

**TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE IMAGE OF ST JOSEPH IN EARLY  
MODERN ART**

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## **ABSTRACT**

On studying the frescoes in the Convent of San Marco in Florence, similarities were observed between a fifteenth century image of St Joseph and contemporaneous images of the merchant banker Cosimo de' Medici. Due to the complete lack of any comprehensive research into the representation of St Joseph in Christian art no explanation or inference could be ascertained for the resemblance. Furthermore no inclusive work was found that specified, explained and chronicled the changes in the different styles of representation of St Joseph.

This investigation will determine and chart the transformations in the image of St Joseph from the earliest occurrences up to the present day, concentrating on the medieval period to the conclusion of the Council of Trent as being the most dynamic phase in the changes.

With the intention of contextualising and understanding the implications of the transformations, religious, cultural and societal factors and, where known, the circumstances of individual commissions, will be evaluated.

Therefore the two aims of the thesis are to fill a gap in art historical knowledge concerning images of St Joseph; and to prove that his growing importance to the Church can be seen and comprehended in the transformations the image of St Joseph has undergone.





To my husband Peter, my children Duncan, Iain and Paulina, and my grandchildren Christopher, Susannah, Madeleine, Joseph, Hannah and Naomi.



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## Preface

The mid fifteenth century image of St Joseph in the fresco of the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 1) in Cosimo de' Medici's cell in the Convent of San Marco in Florence is striking in its novelty of location and in its resemblance to Cosimo.<sup>1</sup> Whilst investigating the possible reasons for the peculiarity of this particular painting it became apparent that there were many lacunae in the history of the image of St Joseph.

Therefore investigating the images of St Joseph to determine if the *Adoration of the Magi* in San Marco was an isolated case or part of a wider use of Joseph's image as a pictorial metaphor for cultural and spiritual issues was judged to be grounds for original research.

There has been some analysis of the iconography of individual images of St Joseph since the inception of the Church but in general it has been a comparatively recent phenomenon and it has tended to be piecemeal. Concentration has been on discrete sections, whether paintings, mosaics, or sculptures. There has been no overall description or analysis of the developments in the portrayal of St Joseph. In fact few have examined the role of St Joseph from an artistic perspective and none have examined and charted his evolutionary development taken as a whole from the humble figure in the earliest inclusions to that of the iconic cult figure of Christ's earthly father and father of the Church.

To appreciate who Joseph is it is necessary to have some acquaintance with the stories as told in the literary sources. St Joseph was the betrothed spouse of the

Virgin Mary and the putative father of Christ. He appears in specific circumstances in two of the gospel accounts taken from the New Testament. These relate to the life of Christ. The *Gospel of St Matthew* recounts Christ's genealogy from King David and to Joseph<sup>2</sup>, Joseph's espousal to the Virgin Mary and the revelation of her pregnancy<sup>3</sup>, the angel of the Lord appearing in a dream telling Joseph to take Mary as his wife and to name the child Jesus<sup>4</sup>, the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Adoration of the Magi<sup>5</sup>, the angel of the Lord appearing to Joseph in another dream telling him to take his family and escape the wrath of King Herod by fleeing to Egypt<sup>6</sup>, and a further dream in which the angel tells Joseph that Herod is dead and that he Mary and Jesus can safely return to Nazareth<sup>7</sup>. The *Gospel of St Luke* relates that Mary is espoused to a man named Joseph<sup>8</sup>; it reports their travelling from Nazareth to Bethlehem<sup>9</sup>, the Nativity in Bethlehem<sup>10</sup>, the Adoration of the Shepherds<sup>11</sup>, the Presentation in the Temple<sup>12</sup>, the Passover celebration in Jerusalem twelve years later when Jesus was lost and eventually found by Joseph and Mary in the temple discoursing with the priests<sup>13</sup>, and lastly in the reverse order to that given by St Matthew Joseph's genealogy from Joseph through to "Adam, which was the son of God"<sup>14</sup>. Joseph can be found also in a number of Apocryphal accounts of Christ's life including the *Protoevangelium of James*<sup>15</sup>, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*<sup>16</sup>, the *Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew*<sup>17</sup>, the *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*<sup>18</sup>, the *History of Joseph the Carpenter*<sup>19</sup>, and the *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour*<sup>20</sup>.

The Gospels and the Apocryphal texts were the two major sources of inspiration for artists though the writings of saints, doctors of the church and theologians influenced the manner in which the accounts summarized above were interpreted.

The construal of St Joseph in art is both remarkable and problematical. From the evidence the artistic awareness of the magnitude of his role was gradual. Initially St Joseph would be included as a modest figure at the Nativity crowded in at the edge of the scene: the humble man who could be easily mistaken as one of the shepherds. Or he would be shown in diminutive form seated somewhere along the base line of the picture usually facing out towards the viewer. As the years passed and Joseph's station gained in credence and prominence and his position became more central to the teaching and spirituality of the Church accordingly his size, pose, location and demeanour altered.

There are specific differences in the understanding of St Joseph's role and function; these are signalled through the manner of his artistic interpretation: St Joseph the humble spouse and putative father, St Joseph the carer and provider, St Joseph the exemplar and eventually St Joseph the cult figure.

