

Reflection for Saturday 1 May

Today is a feast of St Joseph. This year has been dedicated to St Joseph by Pope Francis.

We first read about St Joseph in St Matthew's Gospel when he heard that his wife Mary was with child after they were betrothed, and Joseph decided to divorce Mary quietly to avoid bringing any shame on her. This was because he was a just man. But then an angel appeared to him telling him that he should take Mary as his wife because it was the Holy Spirit who put the child in Mary's womb. Joseph was commanded by the angel to call the child Jesus. He was obedient to the angel's message and called the child Jesus.

Then after the wise men had left after visiting the child Jesus and Mary and Joseph an angel again appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take Jesus and his mother into exile in Egypt because Herod wanted to kill Jesus. When Herod was dead the Holy Family then went to Nazareth in the district of Galilee.

Joseph was not only a just man but he was a godly one who was in touch with God and obedient to God's will. This is shown by Joseph's response to God through the angel appearing to him in the various dreams. Joseph also knew his part in the bringing up of Jesus. He did the right thing for both Jesus and his wife Mary.

The name Joseph in Hebrew means "the Burning One" from the Hebrew verb "yasaph" meaning to burn. So Joseph was the burning one for God, burning for the love, obedience and faithfulness to him.

We are privileged to have St Joseph as our patron. Let us pray that that God will set us on fire with his love and our willingness to listen to him and to carry out his will in our lives.

St Joseph pray for us.

Roger Watson