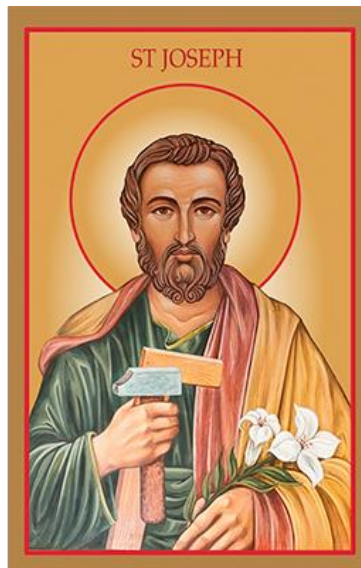




Basilian Fathers

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Saint Joseph
March 19, 2022
John Huber, CSB



As an official patron saint of the Basilian Fathers, Saint Joseph, in so many ways, witnesses to Basilians an example for us to follow, and indeed, hundreds of confreres who have gone before us did indeed follow his example of holiness, of hard work, of consistent faith and fidelity, of humility, and of love for Jesus and the Blessed Mother.

Although we were always a small congregation compared to the major religious communities of our time, the Basilian Fathers have indeed offered a dedication to scholarly work, research, enlightened contemplation of theology and divine truth, and academic excellence. At the same time, we recognize that not all dedicated and hard working Basilians were great scholars who

wrote books and journal articles and who taught at the highest levels of academia. In my own lifetime, one of my best friends and fellow Basilians, Mario D'Souza was always on a completely different level than me academically. I remain in awe at his writings and contributions to Catholic education that are truly in line with Basilians of previous generations. Yet Mario neither boasted of his accomplishments nor did he ever think himself superior to other Basilians who did not share his talents for higher academia. He was often teased by his peers because of his intellect, yet at the same time he enjoyed quality time spent with his brothers who were not as gifted academically. Many of our confreres over time were not great scholars, yet in the spirit of our patron Saint Joseph, were dedicated hard workers, teachers with an intuitive sense of the needs of their students, faithful and inspirational parish priests, talented and loving missionaries.

In a sense, each Basilian shared the humility, faith and gentleness of Saint Joseph in his own way. We have no account of words spoken by Joseph, yet his paternal qualities have inspired and continue to inspire Basilian ministry. Joseph was not Jesus' biological father, but his love and fidelity were much stronger than any relationship based on blood. God's children to whom we minister, whether they be the adolescent in the secondary school classroom, the family in our Latino missions, the parishioners in a Basilian parish, students encountered at the university level both pastorally and academically, and so many others, are recipients of the paternal instincts, love and care of dedicated Basilians. We have forgone establishing families of our own to care for the needs of God's children whenever and wherever we are sent. What an inspiration St. Joseph is to us as we care for our "adopted children."

Most images of Saint Joseph include a carpenter's square and a lily. The former represents Joseph's hard work and dedication to his trade, while the latter represents his purity and fidelity as a chaste husband to the Blessed Mother and loving father to Jesus. As Basilians, we too are both hard workers, dedicated to a life of chastity and faithful to another of our patrons, the Blessed Mother. Joseph is the patron of the Universal Church, of Canada, and of fathers.

The few lines of scripture concerning Saint Joseph come to us in the infancy narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. We know he was of the House of David, and the tribe of Judah, born in the city of David, Bethlehem. These Gospels likewise present with us his genealogy. Yet perhaps the lack of words attributed to Joseph in scripture highlight his humble fidelity, simplicity and paternal care. We do know that after having been inspired by an angel in a dream, he took Mary as his wife despite his knowledge that Jesus was not his biological son, faithfully caring for his family and teaching Jesus his trade. Humility, fidelity, and obedience to the will of God... these attributes surely inspire the Basilian charisms across all our apostolates and ministerial endeavors.

Some Basilians were instructed by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. I would like to close with a prayer that the good sisters taught me in grade school. "Oh Saint Joseph, you whose power extends over all our needs, who knows how to make possible for us the most impossible of things, open thy fatherly eyes to thy children's interests." Saint Joseph, continue to inspire us.

Annonay: Maison Saint-Joseph