On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1870 when Pope Pius IX declared St Joseph to be Patron of the Universal Church the Catholic Church officially acknowledged the authority of St Joseph as universal father, protector and mediator. By this time representations of Joseph had come to depict him as a man to espouse devotion, a man of importance, a man of great gentleness and a man of authority.

The designation 'Early Modern' has been employed in the title of this thesis to eradicate confusions of nomenclature and enable contextualisation of the eventual conclusions. However where the term Renaissance is used it will be in reference to the period from Giotto's active phase starting around 1300 to the death of

Michelangelo in 1564. This period is significant to this investigation as it will be argued that it includes some of the major transformations in the manner of representing Joseph.

A study of St Joseph within European culture during the period under examination requires an expansive approach; for as much as religion is a cultural phenomenon, affected by and affecting every aspect of daily life, Joseph's position and function has to be similarly treated and its effect expressed within a broad cultural, social and economic context.

During the two hundred and sixty four year period delineated above as the pivotal period for the research there were many upheavals in Europe of which some manifestation was wrought on the artwork of the time. Not least the Church underwent major dislocations including the Great Western Schism of 1378 – 1417; and its move from Italy to France resulting in there being rival popes in Rome and Avignon.<sup>21</sup> The Anglican Church was established during the early years of the fifteenth century as was the Protestant Church in Germany. Good climate conditions at the beginning of the fourteenth century resulted in heavy crop yields which drove wages down while at the same time causing a sudden rise in population. This demographic change was reversed first by the ensuing Great Famine of 1315 -1317 and then by the many outbreaks of plague of which the worst epidemic became known as Black Death and occurred across Europe from 1346 to 1351<sup>22</sup> reducing populations by as many as fifty percent in many places including Tuscany.<sup>23</sup> Columbus sailed across the Atlantic and discovered a new continent. Politically, with the slow disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire,



monarchs and princes independently sought economic advantage over their rivals. The Italian city-states were no exception vying with each other for power and economic gain.<sup>24</sup> Consequently with some many possible factors influencing artists and patrons alike any investigation to some degree must apply a multidisciplinary approach to the subject.

In the twentieth century, perhaps in response to Pope Pius's declaration, works which include some examination of St Joseph and his role began to appear. One of the first was published in 1908 by Joseph Seitz. He wrote of the veneration of St Joseph and his position in the Church *apropos* the emergence of cult devotion prior to the Council of Trent in *Die Verehrung des heiligen Joseph in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung bis zum Konzil von Trient dargestellt*.<sup>25</sup> He discussed the development of the cult of St Joseph from a social and cultural perspective rather than through the analysis of images of St Joseph. Relying on information gathered by Seitz, Joseph Braun in 1924 briefly discussed St Joseph as small component of his extensive study of altarpieces: *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*.<sup>26</sup>

In 1944 the Chicago-born Jesuit Fr Francis L. Filas published the first of his two investigations into the role of St Joseph within Christian spirituality entitled *The Man Nearest to Christ*. In 1962 he went on to publish a larger work in which he sought to 'bring up to date the complete life, theology and devotional history' of St Joseph, being inspired to do so by the custodians of Brother André's St Joseph's Oratory in Montreal who at the time were sponsoring new theological research into St Joseph.<sup>27</sup> The work was called *Joseph: The Man Closest to Jesus*.

In it Filas describes Joseph and his function through literary examples drawn mostly from the Scriptures and Apocryphal texts. Only occasionally does he make reference to images for these books are primarily theological works.

In 1945, a year after Filas's first book had been printed, Meyer Schapiro, a lecturer at Columbia University and an expert on early Christian, medieval and modern art published an article in the *Art Bulletin* in which he discussed the significance of the images of two mousetraps in one of the wings of a Netherlandish triptych believed to have been painted sometime between 1425 and 1435 and known as the Mérode Altarpiece (pl. 2).<sup>28</sup> The panel in question featured St Joseph the carpenter in his workshop.<sup>29</sup> Momentous in its assessment of Joseph's role, Schapiro proposed that the manner of his presence in the painting, in the pursuance of his craft, was more than a 'whimsical invention of the artist' but an illuminating insight into the minds of fifteenth century Christians.<sup>30</sup> He highlighted the unusualness of coupling an image of St Joseph the artisan at work with products of his labours around him, namely the mousetraps, with one of the Virgin in an Annunciation scene.<sup>31</sup> Schapiro explained that Christians and theologians in the fifteenth century would have been familiar with the concept of the mousetrap as bait box in which to catch the devil through the writings of St Augustine who had used the symbolism of the mousetrap - the bait being Christ - as a means of defeating the devil in 'De ascensione Domini', *Sermo CCXIII*.<sup>32</sup> In his article Schapiro admitted that he could not explain why specifically at this time the Franciscans enthusiasm for St Joseph had lead to their establishment of a feast day for St Joseph in 1399; but that this in turn had precipitated the Dominicans into doing likewise a few years

later. Schapiro associated these events with the instigation of the cult of St Joseph. He extrapolated from these events that St Joseph's inclusion in the triptych of which the central panel was a representation of the Annunciation, and the very act of making symbolic wooden objects with which to trounce Satan was particularly timely.<sup>33</sup>

