

## Good Steward Newsletter – December 2010 – Merry Christmas!

December 22, 2010 by [O'Meara Ferguson](#)

*(Reprinted from December 2004)*



### The Silent Steward

Joseph of Nazareth is the silent steward of the Gospels. Although he is clearly an important figure in the story of our faith, he never speaks. He simply does: “When Joseph woke from sleep, *he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.*” (Mt. 1:24; 2:14-15)

His role in salvation history was simple, but not easy. He was to take Mary as his wife, in spite of the mysterious circumstances of her pregnancy, and to share her life in the most profound and intimate ways while respecting her virginity. He was responsible for ensuring that the child Jesus was protected from all harm, that he was fed, clothed and educated in the Jewish faith, and that he learned to balance prayer and work and leisure in a truly human way. He was called to endure the hardships of homelessness, persecution and exile. And he was challenged to accept God’s will when he couldn’t possibly understand why.

Pope John Paul II calls him “the guardian of the redeemer” (*redemptoris custos*) because his unique vocation was to safeguard our savior and, therefore, to share in “the mystery hidden for ages in God” in the most unique and privileged way. “Together with Mary,” the pope says, “Joseph is the first guardian of this divine mystery.” Joseph is the first to share in Mary’s faith. He is the first to journey with her on the spiritual pilgrimage that all Christians are called to undertake. He is Mary’s partner and companion. He is Jesus’ guardian and mentor. He is a steward of the Holy Family and of “hidden mysteries” that will only be revealed after his time on earth has passed – beginning with his son’s public ministry and then fulfilled once and for all through his passion, death and resurrection.

During the Advent and Christmas seasons, we are right to remember the silent stewardship of St. Joseph. He celebrated the mysteries of our faith in very practical ways. He did what God asked him to do – quietly, deliberately, not without questions or doubt but always with a ready acceptance and a firm commitment – to love his wife, to care for his child, and to do his duty (to God and to Caesar).

St. Joseph is a perfect patron for the Church in our day – not only because we need protection from the dangers that threaten us, but because we need more than ever Joseph’s profound readiness to hear the Word of God (revealed in mysterious, often troubling, ways) and to act on it decisively and with the constancy of faith. Sometimes that means less talk and more action. Always it means less self-centeredness and more openness to God and others.

As Pope John Paul II reminds us, “Besides trusting in Joseph’s sure protection, the Church also trusts in his noble example, which transcends all individual states of life and serves as a model for the entire Christian community, whatever the condition and duties of each of its members may be.” Parents can turn to Joseph as a mentor, but so can single people. He is a perfect model

for lay Catholics living and working in the everyday world, but he is also a “noble example” for pastors and religious who seek to do God’s will as Joseph did.

After we have celebrated the great mysteries of Advent and Christmas, after all the carols have been sung and the family gatherings are over for another year, and after all the gifts have been opened (and some have been returned), we once again find ourselves at the start of another calendar year. Then it’s time to get back to normal and to return to work. Then we need St. Joseph more than ever.