

REMARKS OF HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE FOUNDATION
OF THE MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY
SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH
TRINITY MISSIONS, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND
MARCH 19, 2022

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As the Apostolic Nuncio, the representative of the Holy Father to the United States, I want to express the Holy Father's spiritual closeness and heartfelt congratulations at the conclusion of this liturgy which is not only the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, the Husband of Mary, but which also celebrates the centenary of the foundation of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. I express my gratitude to Father Michael Barth for his invitation to be with you. I also express my gratitude to all the members of your community, as well as to the benefactors of the order, who make this missionary work possible.

More than 100 years ago, Father Thomas Augustine Judge founded this congregation. He was the son of immigrants and understand the plight of immigrants and as a Vincentian understood the importance of missionary work and the formation of the clergy. He had a vision for evangelization that involved utilizing the gifts of lay men and women and eventually founded the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, whose apostolate has expanded beyond the United States to Puerto Rico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Haiti, Honduras and Mexico, and whose members include more than 145 members.

You are the heirs to his legacy. The Holy Father wants a Church that goes forth, a Church that is missionary, but this requires not only vision but courage. Today, we are celebrating the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, who was a man of courage, whom Pope Francis recently called a "courageous migrant."

The Holy Father, commenting on the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, drew a contrast between King Herod and Saint Joseph. Herod was ferocious and wanted "to defend his power, his own skin, with ruthless cruelty, as attested to by the execution of one of his wives, some of his children and hundreds of opponents. He was a cruel man: to solve problems, he had just one answer: to kill. He is the symbol of many tyrants of yesteryear and of today." (POPE FRANCIS, GENERAL AUDIENCE, 29 DECEMBER 2021)

In contrast, Saint Joseph, instead of eliminating all his difficulties faced them with courage: in taking Mary as his wife; in obeying the angel's command to flee to Egypt; in returning to his homeland and settling in Nazareth, even when he was afraid. Saint Joseph understand that we cannot eliminate or flee from every problem, but we must confront them with the fortitude that comes from God.

It is part of your apostolate to offer courageous witness in service of those under your care *and* to inspire them to be courageous in confronting the challenges that poverty, dehumanization, and secularization bring. The Holy Father says:

"In reality, the daily life of every person — yours, mine, everyone's — requires courage. One cannot live without courage, the courage to face each day's difficulties. In all times and cultures, we find courageous men and women who, in order to be consistent with

their beliefs, overcame all kinds of difficulties, and endured injustice, condemnation and even death. Courage is synonymous with fortitude..." (Ibid.)

Our people want courageous priests. They will not follow a coward, nor will they respect the authority of one who is not willing to risk something for them. In the face of fear, will we run or will we follow the example of Saint Joseph, who relied on Divine Providence? Your founder, Father Judge, was a man of great vision and courage. It is my sincere hope that as you celebrate your 100th anniversary, you may draw inspiration from him and from your predecessors in this congregation. Congratulations and may God bless you.

[And now, it is my privilege to read to you the message sent by the Vatican Secretary of State for the occasion:

*The Very Reverend Michael K. Barth, S. T
General Custodian
Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity*

His Holiness Pope Francis sends cordial greetings and prayerful good wishes to the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity as they commemorate the hundredth anniversary of their foundation. The Holy Father joins the community in giving thanks to Almighty God for the blessings received during these years through the ministry of generations of priests and brothers. In light of the needs and challenges of the present, he prays that the centennial celebration will inspire the Missionary Servants to dedicate themselves with renewed vigor to their religious consecration as missionary witnesses of the Gospel, committed to building a better world in fidelity to their charism of serving the poor, the abandoned and those spiritually neglected. Commending the members of the Congregation to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, His Holiness cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

*Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State*