The triptych is understood to have been painted by the Flemish artist Robert Campin<sup>34</sup> also known as the Master of Flémalle.<sup>35</sup>

In the mid 1950s the Mérode Altarpiece was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and moved to the Cloisters Collection. Its relocation and renovation generated more investigations and interpretations of its meaning, in particular the wing that includes the representation of St Joseph in his workshop. Art historians passed their opinions on the intricate iconography surrounding this one particular representation, including Theodore Rousseau who described it in detail.<sup>36</sup> He saw it as a painting that bridged the gap between 'two periods'; that it encapsulated 'the medieval tradition and lays the foundation for the development of modern painting'<sup>37</sup>. Yet at the same time he was of the opinion that the painting continually intrigued the viewer into trying to interpret its imagery.<sup>38</sup> Erwin Panofsky discussed the painting and Joseph's role within it in his book *Early Netherlandish Painting* published in 1964. He described and analysed in some depth the implements in Joseph's workshop calling the demonstration of Joseph in this environment as emphasising his 'homely virtues'.<sup>39</sup> Within his discussions he suggested that Joseph was making part of a foot warmer. Also he saw the whole timbre of the painting as a move away from the

condescension aimed at Joseph so often visible in the Netherlandish International Gothic style of painting, but did not pursue this line of examination. Charles Hlsley Minott also writing in 1964 discussed the theological implications of Joseph's role in the painting saying that he saw Joseph as being oblivious to the 'diabolical' nature of the implements arrayed around in his workshop, that they were the tools which made and signified him as being an instrument of God.<sup>40</sup> Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin when writing in 1975 acknowledged that the decisive change in the interpretation of the painting came about in 1945 with Schapiro's reassessment of St Joseph in his workshop.<sup>41</sup> Marilyn Lavin in 1977 continued the debate as to the meaning of carpenter's implements and the items produced and ranged around Joseph. She was of the opinion that the object identified by Panofsky as part of a foot warmer was in fact a wine strainer and thus had Eucharistic implications.<sup>42</sup> Cynthia Hahn in her article for the *Art Bulletin* in 1986 is more revealing; like Panofsky she mentions that the derision aimed at Joseph in earlier works alternates with those of Joseph as the conscientious *paterfamilias*.<sup>43</sup> She skilfully pulls together the previous interpretations touched on here. She views the Mérode Altarpiece as a whole and sees the work as a model of the new nuclear family. She does not describe the manner of earlier interpretations of St Joseph nor how later artists were to transform the image of Joseph beyond Campin's painting.

Sheila Schwartz in 1985 took a different and wider approach in examining the images of Joseph in the late fourteenth century Petri-Altar or Grabow Altar (pl. 3)<sup>44</sup>, a work attributed to Master Bertram.<sup>45</sup> She is illuminating in her discussion of two panels in particular, those of the *Nativity* and the *Rest on the Flight into*

*Egypt* and is eager to establish this change in his persona as being symptomatic of the emergence of the cult of St Joseph instigated by the writings of St Bernard of Clairvaux and others.<sup>46</sup> However, she does not discuss the transformations that the image of St Joseph had undergone up to the point at which Master Bertram painted his altarpiece. Neither does she indicate how it developed.

Major additions to the body of works examining St Joseph and to some degree the image of St Joseph occurred in 1993 when St Joseph's University in Philadelphia published two books by the Jesuit Fr Joseph F Chorpenning. The first, which Chorpenning introduced and translated, was the summary by Jerónimo Gracián of the *Excellencies of St Joseph* (1597). In its original format the book had six engravings by Christophorus Blancus; but these were not present in Chorpenning's translation of and selection from the *Summary*.<sup>47</sup> In the 1993 book Chorpenning examines selections from Gracián's *Summary*, and analyses mostly seventeenth century depictions of Joseph, particularly those in relation to the veneration of St Joseph by St Teresa of Ávila. Additionally he discusses the influence of the inspector of art for the Spanish Inquisition Francisco Pacheco's book the *Art of Painting* on religious imagery in seventeenth century colonial art. Then in 1995 Chorpenning wrote a companion book in which the six engravings by Christophorus Blancus are discussed rather more for their theological implications than for their iconographical connotations.<sup>48</sup> Though both these books are informative their intention is not specifically to investigate transformations of the image of St Joseph rather their purpose is to examine Gracián's summary.

A new dimension to the study of the iconography of St Joseph was published in 2001. The book is by Dr Carolyn C Wilson of St Joseph's University in Philadelphia and a colleague of Joseph Chorpenning. The university inaugurated an annual St Joseph Lecture in 1992 and in 1998 Dr Wilson was invited to give the seventh lecture. Stimulated by this experience Dr Wilson's book called *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations* was published. The book presents Wilson's response to research she undertook in 1992 whilst writing a catalogue entry for *Nativity with Shepherds*, a painting by Titian's brother Francesco Vecellio intended for the high altar in the church of St Joseph in Belluno.<sup>49</sup> Whilst investigating the painting and its iconography she realised that information appertaining to the image of St Joseph had been overlooked. Here was the opportunity to expand her investigations of the image of St Joseph and to submit the results of her efforts as a book. In the resultant book she refers to the vast amount of work undertaken into what she calls 'Josephological' investigations by St Joseph's Oratory in Montreal; these were theological, sociological and cultural studies. Her own book gives a concise twenty page summary of the theology and cult of St Joseph prior to the Council of Trent then continues by examining specific altarpieces that she has chosen to illustrate her case that Joseph requires deeper examination in terms of Renaissance art. She briefly defines the pre-Tridentine art and theology of St Joseph; then she explores the depictions and estimation of St Joseph as a cult figure and to study the imagery of St Joseph during and after the conclusion of the Council of Trent in 1563. She willingly admits that the information concerning images of St Joseph prior to the Council of Trent is so vast that in her own words 'there is no aspect of the research I could as yet consider to have exhausted.'<sup>50</sup> In

