

## Solemnity of St Joseph, 19 March 2014 Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone

### NOTES

1. Don Bosco gave him to us as a Patron. I recall the hymn I learned as a boy at Valdocco in 1946 Mary's Chaste Spouse accompanied by the trade school band.
2. St Joseph is intimately part of Jesus' virginal birth. The Angel's appearance at a dramatic moment in the life of two individuals who respect and love one another deeply opens Joseph to a new life and mission.  
We too in our vocation as educators are called to protect and strengthen the virtue and moral integrity of the young entrusted to us, and to support families lost under tremendous social and cultural pressures, in safeguarding values handed down to us.
3. A misfortune soon struck the little family: persecution and exile. Jesus took on the status of a refugee. In Matthew's account, as happens in refugee situations today, we hear the cry of innocents who are exterminated, we see blood spilt, we see the brutality of repression and the monstrosity of absolute power. How many Salesians there are dedicated to looking after refugees, especially in Africa, and add to their stable educational work taking in so many poor migrants and their families (e.g.. Zambia).
4. St Joseph is a good tradesman (Don Bosco declared that he was patron and model for his working boys), a good carpenter (τέκτον, in Greek) and had Jesus as an apprentice. One of the lessons of Nazareth, Paul VI told us, is work. And today, surprising as it may seem, work, especially for young people, is a problem and challenge for society.  
By vocation we are called to teach work to so many young people, especially in technical schools.  
It is interesting to recall that the Pauline motto "whoever does no work does not eat" was part of the Soviet constitution, and Lenin, in his work 'Will the Bolseviks preserve the power of the State?', wrote: "Whoever does not work does not eat; here is the essential initial, principle rule that the Soviets can and must apply when they are in power!" (cfr Ravasi, Giuseppe, p. 65).
5. St Joseph is patron of a happy death. In the apocryphal gospel the Story of Joseph the carpenter, there is a moving dialogue on death between the dying father and his son Jesus. Tradition and art have given emphasis to this relationship marking the passage to immortal life.  
May St Joseph assist us in this passage which the liturgy surrounds with beautiful prayers and may we be prepared for it when God so wishes!