

Catholic

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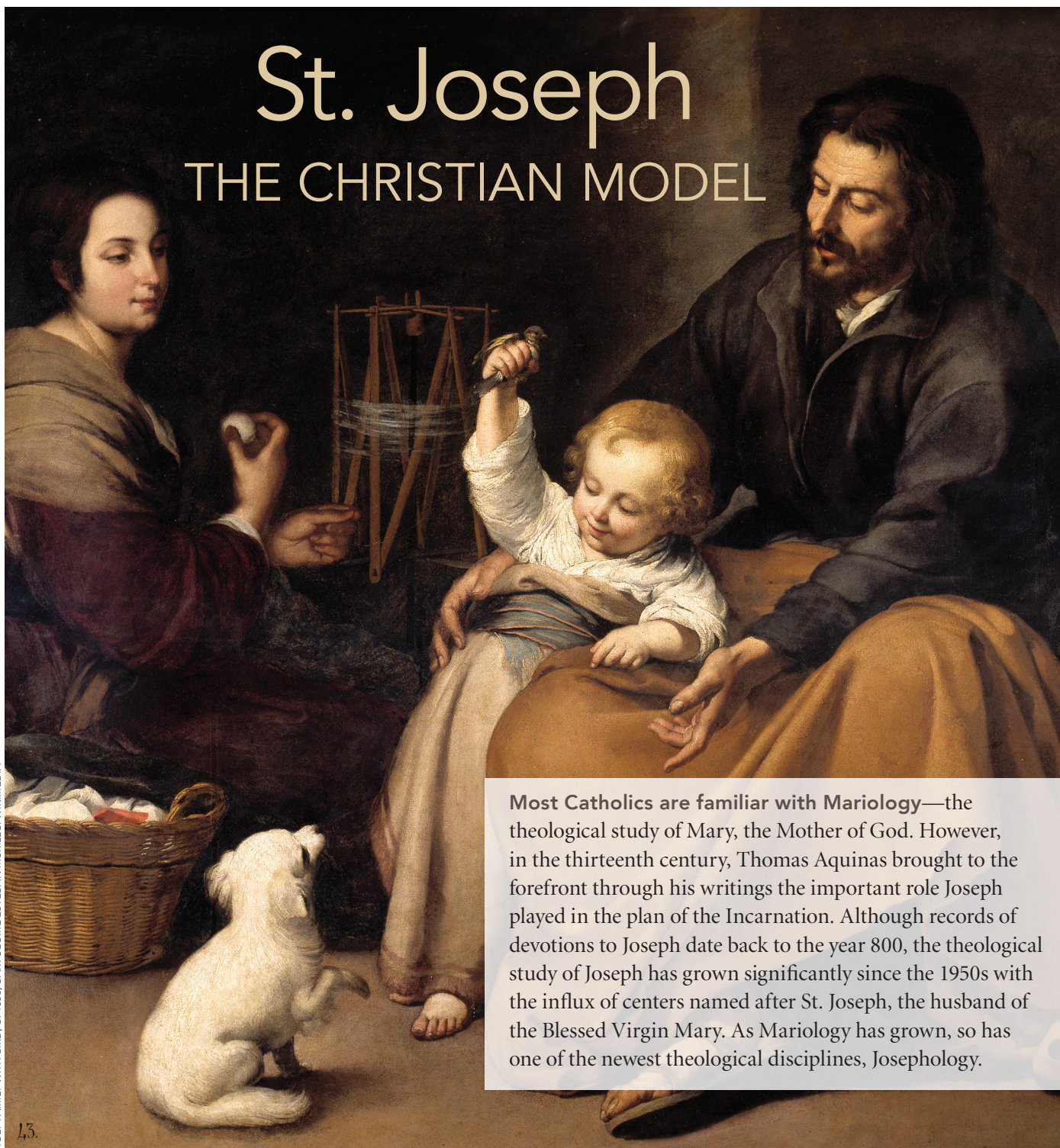
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MAY 2018

St. Joseph

THE CHRISTIAN MODEL



Most Catholics are familiar with Mariology—the theological study of Mary, the Mother of God. However, in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas brought to the forefront through his writings the important role Joseph played in the plan of the Incarnation. Although records of devotions to Joseph date back to the year 800, the theological study of Joseph has grown significantly since the 1950s with the influx of centers named after St. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As Mariology has grown, so has one of the newest theological disciplines, Josephology.

Joseph always put God first.
Everything else was secondary.
We are challenged to follow in his footsteps
and live a life of simplicity.

Craftsman Father

Catholics celebrate two feast days for St. Joseph. One is on March 19 as the husband of Mary, and one is on May 1 as the patron saint of workers. He is known as a man of great spirit and also is recognized as the patron saint of the universal Church, unborn children, fathers, immigrants, and the patron of a happy death, to name a few. As the husband of Mary and the chosen father of Jesus, St. Joseph is at the heart of both the Holy Family and the story of salvation itself. There is much to be gleaned from exploring the life and labor of St. Joseph.

Joseph first appears in Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew. We learn about his profession in Matthew 13:55, usually translated to read that Jesus became known as “the carpenter’s son.” But Joseph’s carpentry probably encompassed more than just home construction. It might be more accurate to call him a craftsman—someone who could be called upon to build basic furnishings, cabinets, tools, and a wide variety of other essential items. Joseph was most likely experienced in it from his youth, as a career handed down by his father and, in turn, handed down to Jesus in keeping with the custom of the time.

The Gospels tell us that Joseph practiced his trade in Nazareth, a small town hidden in the hills near Galilee, a village of laborers who were known to be poor and live simple lives. As a result, Joseph would likely have made simple furnishings, tools, and household items, rather than refined furniture or expensive artistic items for the wealthy.

Often we hear of Joseph’s work being referred to as woodworking. However, the Greek word for Joseph’s profession is *tekton*—a “worker of hard materials.” So it is likely that Joseph worked with more than just wood and probably also worked with stone, and even metal. In his workshop, he would make furniture, doors, windows, and other necessities for local townspeople. Outside his shop, Joseph would likely have been seen repairing a plow or wagon

DIG DEEPER

Look: How do you carry yourself
as a servant of Christ’s love?

•

Judge: Are you fully applying the
concept of genuine loving service?

•

Act: Consider how you and your
family can better live the gospel in
all circles of life.

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