

unexpected and unprepared for pressure of a very long and a very dangerous trip - ON FOOT! Until then, he possessed little, with nothing to lose; afterward, he had Jesus - entrusted to him by special Divine request. When he lost Him in Jerusalem, what an affliction that must have been! And then, when all seemed to have become settled, he was taken from this present life, never again to see his beloved Jesus and Mary in this world. He was forced to leave everything he had worked so hard to protect and provide for. It is thus that the patience of St. Joseph was tried - by a series of profound and terribly real tribulations, and in the midst of it all, he remained calm and trusting and SILENT. Never a word of complaint was to issue forth from his mouth! Never a murmur or groan was ever to be heard from him. SILENCE - always! Never was he found to question the reason behind all that was happening to him.

Joseph understood that tribulations are the crucible in which God purifies the virtue of those whom He loves. Joseph understood that the way of suffering is the only way which leads to Heaven, and that all the just must pass along that way, and that Jesus never visits a soul without taking His Cross with Him. Awesome realities, but realities nonetheless; an astonishing realization! WHAT ARE OUR DISPOSITIONS CONCERNING OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE? Do we not, on the contrary, mindlessly follow and imitate the man of the world who lives only for his own pleasure; who thinks of nothing but his achievements and advancements; who constantly seeks out his own comforts and easy living in every circumstance of life? Are we not like the man of the world who will not deprive himself of anything, who knows nothing at all about mortification and sacrifice? Do we not surround ourselves by a superabundance of THINGS - and most of them needless and foolishly expensive? Are we not irritated, and are we not thrown to the depth of depression, by the very thought of suffering or sickness or death? Are we not seized by fits of temper tantrums of resentment when anyone contradicts - if ever so slightly - our least word or whim or wish? And at such times, are not our vocalizations astonishing and shamefully cheap?

**Even those of us who KNOW - how much do we really have in common with the humble, quiet St. Joseph?**

Let us, however, not look upon this as a futile effort. It all depends on our DESIRE - our COMMITMENT - to be part of the design of our all powerful and all knowing God. All things come through a life of prayer. Let us adore the great design of God, Who exposes His dearest friends to His Cross; and we must pray for understanding. Here below, we find much difficulty in understanding the arrangements of Divine Providence, but let us have enduring patience, and, for those of us who WANT to be of God - in spite of our shortcomings - the day will come when we shall understand the workings of God. Meanwhile, let us adore in unshakable faith, and let us lovingly bless God in all things - God Who does all things well. And let us make use of that most wonderful prayer from the Psalms, keeping it upon our lips at all times:

*"Uphold me, O Lord, according to Thy Word, and I shall live,  
and let me not be confounded in my expectations." □*