

THREE NOVENAS

Mt. Carmel
Our Lady of Fatima
St. Joseph

DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

MOUNT CARMEL NOVENA

FIRST DAY:

There is something splendid about a uniform.

We honour the soldier who returns with ribbons on his chest and wound stripes on his sleeve, and we salute his uniform.

Romance has attached itself to the uniform of a sailor or a marine.

The plain white uniform of the nurse has become a gleaming symbol of mercy and tender service.

The uniform donned by the doctor in the operating room is ugly—and wonderful.

The priest is proud of his cassock, Christ's uniform; the nun regards her habit as her cloister, her dwelling place of peace.

The scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a uniform, the splendid uniform of those who enlist under Christ and Mary to battle evil and defend the right.

Wear that scapular, love it, honour it. Be proud of this, your uniform and sign of grace.

In this pride we say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

O God, who has honoured the Order of Carmel with the special title of thy Blessed Mother Mary, ever Virgin, grant in thy mercy that we who keep her memory this day may be shielded by her protection and be found worthy to attain unto joy eternal. Who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

SECOND DAY:

Almost from the dawn of history uniforms have suggested war.

Soldiers wore them when they went out to do battle.

Now with the coming of Christ a new kind of war was emphasized: the war of truth against lies, of right against wrong.

Naturally enough in this new war, in which there were armies on the side of Christ, the men and women pledged to fight the good fight and thrust Satan back into hell came to wear uniforms. These were the religious habits of early Christian times, the special garb worn by priests and brothers and nuns.

The most distinctive feature of this uniform was the cloth cape worn in front and in back. This was called the scapular.

When lay men and women, eager to join the fight of right against evil, asked to be enrolled in the army of Christ, they wanted a uniform. So the scapular, the long cloak, was given to them too. And since this scapular was difficult to wear in ordinary workaday life, the cloth was cut to a small square in front and in back. That is our modern scapular. It is the badge of our allegiance to Christ and His Mother in their fight against the forces of Evil. It is a distinctive emblem of a Catholic.

We who in our youth were enrolled in the scapular say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(recite the prayer on page 1)

THIRD DAY:

How strange it seems to think of Mary as a warrior.

The gentle maid of Nazareth, the Virginal Mother, the Mother of the Prince of Peace, is still called—and properly called—"More terrible than army in battle array."

And so she is. For when Satan, the great and immortal enemy of the human race, won the preliminary skirmish of Eden, the voice of God Himself foretold that the foot of a conquering woman would crush the devil's head.

Mary, conqueror of heresies . . .

Mary, triumphant always in the battle with sin . . .

When then we put on the scapular, which is Mary's uniform, we join in a special way the regiment of which Mary is queen and honorary colonel.

We pledge ourselves to do battle against the enemy of the human race.

We will be victorious as Mary is victorious, and conquering as Christ is conquering.

Part of the always-beaten and the never-vanquished, the always-attacked and the never-overcome army of Christ's kingdom, we wearers of the uniform of Mary know the certainty of victory and the clear prospect of eternal peace.

To Mary, queen of the armies of Christ, we say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(recite the prayer on page 1)

FOURTH DAY:

Among the many uniforms that are worn by members of the various regiments in Christ's army of peace, none is more widely known or better loved or most historically honoured than the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The legend and tradition of the great Carmelite Order, which gave this uniform to the Christian world, goes far back into history.

On the heights of Mount Carmel the great Prophet Elias lived a life of hunger for Christ. Looking forward into history, he saw the Saviour who was to come, and the Virgin who would be His Mother.

He honoured her whom he had never seen and spoke of her to the disciples that he gathered around him. Sons of the Prophets they were called. They lived together on Mount Carmel and kept their souls in alert expectation of the coming Saviour. They sang in advance the praises of the Saviour's Mother. They were a religious vanguard of Christianity.

