

Living the Dream

'When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel had commanded him and took his wife into his home.'
(Matt. 1:24)

Men live their dreams when their entire beings are aligned with God's will. Those dreams, as St. Joseph reminds us, may well involve angelic encounters in the night, but more than that, it involves a daily 'yes' to manning up for the mundane needs of those God entrusted to us. Not-usually-mystical or sexy, living the dream is about the good of others. And it always involves forsaking vain dreams in order for our lives to be a blessing, not a waking nightmare, for persons we love most.

A man's value hinges upon the value he demonstrates to those God entrusts to him. His dependents become independent, better able to master difficulties, when a man uses his power to empower wife and kids (or any dependents God entrusts to us.) Happy is the family whose head focused his strength to summon the good of his beloved ones. When he lives to provoke and protect the dignity of his family, a man lives the dream for which God created him.

Conversely, our corporate sadness is sourced in men who fail to keep their promises of love. Uncontestable and radical are the wounds perpetrated by the man who got away—the one who employed his strength to satisfy the sensual gods but wasn't man enough to stay. Binding up the deep cuts of betrayal takes up much of our time in Living Waters. The hard truth is: our church world is full of adult children and ex-wives of men who abandoned their families.

Rather than live the dream, these men now pursue vain dreams that become more nightmarish as time advances. Sexier, younger partnerships reflect a ghastly image of the man who gave up everything for a glimpse of beauty that eludes his grasp. Adulterous partnerships are phantoms which please in order to torment. By their very nature they cannot grant true happiness. These days, lovers of either gender will do but we must be clear that this is the same old nightmare—the man exchanging beloved ones for new models while choosing to numb himself to the monstrous consequence of his actions. A sure sign of entrenched evil in our culture? When such choices are interpreted as 'justice' for the man, be it in the form of a more 'understanding' woman, a 'gay' mate, or the 'freedom' to pursue his transgender self.

For such a time as this, we need the witness of St. Joseph. God chose a just man to fulfill God's dream for his life. In saying 'yes' to that dream daily in how he cared for Mary and Jesus, St. Joseph brought forth the Savior of the Universe.

We don't know much about him from Scripture. He spoke only through righteous action. He quietly united himself with the Father's will; he demonstrated his manhood by advocating for his family at its most vulnerable—Mary in her social shame, Jesus under the rage of Herod. St. Joseph is (for me) Scripture's best witness of inspired masculinity. After all, the divine apple was sustained and strengthened by this most noble tree.

We too may have dreams that we believe God has put on our hearts. Like St. Joseph, we must wake up and act upon its fulfillment every day in order for it to come true. St. Joseph's fidelity to God and loved ones made him great. May we follow his lead of guarding God's best for his family. May we too live our dreams in fear and trembling, exchanging phantoms for the Father's will and true happiness.