that ye worship none but Him: that is the right religion, but most men understand not..."

41. "O my two companions of the prison! As to one of you, he will pour out the wine for his lord to drink: as for the other, he will hang from the cross, and the birds will eat from off his head. (so) hath been decreed that matter whereof ye twain do enquire"...

42. And of the two, to that one whom he consider about to be saved, he said: "Mention me to thy lord." But Satan made him forget to mention him to his lord: and (Joseph) lingered in prison a few (more) years.

43. The king (of Egypt) said: "I do see (in a vision) seven fat kine, whom seven lean ones devour, and seven green ears of corn, and seven (others) withered. O ye chiefs! Expound to me my vision if it be that ye can interpret visions."

44. They said: "A confused medley of dreams: and we are not skilled in the interpretation of dreams."

45. But the man who had been released, one of the two (who had been in prison) and who now bethought him after (so long) a space of time, said: "I will tell you the truth of its interpretation: send ye me (therefore)."

46. "O Joseph!" (he said) "O man of truth! Expound to us (the dream) of seven fat kine whom seven lean ones devour, and of seven green ears of corn and (seven) others withered: that I may return to the people, and that they may understand."

47. (Joseph) said: "For seven years shall ye diligently sow as is your wont: and the harvests that ye reap, ye shall leave them in the ear,- except a little, of which ye shall eat."

48. "Then will come after that (period) seven dreadful (years), which will devour what ye shall have laid by in advance for them,- (all) except a little which ye shall have (specially) guarded."

49. "Then will come after that (period) a year in which the people will have abundant water, and in which they will press (wine and oil)."

50. So the king said: "Bring ye him unto me." But when the messenger came to him, (Joseph) said: "Go thou back to thy lord, and ask him, 'What is the state of mind of the ladies who cut their hands'? For my Lord is certainly well aware of their snare."

51. (The king) said (to the ladies): "What was your affair when ye did seek to seduce Joseph from his (true) self?" The ladies said: "(Allah) preserve us!"

no evil know we against him!" Said the 'Aziz's wife: "Now is the truth manifest (to all): it was I who sought to seduce him from his (true) self: He is indeed of those who are (ever) true (and virtuous).

52. "This (say I), in order that He may know that I have never been false to him in his absence, and that Allah will never guide the snare of the false ones.

53. "Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

54. So the king said: "Bring him unto me; I will take him specially to serve about my own person." Therefore when he had spoken to him, he said: "Be assured this day, thou art, before our own presence, with rank firmly established, and fidelity fully proved!

55. (Joseph) said: "Set me over the store-houses of the land: I will indeed guard them, as one that knows (their importance)."

56. Thus did We give established power to Joseph in the land, to take possession therein as, when, or where he pleased. We bestow of our Mercy on whom We please, and We suffer not, to be lost, the reward of those who do good.

57. But verily the reward of the Hereafter is the best, for those who believe, and are constant in righteousness.

58. Then came Joseph's brethren: they entered his presence, and he knew them, but they knew him not.

59. And when he had furnished them forth with provisions (suitable) for them, he said: "Bring unto me a brother ye have, of the same father as yourselves, (but a different mother): see ye not that I pay out full measure, and that I do provide the best hospitality?"

60. "Now if ye bring him not to me, ye shall have no measure (of corn) from me, nor shall ye (even) come near me."

61. They said: "We shall certainly seek to get our wish about him from his father: Indeed we shall do it."

62. And (Joseph) told his servants to put their stock-in-trade (with which they had bartered) into their saddle-bags, so they should know it only when they returned to their people, in order that they might come back.

63. Now when they returned to their father, they said: "O our father! No more measure of grain shall we get (unless we take our brother): So send our brother with us, that we may get our measure; and we will indeed take every care of him."

64. He said: "Shall I trust you with him with any result other than when I trusted you with his brother aforetime? But Allah is the best to take care (of him), and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!"

65. Then when they opened their baggage, they found their stock-in-trade had been returned to them. They said: "O our father! What (more) can we

desire? this our stock-in-trade has been returned to us: so we shall get (more) food for our family; We shall take care of our brother; and add (at the same time) a full camel's load (of grain to our provisions). This is but a small quantity.