When their uniform, their scapular, became known throughout the world as the special badge of Mary's soldiers, they gave it to lay men and women too—and with it a share in their fight to advance the kingdom of Christ.

To the Lady foreseen and beloved by Elias we say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(recite the prayer on page 1)

FIFTH DAY:

A uniform is a splendid and shining thing.

Beyond all else it is unmistakable.

One has no doubt about the differentiating characteristics of one who wears a general's stars, or a Roman collar, or the red coat of the Mounties, or the veil of a nun.

A uniform says to friends: "Here I am, and you may call upon me if you need me."

A uniform speaks to enemies: "I am on guard, and you must reckon with me."

So it is that a scapular, the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, is a public profession of the wearer to fight.

Before all observers that scapular says: "I am a soldier of Christ and of Mary. I am a sworn enemy of evil."

"Do not disgrace the uniform," cries the general to his soldiers. And they know that they merit death if they turn traitor.

"Do not disgrace the scapular," cries Our Lady, to those who wear it. And they know that they cannot go over to the side of the devil or become party to lies or accomplices in evil. They cannot be cowards when temptation threatens,

and they dare not, in the life-and-death struggle that is constantly waged between the powers of heaven and the powers of hell, grow slack and fall asleep.

Pledging ourselves anew to the great fight for Christ against evil, we say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(recite the prayer on page 1)

SIXTH DAY:

Mary knows her own.

Mary watches over her own.

She has a Mother's love for those who profess openly before the world their love for her.

So she watches with eagerness and guards with care those sons and daughters who wear her uniform and profess by her scapular their consecration to her.

A wedding ring is a sign of love pledged and fidelity preserved.

A locket is eternal reminder of the one whose picture the locket frames.

A scapular is public manifestation in the sight of God, of men, and of angels that we belong to Mary, that we love her virtues, and that we are trying to live her life before all observers . . . a beautiful "spectacle for God and men."

How wise is the person who in this age of temptations marks himself clearly as Mary's property. **Mary** guards her own. She will guard him.

How full of divine common sense is the person who makes it clear that he wants Mary near him in danger and that he hopes her eyes will find him easily when he is in peril. Mary watches over her own. She has no doubt that this one who is marked clearly with her uniform is her own.

Confident in the protection that Mary grants to those who are her own we say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(recite the prayer on page 1)

SEVENTH DAY:

Since it is part of a great tradition, the story of the Carmelite scapular should be told—even if only briefly.

Saint Simon Stock, a Carmelite of heroic stature, loved Our Lady, as the Order of Mount Carmel was vowed to do.

He saw the temptations that threatened the purity of young people.

He watched with horror as the devil won to his side cleverness and strength and power.

"Mary," he prayed, "what can I do to safeguard your beloved sons and daughters?"

In a vision Mary presented him with her scapular.

Saint Simon placed it upon the tempted breasts of the young, and their temptation fled. In all simplicity he gave it to the wise and the learned, and they suddenly knew that the highest wisdom is faith in Mary and in her Son. He consecrated cleverness by enlisting it in Mary's army and clothing it in her uniform. He made power and strength humble as he dressed them in the simple livery of the maid of Nazareth.

Mary saw her uniform worn now by millions. Down through the ages the priests of the Order of Carmel continued to clothe the followers of Mary in her uniform.

And Mary continued to watch over and protect her own. To her we pray:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(recite the prayer on page 1)

EIGHTH DAY:

When a soldier dies, he is buried in his uniform. In a way his burial is his final dress parade.

When a priest dies, he is clad as for Mass, vestments covering his human form with divine disguise.

When a man or a woman religious dies, he or she is clothed for the last time in the habit; he or she goes to the grave and to final judgment unmistakably marked as one consecrated to God.

In life the scapular is a public profession of the wearer's love for Mary.

It is an assurance that the wearer will do Mary's work and fight her fight if she will protect and guard and mother Him.

In death that scapular is a fresh pledge of immortality.