analysing the fervour for St Joseph she takes for her examination five altarpieces from the late Renaissance. Using this process she endeavours to define the establishment of the cult of St Joseph. She concludes by raising further questions relating to the image of St Joseph in the immediate post-Tridentine, Baroque and Romantic periods, in particular motifs such as the antique architectural ruins in images of the Nativity and the Adoration, the manner of the inclusion of Joseph's rod, the colouration of Joseph's garments, and the elision between St Peter and St Joseph.

In 2005 there came a possible explanation for the sudden rise in popularity of St Joseph, the emergence of a cult following and, in terms of this thesis, the change in the physical appearance of St Joseph in the early fifteenth century. In his biography of the French philosopher, theologian and chancellor of the University of Paris Jean Gerson the historian Brian Patrick McGuire, in an attempt to capture the true essence of the age, concentrated on translating and analysing Gerson's writings in Latin and French. McGuire's intention was to contextualise Gerson's life within a period he calls the 'last medieval reformation'. Not only did McGuire's investigations reveal the depths of Gerson's crises of conscience but also account for Gerson's advocacy of St Joseph as someone worthy of veneration.<sup>51</sup> When Gerson emerged from his self-imposed refuge in the cathedral of Notre Dame in 1413 he began to write of St Joseph. And in his writings Gerson spoke of miracles; the implication being that he may have experienced them himself. McGuire admits he cannot confirm whether the miracles are attributable to incidents encountered by Gerson, but it was at this time that Gerson's promotion of St Joseph originated, his insistence of Joseph's chastity

and of the Saint's duty of care towards the Virgin and Jesus.<sup>52</sup> Gerson's passion for St Joseph led him to write to churches dedicated to the Virgin pleading for the establishment of a day commemorated to the marriage of Joseph and Mary.<sup>53</sup>

In 2006 Carolyn C Wilson published her lecture to the Internationalen Symposiums über den hl. Josef in which she argued that further research led her to the conclusion that the growth of cult of St Joseph in Renaissance Italy had been more substantial than she had previously believed.<sup>54</sup> Her discoveries *apropos* the paintings of the *Betrothal of the Virgin* by both Perugino (pl. 4)<sup>55</sup> and Raphael (pl. 5)<sup>56</sup> provide confirmation of their importance in the study of images of St Joseph.

This present investigation aims to examine more examples from Renaissance art, to concentrate on the imagery rather than the theology (though this has to be considered), to highlight the transformations of the image of St Joseph, and above all to establish and clarify Joseph's iconographical passage from being an accessory to the story of Christ to that of becoming a cult figure, *paterfamilias* and ultimately Father of the Church.

The transformations do not necessarily follow a clear, continuous, chronological linear sequence so the broad movement will be extrapolated; and thus they will be discussed in terms of the perceived sequential trend. For ease the thesis is more or less organised chronologically and by theme. However there may be instances where stringent chronology has to be temporally suspended in order to maintain lucidity. Thus there will be occasions when it has proved necessary to take a step



back for the sake of clarity. For example Raphael's *Betrothal of the Virgin* will be studied initially for its subject matter then in a later chapter as an example of Joseph's 'divinity'.

The thesis contends that despite the volatility of the changes in St Joseph's appearance, location, status, etc., there is a fundamental, progressive movement and reasoning which can be observed.

For reasons of intelligibility and perspective account has been made as to the societal and cultural environment in which these images have been produced. Therefore for this reason at times the investigation will make recourse to events beyond the strict visual and temporal confines of the representation in order to justify a transformation.

The thesis is organised in chapters and where necessary in sections within those chapters.

Dating and attribution of individual works of art are in accordance with the general consensus of opinion. Those that depart from the norm will be highlighted.

The major primary literary sources regarding Joseph, the primary literary sources influencing contemporary thought, the relevant early Doctors of the Church, and the pertinent theologians and philosophers are presented and discussed in the introductory Chapter I.

Dating will be indicated as BCE (Before Common Era) in referring to the time before Christ's birth and CE (Common Era) for anything beyond Christ's birth up to the year 1000, after which the dating should be self-explanatory.

As most of the representations discussed were executed prior to the publication of the King James Bible it was deemed appropriate to take all biblical quotations from the bible in common usage within the Church. This was the St Jerome's Latin Vulgate Bible. The English translations are from the Douay-Rheims Bible as it is a direct translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible.<sup>57</sup>

In general the thesis is organised and punctuated in accordance with the *Oxford Manual of Style* published 2002.

