

The Patrons of the Legion

1. St. Joseph

(From the Legion of Mary *Handbook*, pages 136-137)

In the Legion's prayers, St. Joseph's name follows the invocations to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as he ranks next to them in the Court of Heaven. He was head of the Holy Family, fulfilling in regard to Jesus and Mary a primary and altogether special part. The same – no more, no less – this greatest of saints continues to render to the Mystical Body of Jesus and its Mother. The existence and activity of the Church, and therefore of the Legion, are sustained by Him. His care is un failing, vital, possessed of parental intimacy; is second only in influence to the mothering of Mary, and is to be so appreciated by the Legion. If his love is to be potent in us, we must open ourselves fully to it by a behaviour which reflects the intense devotion which he lavishes on us. Jesus and Mary were ever mindful of him and grateful to him for all he did for them. Similarly legionaries must be attentive to him in a constant sort of way.

The Solemnity of St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary occurs on 19 March.

The memorial of St. Joseph the Worker, occurs on 1 May.

“We cannot dissociate the historical life of Jesus from his mystical life continuing in the Church. It is not without reason that the Popes have proclaimed Saint Joseph protector of the Church. His task has remained ever the same amid changing times and ways. As protector of the Church of Christ, he does no less than carry on his earthly mission. Since the days of Nazareth, God's family has grown and spread to the ends of the earth. Joseph's heart has expanded to the dimension of his new fatherhood, which prolongs and surpasses the paternity promised by God to Abraham, the father of a myriad. God does not vary in his dealings with us; there are no second thoughts, no arbitrary changes to His plan. All is one, ordered, consistent and continuous. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, is likewise foster-father to the brethren of Jesus, that is, to all Christians through the ages. Joseph, the spouse of Mary who brought forth Jesus, remains mysteriously united to her while the mystical birth of the Church proceeds in the world. Hence, the legionary of Mary who is working to extend here below the Kingdom of God, that is the Church, rightly claims the special protection of him who was the head of the newborn Church, the Holy Family.” (Cardinal L. J. Suenens)