The wearer of the scapular goes down into the grave marked clearly as Mary's soldier.

God sees this sign. The angels recognize and honour it. The devils know it and in hatred flee it.

We pray to Mary, "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

As wearers of the scapular we give that prayer new meaning when in death we are marked as soldiers who have tried to fight the good fight and who wanted to be buried in the uniform of their queen.

To Mary, our hope in death, we say:
The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
(recite the prayer on page 1)

NINTH DAY:

The great moment in a soldier's career is the moment of home-coming.

Battle over and victory won, he walks into the city of his birth and is welcomed by the citizens, thanked by the rulers, and embraced by his mother.

His uniform, battle-stained though it may be, is something of which he is proud.

He wears it whenever he and his comrades gather for a grand review.

The great moment in the life of a Christian soldier, a warrior of Christ and of Mary, is the moment of home-coming to heaven.

He is the conquering hero; there is no chance of his having been forgotten.

The citizenry of heaven greet him with applause.

His palm of victory and his crown are waiting for him.

He will be presented as one of the conquering army to the Blessed Trinity.

Mary, his beloved Mother, folds him to her heart.

How splendid if at that moment of entrance into heaven the soldier of Christ proudly wears the uniform that is the scapular and with utter confidence and a sense of a fight well fought smiles into the grateful eyes of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

To her we say:

The Prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
(recite the prayer on page 1)

OUR LADY OF FATIMA NOVENA

FIRST DAY:

Fatima was long a name filled with anti-Christian associations.

It had been borne by the only daughter of Mohammed, prophet of the first Red peril.

In God's sweet providence during the rise of the second Red peril, atheistic communism, the name Fatima suddenly assumed a beautiful Christian meaning.

For to three little Portuguese shepherds in Fatima, two girls and a boy, appeared Our Lady of the Rosary.

In the third year of World War I she came to speak words that promised peace.

She held in her hand the weapon that men could use forever to end all wars—**the rosary**.

She spoke of her pure and immaculate heart to women tempted to sin.

And in all this a new vision of Mary, Mother of us all, was given to the world. To Our Lady of Fatima we say:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

O God, whose only-begotten Son by His life, death and Resurrection hath purchased for us the reward of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech thee, that meditating on these mysteries in the most holy rosary of the Blessed Virgin

Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

SECOND DAY:

The first sweeping rush of World War I and then the dreary siege of the trenches had sickened Europe.

To win the war, the best brains available had been summoned and the man power of the nations had been exhausted.

Science invented as it had never before invented. The war drew on all the resources of laboratory and factory.

So the war dragged on, and peace became prelude to worse war.

In the midst of chaos worse confused, the beautiful Lady singled out, not the wise, but the simple, not the statesmen, but the children, not the generals, but three little shepherds.

For them and through them for the world she laid down a simple platform for the ending of all wars and the permanence of peace. The only trouble with it is that it is simple and right; the "wise" want something complicated and wrong.

War will end and peace will endure, said Our Lady of Fatima, if we pray:

My Jesus, forgive us our sins.

Save us from the fire of hell.

Relieve the holy souls in purgatory, especially the most abandoned.

If we dedicate ourselves to sinless lives,

If we say the rosary . . .

In honour of Our Lady of Fatima we say:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

THIRD DAY:

During the years of war the Queen of Peace appears with a rosary in her hand.

She offers the simple way to peace: Pray the rosary. Why the rosary?

The Rosary begins with the splendid act of faith that we call the Apostles' Creed.

It continues with the prayer which the Lord Himself gave us, the greatest single prayer that ever linked earth with heaven—the Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father."

Each cluster of prayers ends with a prayer that is a reverent gesture to the Trinity, a salutation to the three Persons in one God—the Gloria.

And as the main prayer, repeated in beautifully poetic rhythm, the rosary offers the prayer that was composed by the Angel Gabriel; by the inspired Saint Elizabeth, and by the Church speaking its love for the Mother of God—the "Hail, Mary."