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## **Chapter I**

### **The Written Sources**

The written sources are comprised of the Scriptural testimony, the Apocryphal texts, the writings of the Doctors of the Church and those who wrote specifically about Joseph.

It was through these various sources that images of Joseph were created that either illustrated a narrative or symbolised a Church dogma.

#### **1) Scriptural Testimony**

The Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke dating from about 70 CE recount Joseph's involvement in Christ's life. Joseph's name appears in St Matthew Chapter I verses 18 to 20 in references to Christ's lineage; in Chapter I verses 21 to 25 in reference to Joseph's first dream; and in Chapter II retelling the Nativity story and Joseph's second and third dreams. In St Luke's Gospel Chapter I verse 27 Joseph is mentioned as being espoused to Mary. Chapter II details the Nativity, the Purification, and the finding of the Saviour in the temple. Joseph is only mentioned once more in Chapter III verse 23 which details Christ's genealogy in which it is stated that Jesus is the son of Joseph.

However, scripturally the genealogies vary in the specificities of Joseph's relationship to Jesus, the name of Joseph's father and to Joseph's Davidic descent; but both Gospels took considerable care in delineating Joseph's family

tree signifying the necessity to locate Joseph firmly within the new Christian canon and denote his divine associations.

Calling it the 'book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham',<sup>1</sup> St Matthew describes the begetting of each generation through Jesse, David and Solomon eventually down to Jacob who '...begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ'.<sup>2</sup> St Luke chooses to wait until the occasion of Christ's Baptism in the third chapter of his gospel before detailing Christ's family tree, in which he writes that Joseph was the son of Heli.<sup>3</sup>

In the early chapters of Matthew's Gospel Joseph is mentioned by name almost as many times as Mary, sometimes as an adjunct of the Virgin, as in the Nativity; and on other occasions in his own right. Conversely Luke writes of Joseph in relation to the Nativity,<sup>4</sup> the Purification<sup>5</sup> and the occasion of finding Jesus in the temple where he is discovered disputing with the doctors.<sup>6</sup> As neither Mark nor John refer to the Nativity or Christ's early life it is unremarkable that Joseph is not mentioned by name in either account.

## **2) Apocryphal Texts**

The second major influence were the Apocryphal New Testament texts; writings that were not considered as part of the formal Christian canon. There are a great many of them similar to the canonical New Testament in the form of gospels, acts, epistles and apocalypses.<sup>7</sup> The authors of these writings created new stories in order to expand and clarify the Scriptures; as a result Joseph is cited

considerably more frequently than in the Gospels.<sup>8</sup> Some of the stories show Joseph in a less than flattering light as can be observed for example in representations of the apocryphal story of Joseph's betrothal to the Virgin.

The *Protoevangelium of James* is the earliest of the Apocryphal texts, which though it appears to date from the latter half of the second century, is understood to have been written by an eye witness, namely Christ's brother.<sup>9</sup> The *Protoevangelium* describes events in the Virgin's life and the birth of Christ and includes contrasting vignettes of Joseph's personality. Regarding Joseph it makes four important assertions not found in the New Testament Gospels. Some of these claims influenced the manner and subject matter of representations of St Joseph: firstly Joseph's great age; secondly that he was a widower with two sons; thirdly his reluctance to accept Mary's hand in marriage; and fourthly the manner in which it is revealed that he is to be Mary's husband. In detailing Mary's life and her betrothal and marriage to Joseph the *Protoevangelium* discloses Joseph's doubts and uncertainties regarding his appropriateness and his fear of ridicule as the Virgin's husband. He says quite candidly to the temple priest: 'I have children, and I am an old man, and she is a young girl. I am afraid lest I become a laughing-stock to the sons of Israel.'<sup>10</sup> In this context his later disquiet on discovering her pregnancy seems altogether unsurprising, if somewhat overstated and dramatic, comparing himself to Adam whose wife Eve is also described as having dishonoured her spouse in his absence:

...he smote his face, and threw himself on the ground upon sackcloth and wept bitterly, saying: With what face shall I look upon the Lord my God? And what prayer shall I make about this maiden? Because I received her a virgin out of the temple of the Lord, and I have not watched over her.

Who is it that has hunted me down? Who has done this evil thing in my house, and defiled a virgin? Has not the history of Adam been repeated in me?<sup>11</sup>

Joseph is described as being 'greatly afraid' by the incident and considers his options; whether to hide her, which would go against the laws of the land, or expose her and face the wrath of 'the sons of Israel'. But worst still are his fears for the safety of the child; for if the infant is incarnated of an angel, as Joseph has been led to believe he cannot allow innocent blood to be spilled. The text goes on to chronicle the birth of Christ, confirmation of Mary's continuing virginity, and Herod's search for both Jesus and John the Baptist with which the account concludes.

The inadequacies of Joseph's carpentry skills are considered in the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* also known as the *Infancy Story of Thomas*, of which there are two versions one from Greek origins and the other originally from Latin.<sup>12</sup> Both basically recount similar bizarre occurrences such as Jesus striking a child dead for little reason only to raise him up again. In both accounts Joseph in his parental role rebukes Jesus for his cruelty. Joseph is made to look inept having cut a piece of wood too short; but Jesus fixes the situation by pulling the plank to the desired length. Joseph's son James is mentioned in passing. The Gospel ends with the incidence of the finding of the saviour in the temple. Lienhard suggests that Joseph's mistakes are intended to glorify Christ.<sup>13</sup> Yet the emphasis on the relationship between Joseph and Jesus rather than on Jesus and Mary is arresting and interesting.