66. (Jacob) said: "Never will I send him with you until ye swear a solemn oath to me, in Allah's name, that ye will be sure to bring him back to me unless ye are yourselves hemmed in (and made powerless). And when they had sworn their solemn oath, he said: "Over all that we say, be Allah the witness and guardian!"

67. Further he said: "O my sons! enter not all by one gate: enter ye by different gates. Not that I can profit you aught against Allah (with my advice): None can command except Allah. On Him do I put my trust: and let all that trust put their trust on Him."

68. And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined, it did not profit them in the least against (the plan of) Allah. It was but a necessity of Jacob's soul, which he discharged. For he was, by our instruction, full of knowledge (and experience): but most men know not.

69. Now when they came into Joseph's presence, he received his (full) brother to stay with him. He said (to him): "Behold! I am thy (own) brother; so grieve not at aught of their doings."

70. At length when he had furnished them forth with provisions (suitable) for them, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then shouted out a crier: "O ye (in) the caravan! behold! ye are thieves, without doubt!"

71. They said, turning towards them: "What is it that ye miss?"

72. They said: "We miss the great beaker of the king; for him who produces it, is (the reward of) a camel load; I will be bound by it."

73. (The brothers) said: "By Allah. well ye know that we came not to make mischief in the land, and we are no thieves!"

74. (The Egyptians) said: "What then shall be the penalty of this, if ye are (proved) to have lied?"

75. They said: "The penalty should be that he in whose saddle-bag it is found, should be held (as bondman) to atone for the (crime). Thus it is we punish the wrong- doers!"

76. So he began (the search) with their baggage, before (he came to) the baggage of his brother: at length he brought it out of his brother's baggage. Thus did We plan for Joseph. He could not take his brother by the law of the king except that Allah willed it (so). We raise to degrees (of wisdom) whom We please: but over all endued with knowledge is one, the All-Knowing.

77. They said: "If he steals, there was a brother of his who did steal before (him)." But these things did Joseph keep locked in his heart, revealing not the secrets to them. He (simply) said (to himself): "Ye are the worse

situated; and Allah knoweth best the truth of what ye assert!"

78. They said: "O exalted one! Behold! he has a father, aged and venerable, (who will grieve for him); so take one of us in his place; for we see that thou art (gracious) in doing good."

79. He said: "(Allah) forbid that we take other than him with whom we found our property: indeed (if we did so), we should be acting wrongfully.

80. Now when they saw no hope of his (yielding), they held a conference in private. The leader among them said: "Know ye not that your father did take an oath from you in Allah's name, and how, before this, ye did fail in your duty with Joseph? Therefore will I not leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah commands me; and He is the best to command.

81. "Turn ye back to your father, and say, 'O our father! behold! thy son committed theft! we bear witness only to what we know, and we could not well guard against the unseen!

82. "'Ask at the town where we have been and the caravan in which we returned, and (you will find) we are indeed telling the truth.'"

83. Jacob said: "Nay, but ye have yourselves contrived a story (good enough) for you. So patience is most fitting (for me). Maybe Allah will bring them (back) all to me (in the end). For He is indeed full of knowledge and wisdom."

84. And he turned away from them, and said: "How great is my grief for Joseph!" And his eyes became white with sorrow, and he fell into silent melancholy.

85. They said: "By Allah. (never) wilt thou cease to remember Joseph until thou reach the last extremity of illness, or until thou die!"

86. He said: "I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah, and I know from Allah that which ye know not..."

87. "O my sons! go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith."

88. Then, when they came (back) into (Joseph's) presence they said: "O exalted one! distress has seized us and our family: we have (now) brought but scanty capital: so pay us full measure, (we pray thee), and treat it as charity to us: for Allah doth reward the charitable."

89. He said: "Know ye how ye dealt with Joseph and his brother, not knowing (what ye were doing)?"

90. They said: "Art thou indeed Joseph?" He said, "I am Joseph, and this is my brother: Allah has indeed been gracious to us (all): behold, he that is righteous and patient,- never will Allah suffer the reward to be lost, of those who do right."