The beat and measure, the rhythm of the prayers become the undercurrent of thought linked to the life of Christ as in the meditations we follow the Archangel Gabriel to Nazareth, follow Christ the eternal Word from heaven to Bethlehem, follow the holy family through the Infancy, follow Christ through His redeeming death, follow the Saviour and Mary through the Resurrection to the Coronation and glory.

In honour of Our Lady of Fatima we say:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

FOURTH DAY:

"To save souls, the Lord desires that devotion to my immaculate heart be established in the world."

The Sacred Heart of Jesus had always in the devotion of the Catholic faithful been linked with the immaculate heart of Mary.

Now in the vision of Fatima, Mary reminds her children of the importance of that close connection. Why?

Mary's was a sinless heart, the purest next to that of her Son.

Sin is the simple cause of all war.

Blame what economic causes we wish, underlying all those causes are greed and lust for power, cruelty and pride, long-practiced revolt against God expressing itself in swift and bitter revolt against the happiness of men.

As a corrective for these causes of war the Saviour orders devotion to the immaculate heart of His mother.

"Imitate," He bids us, "that heart whose first and greatest love was always God.

"Pattern human hearts upon that heart, which was devotedly faithful to a husband and a Child.

"Follow that heart, which loved all of God's children and prayed for them and served them in the blissful ways of peace."

We honour the immaculate heart of Mary and say:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

FIFTH DAY:

"I am the Lady of the Rosary, and I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask pardon of their sins. They must not continue to offend Our Lord already so deeply offended."

In times of war there always seems to be a swift and pitiful turning to God.

"Save us," even the sinful cry, "from the consequences of the folly we have brought upon ourselves."

At the same time the cynical dares to ask why God permits the wars into which men rush eagerly and for which they plan craftily during the days of peace.

War over, God is forgotten, and back they rush to their sins.

There can be an end to civil and international war only when men give up their part in the war of evil against good, of lies against truth, of Satan against Christ.

If men will give up their sins, they will give up their wars.

If men will stop offending God, they will cease to give those miserable offenses that result in national incidents and the excuses for war.

The Prince of Peace will lead us only when we cease to turn upon Him, only when we cease to nail Him helpless to the cross.

With a great desire for peace we pray to Our Lady of Fatima:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

SIXTH DAY:

Today we live under the fear of the atomic bomb.

We have seen it and heard it less than half a dozen times. Yet we know with frightening clarity that if it is used again, the next war will be, not years, but hours.

Again in the providence of God during the course of World War I, Mary foretold and in a kind of way anticipated the atomic bomb.

Seventy thousand people, believers and nonbelievers, Catholics and skeptics, had gathered round the three little shepherds. A driving rain made the day dark. Suddenly the rain stopped. As if emerging from eclipse, the sun rolled into the heavens.

Rolled is the word, for the sun was spinning, shooting forth tremendous rays of colored light. As the multitudes below screamed in terror, the sun rushed toward the earth, a gigantic falling bomb, a perilous menace moving to obliterate mankind.

Then the sun stopped. The lovely Lady smiled her reassurance. The sun rolled back into its normal position. The threat of the atomic bomb had yielded to the intercessory power of Mary Mother of mankind. In her protective role as our Mother, She will always guard us.

For protection against the threat of the atomic bomb we pray:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

SEVENTH DAY:

Man is always his own worst enemy. He deliberately shuts his eyes to the truth. He turns away from his salvation and pre-tends he does not see it.

So we are not surprised that the simple platform of peace laid down by heaven's queen aroused the fierce opposition of God's enemies.

The little shepherds of Fatima were treated by the agnostic officials of the country as if they were criminals.

Every effort was made to keep Mary herself from reappearing.

A conspiracy of silence, deliberate and brutal, was developed so that Christendom would not learn how easy was the program by which to end war and keep peace.

