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An Important Fatherhood Prerequisite ***“St Joseph’s Humility”***

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I am a father to six children and was a foster father to one child. I can remember growing up hearing my mother say: “A child is a gift from God.” This reality was not fully realized by me until I began to have my own children. Each pregnancy gave me a clearer understanding of the beauty of the developing baby in my wife’s womb and a window to see the close relationship developing between my wife and our child in utero. In those nine months that my wife was blessed to share with each of our children, I observed a special bond growing between them, the effects of which were quite clear on my wife but were mysterious in relation to each child in utero. It wasn’t until our children were born that it became obvious how important their mother was to them.



By observing the bonds that developed between a mother and child I was made aware of how important it is for a father to be a good husband. A child has a deep, tender, and special place in their heart for their mother. They are close to them from the beginning. The way a mother and child relationship develops it seems natural that what happens to a child’s mother affects the child intimately because of these unique bonds that are formed during pregnancy and through childhood.

Over the years, I observed each of my children’s reactions to how I treated my wife. Each time I was gentle, kind, understanding and forgiving my children were content and full of joy. If I spoke to her harshly, in a poor tone or blaming, the children’s spirit changed. They were down, cranky, unsure and depressed. I learned that the way I love their mother had a profound impact on them. All a child needs to feel safe, secure and

joyful is for their parents to be together and to treat each other with selfless tenderness and merciful hearts.

This is the example set for us by Saint Joseph, husband of Mary. If we look at St. Joseph's thoughts and actions, because he says no words, we can see that his love for Mary was expressed through his virtue of loyalty to Mary's honor. Scripture tells us about this in Matthew 1:18 to 25. Verse 19 in particular says: "Her husband Joseph, being a man of honor and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally." The note on this verse in "The Jerusalem Bible" tells us: " It would appear that Joseph's integrity did not only consist in wanting to withhold his name from a child whose father he did not know, but also, since he was convinced of Mary's virtue, in refusing to expose to the rigor of the Law (Dt 22:20,21 - stoning to death) a mystery he did not understand."

St. Joseph had a deep respect for Mary and the father of her child and thought he should move on quietly. Because of what he knew of Mary's virtues he believed God must be involved in this mystery. As a good husband does he defends and protects Mary and her child but is afraid he's not worthy and makes plans to move on. God honors St. Joseph's humility and in a dream reveals the plan of His Fatherhood.