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St Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron Saint of the Society of Jesus

Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C
First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 89:2–5, 27, 29 | **Response:** Psalm 89:37
Second Reading: Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 84:5
Gospel Reading: Luke 2:41–51a
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

The night sky over Jerusalem, like the vast heavens over Zambia, has always told a story—not of chance, but of promise. Long before Christ walked among us, God made a covenant with David: "I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins," He declared. This was more than a royal succession; it was a divine guarantee that from David's house would come a King whose reign would never end.

History reminds us that human power is fleeting. Empires rise and fall—Babylon, Persia, Rome. Even Israel wavered. The throne of David seemed lost, his descendants scattered. But God's faithfulness is not measured in earthly timelines. What appeared forgotten was merely awaiting fulfillment. In a carpenter's shop in Nazareth, that promise found its quiet resting place in Joseph, a righteous man. He was of David's line, but chosen not to rule—chosen instead to stand beside the Mother of God and to guide the King of Kings.

No wonder the Psalmist sings: "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations." This is not just ancient poetry—it is the deep longing of every just soul. We yearn for a world where promises endure, where justice reigns, where the cries of the poor are answered. In a world of uncertainty, we cling to the covenant, trusting that God does not forget His own.

St. Paul tells the Romans that the promise made to Abraham was not fulfilled through the law, but through faith. Faith—the true currency of heaven. Faith—the light that shines in the darkness. Abraham believed against all odds, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Joseph, too, believed. Confronted with a

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mystery beyond human logic, he did not grasp for control but surrendered to God. He welcomed Mary into his home, protected the Christ-child, and worked with calloused hands to provide for the Redeemer of the world. His greatness was not in power, but in fidelity. Not in conquest, but in quiet courage.

And so we come to the Gospel, to that moment of loss and discovery in the Temple. Mary and Joseph, filled with worry, find Jesus among the teachers, astonishing them with His wisdom. “Son, why have you done this to us?” Mary asks. “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” Jesus’ words here do not diminish Joseph’s role—they illuminate it. Joseph had been His earthly father, but the Son he raised belonged ultimately to the One who sent Him. Every parent, every teacher, every leader must face this truth: those entrusted to us are not ours to possess, but to guide. Joseph’s silent obedience in this moment is his greatest gift. He does not argue. He does not demand. He accepts—just as he always has—the will of God.

What does this mean for us? It means that faithfulness in the small prepares us for the great. It means that whether we are called to religious life, to family life, to work, or to study, our mission is to cultivate a faith like Joseph’s—strong, serene, steadfast. It means that God’s promises, though sometimes hidden, are never broken. We look around and see the struggles of the poor, the burdens carried by families, the uncertainty of the future. But if Joseph’s life teaches us anything, it is this: even in obscurity, even in suffering, God is working out His plan.

St. Joseph, Patron of the Society of Jesus, knew what it was to labor for something greater than himself. His hands shaped wood, but his heart shaped history. Though he never preached a sermon or performed a miracle, his silent fidelity became the foundation upon which the mission of Christ could unfold. The Society of Jesus claims him as patron because, like St. Ignatius and the first companions, Joseph surrendered his own plans to the greater will of God. He was a man of discernment, obedience, and action—never seeking recognition, only the fulfillment of God’s will. In his quiet strength and unwavering trust, Jesuits find a model for their own vocation: to be contemplatives in action, men whose faith is expressed in deeds more than words. Holiness is not found in grand gestures, but in steadfast love. And he calls us, this Lent, to trust as he trusted, to love as he loved, to surrender as he surrendered.

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While we keep Pope Francis in our prayers, let us ask ourselves:

- Where in my life is God inviting me to trust in His promises, even when I cannot see their fulfillment?
- How can I, like St. Joseph, protect and nurture the faith of those entrusted to me—whether in my family, my community, or my work?
- In what way is God calling me this Lent to let go of my own plans and surrender more fully to His divine will?

May St. Joseph, the silent witness of God's faithfulness, intercede for us, that we too may be faithful in the ordinary, trusting that the extraordinary belongs to God.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.