The *Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew* relates Joseph's espousal to the Virgin; describing how all the unmarried men of the tribe of Judah, to which Joseph was one, were summoned to the temple and were to leave their rods on the altar overnight. From the top of the rod belonging to the man who should take and care for the Virgin would fly a dove. But on the following day none of the rods produced a dove. The high priest Abiathar made a burnt offering and the angel of the Lord appeared telling him that the shortest rod had not been laid upon the altar. It is Joseph's rod and as it is placed on the altar the dove appears. Joseph complains that he is an old man and has children. But the temple priests insist that he take the Virgin as it is the will of God. Joseph obeys. Joseph and Mary accompanied by five other temple virgins go to his home. When Mary becomes pregnant Joseph is taken to the temple where he swears he has not touched the Virgin; whereupon Abiathar makes Joseph drink holy water which will indicate if he has sinned. But there is no sign of any wrongdoing and it is deemed that Joseph is innocent. The text continues by relating the Nativity, the Adoration of the Shepherds and includes Joseph's dreams which resulted in their escape into Egypt. On their way they encounter dragons, food shortage and extreme heat. All of their sufferings are assuaged by Jesus. After some years and under Joseph's guidance they return to Nazareth. The text emphasises Joseph's great age and that he is a grandfather with grandchildren older than the Virgin. For her part the Virgin takes a vow of chastity consigning Joseph to a life of celibacy. The miraculous acts which the infant Christ performs are often at Joseph's expense, presenting him as being inadequate, a simpleton, and deficient in his carpentry skills.<sup>14</sup> The text sheds light upon Joseph's all too human nature, leaving the impression of someone who only through the grace of God and Jesus can he fulfil

his role of *Nutritor Domini* (nurturer, carer and provider of Jesus) almost in spite of himself.

The *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*, also known as *Evangelium de Nativitate Mariae* and believed to date from the third century, is short. It narrates the Virgin's espousal to Joseph and the miraculous conception and birth of Christ. In describing Joseph's response to Mary's pregnancy Joseph is shown to want to take the honourable action and to send her away quietly so as not to draw undue and unpleasant attention to her. For this the writer describes Joseph as 'just' and 'pious'. 'For being a just man, he was not willing to expose her; nor being a pious man to injure her fair fame...' <sup>15</sup> An angel of the Lord who appears to Joseph in a dream calls Joseph 'thou son of David' as a reminder of the acceptability of his lineage. The angel then informs Joseph of Mary's continuing purity and assures him that she is above reproach, and that he should still take her as his wife. <sup>16</sup> Joseph does as he is commanded; not to think 'any evil of her; and fear not to take her as your wife' as she is pregnant through the Holy Spirit and will 'bring forth the Son of God' whom Joseph will name 'Jesus, that is, Saviour.' The Gospel makes plain that Joseph fulfils his duty and that he 'took care of her and kept her in chastity.' <sup>17</sup>

Christ is the narrator describing Joseph's life and eventual death in the Coptic text, written in the fourth century and known as *The History of Joseph the Carpenter*. Joseph is a widower with six children prior to the birth of Christ. <sup>18</sup> He is ninety one when he marries the Virgin and one hundred and eleven when he dies with the Virgin and Jesus at his side. Christ praises Joseph throughout,

calling him father and pronouncing him 'righteous', 'pious' and 'furnished with wisdom and learning'.<sup>19</sup> Jesus relates that Joseph was made a priest of the temple and that when Mary was twelve years old the lot fell to Joseph to care for her until she was of marriageable age. He takes her to his home and two years elapse; then he discovers that Mary is pregnant. Joseph is so very worried and perplexed that he will not eat or drink. On falling asleep he has a dream in which the angel Gabriel appears to him telling him to take Mary as his wife that she has conceived of the Holy Spirit. The account continues with the Nativity and Joseph's dream in which the angel tells Joseph to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus in order to escape from King Herod. When all is safe and Herod is dead Joseph experiences a further dream in which the angel tells him to take his family home to Nazareth. There are then a number of verses in which Jesus praises Joseph. The narration finishes with Joseph's death. Christ relates how he 'embraced dead body of his father Joseph and wept over it.'<sup>20</sup>

The *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour* relates the story of Christ's Nativity and the Holy Family's subsequent escape to Egypt where a number of miraculous events occur. There is little emphasis on Joseph, though he is mentioned in conjunction with Mary throughout thereby emphasising their dual roles as parents, until Chapters 38 and 39, at which point Joseph is described as not being 'very skilful in carpentry'.<sup>21</sup> The gospel relates how the king of Jerusalem asks Joseph to make him a throne. It takes Joseph two years to complete during which time he remains in the palace. When the work is completed it is evident that Joseph has made the throne too small. The king on seeing this becomes very angry and Joseph grows fearful. Jesus asks him what is

wrong. Joseph replies 'I have spoiled all the work that I have been two years at.' But Jesus tells him not to fear, and between them they pull the throne to its correct size. Thus as in the earlier *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* Joseph's incompetence is quoted in order for Jesus to perform a miracle.<sup>22</sup>

