

## Feast of Saint Joseph Heroic “Exemplar for Trying Times”

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Ah, St. Joseph’s Feast Day. There are two Gospel Readings to pick from for this feast day. The first one from Matthew recalls Joseph almost divorcing Mary when he heard that she was pregnant. It took an angel to convince Joseph of the divine plan at work. The second option recalls Joseph and Mary losing track of Jesus in a caravan only to discover that he was back at the Temple in Jerusalem...in his “Father’s house”. Both are worthy moments to consider, but I wonder if the Gospel reading that could have been an option today is Joseph taking Mary and Jesus to Egypt when their lives were in danger because of Herod. I saw that this moment was remembered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> antiphon in today’s Morning Prayer.

I think all of these moments from the Gospels are good reminders that the Holy Family didn’t have it easy. They lived in dangerous times without access to the health care or comforts we have today. I think it is medicinal to bear this in mind as we travel through these unprecedented times. Whenever we are tempted to ask God, “why this” or “why that” it is probably a good idea to reflect on what the Holy Family went through during their times and gain some perspective.

I like that Pope Francis, either yesterday or before, asked families to not waste their time of quarantine together but rather use it as a time to grow closer as a family. Good advice. I read another article from some expert who said that we should expect the divorce rate to jump when all this is over, basically arguing that cabin fever is going to doom a number of relationships. I sincerely hope and pray this is not the case. You know what I am really hoping for? I am hoping for a boom in baptisms next winter! Why not? Babies are God’s argument that the world should go on. At any rate, no matter what hardship we encounter today or in the weeks ahead, it is good to remember that God never promised any one of us a rose garden in this life. We all have crosses to carry and we tend to be reminded of them every day. However, Saint Joseph gives us an example of a heroic man who teaches us what fidelity looks like in the face of adversity. Through his intercession, may we all look back at these times as when our families and friendships got stronger and healthier, thanks to the little choices we make each and every day. God bless you and peace be with you this day.