

Joseph's obedience covers every aspect of his life.

He was obedient in entering into a marriage with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He was obedient in his willingness to put her away when, though he knew she was innocent, he found her with child.

He was obedient when he went to Bethlehem to be registered with Mary, and accepted the humiliation of having Jesus born in a stable cave.

He was obedient in taking the Child and His Mother by night and fleeing to Egypt.

He was obedient in taking the Christ Child to Jerusalem, as prescribed by the Law, and accepted God's mysterious will when the Child was lost, and God's even more mysterious will when Jesus told Mary that he must be about His Father's affairs—even to grievously paining Joseph, His foster father, in order to do the will of His Father.

What are the lessons for us? Obedience is the test of our love of God. His laws are God's way of enabling us to prove our love for Him; there is no obedience where there is no love, there is much obedience where there is much love.

Joseph was head of the Holy Family. He did not have identifiable superiors whom he should obey. Joseph's obedience consequently was mainly interior.

This is illustrated by the fact that each time Joseph was to obey, he was divinely inspired. Thus it was by a special communication from God that Joseph was told to marry the Blessed Virgin. Thus it was also by interior communication that he was told to marry the Blessed Virgin after he found that she was pregnant. It was also by divine communication that Joseph was told to flee with Mary to Egypt. It was also by divine communication that he was told to return from Egypt to Palestine. It was finally by divine communication that Joseph was instructed to live with Jesus and Mary in Palestine. We may also say that Joseph was divinely instructed to remain in Palestine after the Holy Family returned to Nazareth.

There is not a single recorded word of Saint Joseph which he spoke during his years of caring for Jesus and Mary.

We may say that Joseph's obedience was profoundly interior. He obeyed God's will by supernatural instinct. Needless to say, he did not have to be ordered by God to exercise authority over Jesus and Mary. We may say that Joseph obeyed not because he was told to but because his mind was always conformed to the mind of God. We may further say that Joseph's faith always saw in Jesus the living God who instructed His foster father constantly in everything that the Lord wanted him to do.