



ST. JOSEPH: TERROR OF DEMONS

By Bud McFarlane, Jr.

I promised some time ago to write about Saint Joseph, Terror of Demons. I was prompted to ponder this title while visiting the Oratory of Saint Joseph in Montreal, Quebec. There is a fresco (a carved stone tablet) there portraying Joseph holding his hand up, a family behind him, keeping a cowering, ugly, simpering, petrified group of demons, at bay. "Why is Joseph so calm? Why are the demons terrified?" I prayed.

Our first clue is Mary. In Genesis 3:15, Yahweh promises to put enmity (total separation) between mother of the promised messiah and the serpent. This separation is complete because of Mary's Immaculate Conception--she is not subject to Original Sin in any way. Joseph is her husband, her beloved groom, and their marital union and his virtue places him apart from demonic influence. It is part of Sacred Tradition that Joseph led a sinless life.

But evil shrinks from Joseph for a related reason. He is pure. Joseph is pure of body. Pure of heart. Pure of intention. Pure and sinless because he battled Original Sin. This is just me pondering (as usual) but I'm coming to believe that demons cannot "see" a man who is pure. All demons know is force, lies, degradation, and filth. That is their world, and they want to make our lives just as ugly. Their sin blinds them, just as sin blinds us mortals.

We are afraid not of the dark, actually, but rather the dangers which the darkness does not allow us to see. The demons can't "see" Joseph because he is pure. Purity makes him invisible, just as pure water is perfectly clear. Evil spirits don't know when, how, or from which direction Joseph is going to hammer them. Joseph's job, when Christ was a child and up to this very day, is to protect the Holy Family, and through our baptisms, we are part of his family. So Joseph protects us. He will calmly raise his hand and keep the demons away, if you but ask him.

So let's pray together...

"Dear Saint Joseph, just as you brought Jesus and Mary to safety in Egypt, please bring the soul of Bob Hope to heaven. Just as you taught Mary's son, Jesus, please teach her son Jim Caveizel (portraying Jesus in Mel Gibson's 'The Passion'), during his trials in Hollywood. Just as you provided for your family, please provide for the impoverished Ukrainian Catholics in Father Gregory's flock in London. Just as you protected Mary and Jesus from evil through our courageous purity, ask the Holy Trinity to give us the grace needed to make contrite Confessions for our impure actions--and then embrace meaningful penances. Hold up your hand, Brave Joseph! Serenely stand athwart our demons, literal or figurative, as we grow to adulthood in the Catholic Faith. Ask your beloved bride, Mary, to hold our souls in her motherly embrace. Amen."

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