Men had their own elaborate programs of armament and treaties of balanced power and unbalanced budgets, of cultivated alliances and more carefully cultivated national enmities. They did not want God's plan for peace or Our Lady's invincible weapon—the rosary.

Yet despite persecution and the deliberate hiding of the truth, despite hatred and opposition the news of Fatima spread.

Pius XII gave the world a prayer by which it could dedicate itself to the immaculate heart of Mary. And millions took up the rosary, the weapon of lasting peace.

To Mary of Fatima we pray:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

EIGHTH DAY:

On the horizon of our modern age hangs the threat of Russia.

Atheistic communism, despising God and enslaving men, is the peril, half known, always watched with terror. Russia, mysterious, brutal in philosophy, gigantic in power.

A thousand vain schemes are being tried to safeguard Christian democracy against the rise of anti-God and anti-human power. Leagues, paper treaties, conciliations, bribes, all are tried—but with a disbelief that makes them failures even before they are tried.

All the while the solution had been offered by Mary.

"If my requests are heard, Russia will be converted and there will be peace."

How complicated are the ways of men! How simple are the ways of God!

If we will consecrate the world to Mary's immaculate heart . . .

If we will say her rosary ..

If we will be sorry for sin and keep our hearts sinless . . .

If we will love purity and truth .

Russia will find its way back into the arms of the Father of the prodigal, and the threat that lies behind the Iron Curtain will be removed from the world.

In the hope of all that Our Lady of Fatima promised we say:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

NINTH DAY:

So Fatima became a new place of pilgrimage.

Millions have gone to see the place to which Mary came from heaven in order to show her children the ways of peace.

Men who hated God and Mary destroyed the oak tree that marked the spot on which she appeared and bombed the little church that had been built to commemorate her apparition. Pilgrims came in ever growing numbers, and the fame of Our Lady of Fatima swept the Christian nations.

Rosary in hand, individuals and families, nuns and priests, educated and unlettered did battle for the cause of Christ.

The image of Mary's immaculate heart began to appear on thousands of walls; Mary's immaculate heart became the model on which devoted Catholic youth patterned their hearts.

Once more we knew that God loves us and Mary watches over us.

Once more we were assured that God's ways are the ways of peace and that those who in their secret souls win the battle against sin are victors in history's most important battle.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." . . .and the faithful clients of Mary Our Lady of Fatima.

To her we say:

The Prayer of the Queen of the Rosary

(recite the prayer on page 4)

NOVENA TO ST JOSEPH

FIRST DAY:

The man nearest to Christ Jesus was His foster father, Joseph the carpenter.

John the Baptist saw Christ briefly near the Jordan and knew that his work as Precursor was over.

The Apostles lived and worked with Christ during the brief days of His public life.

But Joseph presided over the events of Christ's Infancy, provided for Him the house that sheltered Him from birth to baptism, and was of all the men of earth the one at whose hands Jesus received most in service and love and unselfish devotion.

Born of a royal line, Joseph was a carpenter. That trade he passed on to his foster Son. Joseph was destined to immortal honours of the Church, yet no spoken word of his is recorded in the Scriptures.

Still the Church with good reason cries out, "Go to Joseph."

This injunction we confidently obey as we pray:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

O God, who in thine ineffable providence was pleased to choose blessed Joseph for the spouse of thy most holy Mother, grant we beseech thee, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom we venerate as our protector on earth. Who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

SECOND DAY:

There is always a cause for the choices God makes.

Out of the long procession of men through history, God selected Joseph to be the husband of Mary and the protector of the Saviour.

Joseph's youth was one of stainless virtue.

His young manhood was marked by deep religious faith and a burning desire to see the Saviour of Israel. His was a life of honest work and of a humility that fitted him for his part in the hidden life of the Saviour.

