Having just completed our Christmas festivities, let us recall for one example among many St. Joseph’s presence at the Christmas scene with head bowed in adoration of the Divine Child born from Mary’s virginal womb. How often must St. Joseph have held the Baby Jesus in his arms as fathers are want to do and received the affection of the God-Man! By highlighting St. Joseph’s contemplative exemplarity, we are reminded of prayer’s essential nature as familiarity with God wherein we speak to God and, perhaps more importantly, allow God to speak to our hearts.

As I seek to attend to the needs of our rapidly growing community and to bring our monastery’s construction project to completion, we turn with trust to St. Joseph! Cognizant of St. Joseph’s duty to attend to the needs of the Holy Family, the monks and I have every confidence that this good saint will help us to make much progress on our monastery in this wilderness. I invite you to be generous, and I beg you not to forget us. Having received a $200,000 matching pledge at Christmas, your support at this hour will not only help us to complete our Chapter House, God-willing, but also will be doubled.

Let us love St. Joseph and honor him for the wonderful care he gave Jesus and Mary. In this year, may he intercede before God for us all! We thank you too for the exceptional love you show us, and we promise our unfailing prayers in return from within this vibrant, joyful monastery. I remain,

Your devoted Father in Carmel,
Fr. Daniel Mary of Jesus Crucified, M. Carm., Prior

The familial home of Nazareth surely abounded with precisely these colloquies of love between the Incarnate Lord and His foster-father, the glorious St. Joseph. When prayer seems complicated or difficult to practice in the midst of the duties of life, let us look to St. Joseph to rediscover prayer’s simplicity in its call not to think much, but rather love much. May St. Joseph help us in this year, dedicated to him, to grow in our spiritual lives and become those interior souls that God is calling us to be. Indeed, how the world needs the holiness of St. Joseph, even in this very hour!

Dear Carmelite Family and Friends,

Praised be Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary! As our growing band of young postulant brothers (those in the first stage of formation) attend a class in this very hour with their Postulant Master and our professed monks mill the hand designed stones to adorn the monastery’s chapel, God has placed you upon my priestly heart. I write with the tenderest paternal love and affection for each of you, recalling with indescribable gratitude your astonishing charity towards this young community here in Wyoming’s Rocky Mountains. The monks and I thank the good God for blessing us with each of you as our spiritual children, and our prayers accompany you without ceasing. During this time of suffering in our world, we pray for you most dearly asking the Blessed Trinity to attend to your every need and work those miracles for which you and your family long. May our Blessed Lord, through the immaculate hands of His Virgin Mother, protect you and yours!

I write today with great joy, as we begin a new year of grace and of St. Joseph. After the long sufferings of 2020, we begin this year with newfound confidence in God and ask St. Joseph to intercede for our Church and for our world. One hundred and fifty years after Pope Pius IX’s proclamation of St. Joseph as Protector of the Universal Church, we once again fix our gaze upon the “just man” chosen to be the foster-father of the Son of God.

Throughout salvation history, St. Joseph has rightly enjoyed a prominence directly corresponding to his singular vocation as the head of the Holy Family that brought this glorious saint into unrivaled proximity to the Incarnate Word and the Virgin Mother. In 1870, Pope Pius IX wrote that from the familiarity of St. Joseph with Jesus Christ and Mary “have sprung his dignity, his holiness, his glory.” As foster-father of Jesus and true spouse of Mary, St. Joseph has long been invoked as a spiritual father to Christians due to St. Joseph’s singular role of protecting and providing for Jesus and Mary. As the Gospels’ restraint makes manifest, words struggle to express the unique relation between Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and, by extension therefrom, to

Carmelite Monastery, Post Office Box 2747, Cody, Wyoming 82414 Tel. No. 307-645-3310
February 2021
all of us. All the same, St. Joseph’s presence in the biblical account of the Incarnation, Nativity, and Childhood of Christ reveal the most intimate bond between St. Joseph and the central Christian Mystery of the Incarnation. Exploring Scripture, Tradition, and magisterial teaching, as well as the reflections of Church Fathers, ecclesiastical doctors, and saints, St. Joseph has been rightly considered under such diverse dimensions as father, husband, worker, protector, and patron.

As sons of the seraphic doctor of the Church, St. Teresa of Jesus, we recall in this new year her tremendous legacy of promoting devotion to St. Joseph. In her hard-fought labor of reforming the Carmelite Order in the sixteenth century, St. Teresa never tired of extolling the efficacy of St. Joseph’s intercession. St. Teresa candidly relates in her autobiographical account, “I wish I could persuade everyone to be devoted to this glorious saint [St. Joseph], for I have great experience of the blessings which he can obtain from God. I have never known anyone to be truly devoted to him and render him particular services who did not notably advance in virtue, for he gives very real help to souls who commend themselves to him.” This admonition was not, however, mere idle words for the Carmelite reformer, but rather a personal practice that bore fruit through experience. St. Teresa celebrated with marked joy St. Joseph’s feast, and she entrusted to St. Joseph’s particular concern the work of reforming the Carmelite family. More still, ever practical, St. Teresa placed a statue of good Father St. Joseph at the entrance to all of her monasteries to protect the monastic enclosure and its inhabitants. St. Teresa admonishes in her Maxims: “However numerous may be your patron saints, always rank St. Joseph first, for he has great power with God.”

From this vantage point of the contemplative life, I would like to not only recommend devotion to St. Joseph in all temporal needs, as the custom of a St. Joseph statue for real estate sales makes manifest. Nor only as a patron for a holy death, like countless prayers recall. Rather, let us develop an especial devotion to St. Joseph as patron of interior souls. As men and women called by God to enter into a relationship with the Adorable Trinity in this life that is perfectly fulfilled in the beatific vision of heaven, St. Joseph can teach us much about what it means to be men and women of prayer. How often I hear from so many of you of your desire to learn how to pray and to locate a capable spiritual director! Here too St. Teresa recommends St. Joseph: “If anyone cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious saint [St. Joseph] as his master and he will not go astray.”

You, companion of the pure virgin,
You faithful, caring father of the divine child,
Bethlehem and Nazareth, even Egypt becomes our home when you are with us.
Where you are there is heavenly blessing.
Childlike we follow you closely,
We confidently lay our hands in yours:
be our home, you:
St. Joseph, take care!