91. They said: "By Allah. indeed has Allah preferred thee above us, and we certainly have been guilty of sin!"

92. He said: "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: Allah will forgive

you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!

93. "Go with this my shirt, and cast it over the face of my father: he will come to see (clearly). Then come ye (here) to me together with all your family."

94. When the caravan left (Egypt), their father said: "I do indeed scent the presence of Joseph: Nay, think me not a dotard."

95. They said: "By Allah. truly thou art in thine old wandering mind."

96. Then when the bearer of the good news came, He cast (the shirt) over his face, and he forthwith regained clear sight. He said: "Did I not say to you, 'I know from Allah that which ye know not?'"

97. They said: "O our father! ask for us forgiveness for our sins, for we were truly at fault."

98. He said: "Soon will I ask my Lord for forgiveness for you: for he is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

99. Then when they entered the presence of Joseph, he provided a home for his parents with himself, and said: "Enter ye Egypt (all) in safety if it please Allah."

100. And he raised his parents high on the throne (of dignity), and they fell down in prostration, (all) before him. He said: "O my father! this is the fulfilment of my vision of old! Allah hath made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord understandeth best the mysteries of all that He planneth to do, for verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom.

101. "O my Lord! Thou hast indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events,- O Thou Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take Thou my soul (at death) as one submitting to Thy will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous."

102. Such is one of the stories of what happened unseen, which We reveal by inspiration unto thee; nor wast thou (present) with them then when they concerted their plans together in the process of weaving their plots.

103. Yet no faith will the greater part of mankind have, however ardently thou dost desire it.

104. And no reward dost thou ask of them for this: it is no less than a message for all creatures.

105. And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them!

106. And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (other as partners) with Him!

107. Do they then feel secure from the coming against them of the covering veil of the wrath of Allah,- or of the coming against them of the (final) Hour all of a sudden while they perceive not?

108. Say thou: "This is my way: I do invite unto Allah,- on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes,- I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah. and never will I join gods with Allah."

109. Nor did We send before thee (as apostles) any but men, whom we did inspire,- (men) living in human habitations. Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those before them? But the home of the hereafter is best, for those who do right. Will ye not then understand?

110. (Respite will be granted) until, when the apostles give up hope (of their people) and (come to) think that they were treated as liars, there reaches them Our help, and those whom We will are delivered into safety. But never will be warded off our punishment from those who are in sin.

111. There is, in their stories, instruction for men endued with understanding. It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it,- a detailed exposition of all things, and a guide and a mercy to any such as believe.

### The Phrasing Must Change

Learn about your inner self from those who know such things, but don't repeat verbatim what they say.

Zuleika let everything be the name of Joseph, from celery seed to aloes-wood. She loved him so much, she concealed his name in many different phrases, the inner meanings known only to her. When she said, The wax is softening near the fire, she meant, My love is wanting me.

Or if she said, Look, the moon is up, or The willow has new leaves, or The branches are trembling, or The coriander seeds have caught fire, or The roses are opening, or The king is in a good mood today, or Isn't that lucky, or The furniture needs dusting, or

The water-carrier is here, or It's almost daylight, or These vegetables are perfect, or The bread needs more salt, or The clouds seem to be moving against the wind, or My head hurts, or My headache's better, anything she praises, it's Joseph's touch she means, any complaint, it's his being away.

When she's hungry, it's for him. Thirsty, his name is a sherbet. Cold, he's a fur. This is what the Friend can do when one is in such love. Sensual people use the holy names often, but they don't work for them.

The miracle Jesus did by being the name of God, Zuleika felt in the name of Joseph.

When one is united to the core of another, to speak of that  
is to breathe the name Hu, empty of self and filled  
with love. As the saying goes, The pot drips what is in it.  
The saffron spice of connecting, laughter.  
The onion-smell of separation, crying.  
Others have many things and people they love.  
This is not the way of Friend and friend.