

### **Patris Corde – Reflection Questions**

There are not many passages in the Scriptures that refer to St. Joseph, spouse of Mary, legal father of Jesus. One of the first things that is said about Joseph is: he was a “just man.” “Just,” in this sense, refers to Biblical Justice. Please see the Catechism of the Catholic Church’s definition of Biblical Justice ([CCC 1807](#)) before answering the first question

1. In what ways do you understand Joseph as a “just man?” In today’s climate, what would it mean?

In his letter, Pope Francis states that “St. Joseph stands at the crossroads between Old and New Testaments.”

2. What does this statement mean/say to you?

When God spoke to St. Joseph through dreams, St. Joseph’s response was immediate. There were four occasions when God spoke to St. Joseph.

3. Have you ever responded to a dream? How? Which of the four dreams would have been the most difficult for you to respond immediately? Which one would have been the easiest?

Pope Francis’ letter goes on to state “the spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that *explains*, but *accepts*.” Sometimes, it is only by the Holy Spirit’s gift of fortitude that we are able to *accept*, without demanding an *explanation*, the things that come our way.

4. Talk about a time when you experienced a frustration or disappointment that challenged you, but you were eventually able to *accept*, without an *explanation*.

St. Joseph is also venerated as the “Father of orphans and protector of widows, who commands us to love the stranger in our midst.”

5. Tell about a time when you struggled to love a “stranger.” Were you able to do so? What happened to make it possible? Did you become friends?

In section 5 of his letter, Pope Francis refers to St. Joseph as a creative and courageous father. Pope Francis states: “From St. Joseph we must learn to love the child and his mother, to love the sacraments and charity, to love the Church and the poor.” Each of these realities is always *the child and his mother*.”

6. In your current situation, who are “*the child and his mother*?”

One of the longest sections of Patris Corde talks about fatherhood. In it, Pope Francis quotes a book, *The Shadow of the Father*, which uses the image of St. Joseph as “the earthly shadow of the Heavenly Father.”

7. After reading that section, how do you, as a parent, live out the image of the earthly shadow of the Heavenly Father?

The Holy Father concludes his letter with this statement: “We need only ask St. Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion.

8. What does this statement mean to you? In what areas of your life do you seek conversion?