### **3) The Early Fathers and Doctors of the Church**

Important to the understanding of the theological situation in which the early Church functioned and in order to apprehend Joseph's position within that constitution are the early doctors of the Church. The four great early doctors of the Western Church were Sts Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great. Of the Eastern or Greek Church there were three great early doctors Sts John Chrysostom, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. In the formative years of the Church intellectuals concerned themselves with the main precepts of Christian spirituality and with evangelising the word of God. The manner of Christ's incarnation, his relationship with God and the role of the Virgin were of major importance. Even so, though Joseph was not a foremost player at this stage nonetheless he was essential in specific areas, for instance in reference to Christ's genealogy and in his role as Christ's earthly father.

#### **a) The Latin Fathers and Doctors of the Church**

For the early Latin Church Fathers the degree of intimacy inherent in Joseph's roles as both parent and husband was problematic. For Mary to be inviolate she could not be envisaged as an unwed mother; so Joseph had to be promoted as an elderly man incapable of fathering children due to his age, possibly a widower, in order to be accepted as an ideal candidate as husband. The Western Church, in

accordance with Saints Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine, determined that Joseph should be perceived as being as immaculate and hallowed as the Virgin. Joseph's role in the marriage, though one of convenience, was one of protection, to deflect slanderous comments and allow Mary and Jesus to escape the devil's detection.<sup>23</sup>

To the contrary Helvidius in 383 CE argued that Joseph had had carnal knowledge of Mary; and therefore he was against the feasibility of Mary's continuing state of virginity after Christ's birth.<sup>24</sup> To support his case he quoted from Matthew's Gospel that when Christ's 'mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost;' <sup>25</sup> and continued by further quoting from Matthew that 'Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son.'<sup>26</sup> He contended that this meant that Mary and Joseph had had sexual relations after the birth of Christ. As additional evidence that she was not a virgin in perpetuity he stressed the references to Christ being Mary's 'first-born son', and also to the mention of 'brethren' in the Gospels.<sup>27</sup> He extrapolated that if she had borne other children then the sacrament of matrimony had to be held in higher esteem than that of virginity.

In response to Helvidius St Jerome, though he did not dwell long on matters of Joseph's paternity, did not dispute Joseph's status as putative father of Christ. This in itself is indicative that even at this early period of Christianity Joseph was regarded as a person of some eminence. Rather Jerome was exercised by his thorough disapproval of the Apocryphal texts on the grounds that, amongst their other falsehoods, they circulated the conceit of Joseph having had children from a previous marriage or marriages in order to explain the many biblical references to

Christ's 'brethren'.<sup>28</sup> In his response to Helvidius, Jerome insisted that 'Joseph also was virginal through Mary in order that from a virginal marriage a virginal son might be born'.<sup>29</sup>

Jerome's argument against Helvidius was vigorous. He believed in the perpetuity of Mary's virginity. In *Sanctae Mariae Virginitate Perpetua* (*The Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary*) he stated that when Matthew used the word 'knew' he was not necessarily using the verb in its carnal sense. Contrary to Helvidius's opinion Jerome contended that in the Scriptures a word such as 'know' had more than one interpretation and that Helvidius himself had proffered a sound argument for the word having at least two meanings:

Our reply (to Helvidius) is briefly this, - the words *knew* and *till* in the language of Holy Scripture are capable of a double meaning. As to the former ... no one doubts that it is often used of knowledge of the understanding, as, for instance, 'the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not.'<sup>30</sup>

Jerome also asserted that in the case of Mary and Joseph virginity was a more sanctified state than marriage, though this did not devalue the sanctity of marriage and he quoted from *1 Corinthians* to substantiate his case.<sup>31</sup>

St Ambrose agreed with St Jerome on the sanctity of marriage, but more emphatically on the inestimable value of chastity and Joseph's role in the perpetuity of Mary's virginity; adding that 'He who has preserved it (chastity) is an angel.'<sup>32</sup> In 389 CE, along with a group of bishops at a Synod meeting, he composed a letter to Pope Siricius asking the rhetorical question '... what praise

can be given marriage if there is no glory in virginity?' In his treatise *Concerning virgins* he wrote

I do not discourage marriage, but recapitulate the advantages of holy virginity. This is a gift of a few only, that is all. And virginity itself cannot exist, unless it have some mode of coming into existence. I am comparing good things with good things, that it may be clear which is the more excellent. Nor do I allege any opinion of my own, but I repeat that which the Holy Spirit spake to the prophet:<sup>33</sup> 'Blessed is the barren that is undefiled.'<sup>34</sup>

Ambrose stated in 392 CE that virginity should be granted the highest respect.<sup>35</sup>

St Augustine in 400 CE concurred with the Greek Doctor of the Church Origen and suggested that the name Heli, which Luke gave to Joseph's father, was in fact the name of his putative or adopted father and in this way his lineage could be traced back to David.<sup>36</sup> Thus in as much as Christ was the putative son of Joseph, so for the sake of expediency was Joseph the 'adopted' son of Mary's father.