Little did he dream as he visited the synagogue on the Sabbath that someday he would be the protector of the synagogue's God. Little did he understand that the trade of carpenter that he was learning would be the means by which he would provide food and clothing for the world's maker, would be the trade that he would teach the creator of the universe.

Without knowing what it was that he was getting ready for, he gave to his simple jobs the full devotion and the full strength of a character of a simple, honest man.

In these ordinary ways did he fit himself for the extraordinary assignment that God would give him.

Remembering this splendid man, who walked the simple ways, we pray:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

THIRD DAY:

Tradition has it that Joseph had taken the vow of virginity, thus renouncing the right to marriage. At any rate he lived a life of purity. He was stainless among men and pure in the sight of God.

But God in His providence had greater designs for Joseph than mere abstinence. He chose Joseph, the just man, for the delicate mission of sheltering Mary's virginity and at the same time being her loyal spouse and guardian of the Incarnate Son of God.

Legend tells us that he was selected by a miracle: The barren rod that he held in his hand blossomed with lilies. Perhaps. But surely his soul was bright with joy when he knew that God had given him to be the partner of his life the rose of Sharon, the stainless lily of Israel, the flower among all the flowers in God's garden.

He accepted his bride and his new responsibility with the determination to make her happy, to keep her safe, and in her company to carry out whatever were God's plans for their future.

So Joseph and Mary were married, and they established the holy house of Nazareth. There they lived most exemplary lives.

To this strong and pure protector of Mary we pray:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

FOURTH DAY:

Wedded to the loveliest of brides, entering marriage with strong ideals and a trust in God's provident care, Joseph had a right to expect love and security that come with consecrated marriage.

While marriage for him was the beginning of a high honour, it was also the beginning of a new pain. While it added to his royal dignity, it was also the occasion of poverty, patience, exile, obscurity, confusion and wonderment.

For at once he found that his virgin bride was with child. What could this possibly mean? He wanted to think her stainless, but what of this clear evidence? He was confused and bewildered. And while it was distasteful to a man of his simple reticence, the law of his people demanded that he put her away.

Since Mary herself did nothing to enlighten him (for she was committed by God to secrecy) his confusion gave way to grave doubt, and doubt in turn gave way to firm, honourable resolve to take action.

What a period of suffering and suspense this must have been to Joseph. In His own good time, God would reveal the wonders of the Incarnation of His Divine Son. But to prepare his soul for so great a miracle, God chose to cleanse his heart in suffering.

Remembering his trial and suffering, we pray:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

FIFTH DAY:

Pain and patience in the service of Christ and His Mother soon turn to joy.

The visit of the angel brought an end to Joseph's problems.

The Child whom the lovely Mary carried was the Son of the Most High. He had no earthly father, for God Himself was His Father. The Holy Spirit had wrought the wonder in Mary's body.

Over Joseph there came in a rush the realization of what his marriage meant.

He among all men of earth was to be the guardian of the Mother of the Saviour.

Upon him would rest the responsibility to protect the Christ Child, to provide His home, to watch over His childhood, to lead Him into the safe maturity that would be a prelude to His public life.

The home? Joseph had only the house of the carpenter to offer. The food of the Son of God would be plain. The clothes He wore would be those of a laborer's child. But Joseph silently vowed that the Christ should never want for a heart to love Him, for hands to serve Him, for feet to run His errands, for a back to shoulder whatever weight God would let him bear.

Joseph and Mary smiled upon each other and together waited for the coming of the Son of God, the Saviour of the

world.

To Joseph, guardian of Mary and protector of the Infant Saviour, we say:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

SIXTH DAY:

To us Christmas is a day of uninterrupted joy.

To Joseph it was a day of the brightest light and the deepest shadows: a blazing sky and a chilly cave; the presence of angels and the cold shoulder of the villagers; faith and sorrow; intensest joy in the Infant and grief that he could give the Infant only a stable and straw and his ineffectual service.

