

**Reading for the Feast of St Joseph,
Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary
March 19th 2026**

First reading

2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16

‘The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David.’

In those days: The word of the Lord came to Nathan, ‘Go and tell my servant David, “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me. Your throne shall be established for ever.” ’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 89(88):2-3. 4-5. 27, 29. R37a

His descendants shall continue for ever.

I will sing for ever of your mercies, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your fidelity.

I have declared your mercy is established for ever;
your fidelity stands firm as the heavens.

‘With my chosen one I have made a covenant;

I have sworn to David my servant:

I will establish your descendants for ever,
and set up your throne through all ages.’

‘He will call out to me, “You are my father,
my God, the rock of my salvation”.

I will keep my faithful love for him always;
with him my covenant shall last.’

Second reading

Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22

‘In hope he believed against hope.’

Brothers and Sisters: The promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

That is why it depends on faith; in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring, not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. As it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’. In the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead, and calls into existence the things that do not exist; in hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations — as he had been told, ‘So shall your offspring be’. That is why his faith was ‘counted to him as righteousness’.

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 84(83):5

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord,
for ever singing your praise.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel

Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a

‘Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.’

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

Short reflection on the reading for today

It is strange how Christian art has tended to portray Joseph as an old man, more like Jesus’ grandfather, than his father. One striking exception to this is a painting of Joseph by the Spanish artist, El Greco. He depicts Joseph as a vigorous young man, with Jesus clinging to his legs. In that painting Joseph is portrayed as a strong figure, trustworthy and protective. This is much closer to the portrayal of Joseph in the gospels than the usual elderly depiction of him. The gospel today suggests that although Joseph, the young father, was protective of his young son, he also struggled to understand him at times. Having anxiously searched for Jesus with Mary, Joseph finally finds him in temple, only to be told that by Jesus that he must be busy with his Father’s affairs. Joseph was beginning to learn that there was someone else in his young son’s life whom he called “Father,” and to whom he had a stronger allegiance than he had to his earthly parents. Joseph discovered early on that he would have to let his son go to a greater purpose than what he wanted for him. As such, Joseph could serve as an inspiration, a reference point, for all parents who have to work through that difficult task of learning to let go of their offspring.