The story of Joseph and Christmas is dearly familiar to us.

It was decreed that they leave the comforts of home and journey to Bethlehem. The doors of the crowded inns were slammed in his face. He quested through the night until he found the cave and prepared it for his bride and for the coming Child.

His was the joy of hearing the song of the angels and watching the procession of the first adorers. His was the pain of seeing Mary shiver in the cold darkness and of remembering that they had been forced to leave in Nazareth the cradle that he had made with such loving care.

He was the first sentry in the court of the new king, His first man-at-arms, His prime minister, His treasurer, the faithful disciple of the master, who had yet to speak His first word.

To Joseph at Christmastide we say:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

SEVENTH DAY:

Compared to the powerful and important Herod, Joseph was in the eyes of his times a nobody.

Yet as this faithful carpenter and saint made smooth the ways of his Lord, worked for His comfort, and knelt to adore Him, Herod plotted the destruction of this Child, whom he looked upon as a possible rival for his throne.

Herod had tried to turn the Magi into messengers of death, but these wise men had on a warning from God, through the star-lighted night found their way to the king. Failing this, Herod sent his soldiers out to kill the Child and end the threat to his brief and pitiful power.

Another visit of an angel, and Joseph is moving through the night, leading the ass that carries the sacred burden of Mother and Child.

Eyes alert for danger, staff gripped tightly against possible threat, feet tirelessly striding forward, a few coins in his purse, his locked shop left behind him, Joseph travels the glorious and ignominious road to exile.

But God had chosen well when He chose this protector of Mother and Son. The journey was safe, the exile comfortable, and the return happy and secure.

To Joseph, guardian of Jesus and of Mary in danger and in exile, we say:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

EIGHTH DAY:

Wonderful things have happened in the long annals of mankind, but none have been more wonderful than what occurred in the little house and shop of Joseph in Nazareth.

The earnings of a laborer provide the food for the creator of heaven and earth.

Into the little carpenter shop comes the young Jesus, apprenticed to a trade. Joseph guides the hands that guided the course of the stars; he teaches the maker of sun, stars, and planets the craft of making tables and chairs for peasants and yokes for oxen.

The Trinity looks down to the lovely trinity of earth—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit beautifully mirrored in Joseph,

Mary, and Jesus.

Modern Christian homes receive their design and pattern from this model.

Modern Catholic marriage is here given its lovely example.

Childhood learns obedience as the young Jesus obeys the commands of his parents.

The hearts of Mary and Joseph create a union close and dear and intimate and utterly beautiful; together they live and think and plan and work for the Child, who has been given into their keeping.

Their's was a beautiful family.

Remembering the happiness of Joseph in Nazareth, we pray:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

NINTH DAY:

Death in the days before Christ was often frightening, often terrible.

It was left for Joseph to show us for the first time the perfect way to die.

Graciously God let him know that his work was done. Jesus was almost ready to enter His public life; in that the humble carpenter would play no part.

He obeyed the voice of God in death as he had obeyed that voice in life. But for him the voice had no terrors.

As Joseph lay on his bed, Jesus and Mary were close to him. His head rested on the virgin breast of his untouched bride. His hand rested in the firm grasp of his foster Son. Jesus was speaking gratefully of what Joseph had done for Him. Mary was saying a loving thank-you. His thoughts were being lifted up ... and up and up toward the heaven that lay ahead and the glory that comes to those who have done their simple duty well:

Jesus and Mary followed their beloved protector to the grave.

In his place in glory the whole Church has sought him, called him its faithful guardian, and known that from his powerful intercession favours past counting fall upon the world of men and women, whom he regards as his beloved sons and daughters.

To Joseph in Heaven we say:

The Prayer of Saint Joseph

(recite the prayer on page 8)

Nihil Obstat,
John M. Fearn, S.T.D.
Imprimatur .

* Francis Cardinal Spellman
Archbishop, New York, 1947