St Augustine, in his great work *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* in 415 CE, was of the opinion that when man lived in paradise 'the body' was not 'activated by the turbulent heat of passion'; it was without the 'allurement of passion goading him on'.<sup>37</sup> In his later work *On Marriage and Concupiscence* Augustine went as far as likening this pure and unadulterated form of matrimony to the relationship between Christ and the Church stating that there was 'a certain sacramental bond in marriage'.<sup>38</sup>

Scriptural precedence for the pursuance of abstinence could be readily demonstrated in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.<sup>39</sup> Logically if Christ's mother was a virgin it was reasonable to expect that so too was his putative father, Joseph. St Augustine was adamant that though the marriage was chaste Joseph was a true husband to the Virgin and true conjugal affection joined her to him.<sup>40</sup> Thus Augustine was of the fervent belief that the marriage of Mary and Joseph and their fidelity to one another conferred fatherhood on Joseph.<sup>41</sup>

The patristic texts all appeared to agree that Joseph fulfilled the two functions of protector of Mary and *Nutritor Domini*. To maintain their position on the divinity of Christ it became essential for the Church Fathers to acknowledge the Virgin's role in Church dogma, and by endorsing her immaculacy they were proving that Joseph too was not only divinely chosen by God but was also chaste.<sup>42</sup> The concept of an immaculate existence became synonymous with spirituality; and Joseph became the paradigm.

#### **b) The Greek Fathers and Doctors of the Church**

In the Greek Church Origen's *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke* written about 240 CE describe Joseph's role as foster father. Origen believed that Luke intentionally represented Joseph as Jesus's father, and that Jesus 'honoured' Joseph as his father because it was fitting that children should be subject to their parents' will. He opined that '...the greater is subject to the lesser. Jesus understood that Joseph was greater than he in age, therefore he gave him the honour due a parent.'<sup>43</sup>



St Ephrem the Syrian pronounced a Venerable Father of the Greek Church around 340 CE explained Joseph's role as being as if he were a male palm tree that could produce offspring by casting its shadow on the female palm tree. St Ephrem described that

in the same way that they (male palms) are called fathers although they do not generate, so is Joseph called father although he is not the husband of the Virgin.<sup>44</sup>

Of the three doctors of the Eastern Church it was St John Chrysostom, the archbishop of Constantinople, who around the beginning of the fifth century, wrote emphatically of Joseph's importance as father. He reminded his readers that in dreams the angel of the Annunciation commits the care of Mary to Joseph. Furthermore the angel charges Joseph with the momentous and significant task of naming the child Jesus.<sup>45</sup> Chrysostom also takes some time in accounting for St Matthew's use of the expression 'just man' in reference to Joseph, saying that Joseph's behaviour to Mary being with child was contingent upon him being the just man,

By 'a just man' in this place he (St Matthew) means him that is virtuous in all things. For both freedom from covetousness is justice, and universal virtue is also justice; and it is mostly in this latter sense that the Scripture uses the name justice...<sup>46</sup>

Chrysostom continues that Joseph is the 'just man' - by which he means that Joseph is 'good and considerate' when he learns of Mary's pregnancy, even before it is divulged to him the manner of that pregnancy. It is for this reason that Joseph determines to remove her to somewhere safe; to 'put her away privily'.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4) Joseph's Supporters and Promoters**

In the first millennium Joseph's promoters were the mostly the fathers and doctors of the Greek and Latin Churches. They presented Joseph as a 'just' man and saw no problem in considering him as an integral part of the life of Christ.

By the beginning of the second millennium the approbation of Joseph was escalating in response to the increase in veneration of the Virgin. The Cistercians founded in 1089 by Robert of Molesme, in particular held the Virgin and St Joseph in high regard. One of their number, St Bernard of Clairvaux traditionally known as the 'mellifluous doctor' for the sweet sound of his voice and the beauty of his writing style is considered by some to have been the instigator of the cult of St Joseph through his Homily I *De Laudibus Virginis*.<sup>48</sup> In his sermons of 1130 on the *Glories of the Virgin* he emphasised Joseph's importance by reminding his listeners that Christ had been subject to Joseph's authority.<sup>49</sup> However he was equally devoted to both Joseph and Mary. Bernard's godliness and dedication affected and added weight to all he wrote and preached: 'What and how great was the dignity of Joseph...that he merited to be honoured by God, so that he was called...the father of God.'<sup>50</sup> Bernard wrote over 2500 sermons<sup>51</sup> many of which were translated from Latin into the vernacular thereby reaching a wide audience.<sup>52</sup> Bernard's *Sermons* and *Canticles* proved to be extremely convincing and highly regarded,<sup>53</sup> and his mellifluous style of oratory, as well as the persuasiveness of his writings inspired clerics and members of the laity alike.

In *Sermon II* from the *Glories of the Virgin Mother* Bernard emphasised Joseph's signal importance due to his function as the only true witness of Mary's perpetual

virginity by being with her always as guardian. He wrote that 'as to the Mother's integrity I should find it easier to accept the testimony of St Joseph - her guardian and associate - than that of the Virgin defending herself by the sole witness of her own conscience.'<sup>54</sup> Moreover he debated whether 'seeing her with child before marriage would not rather declare her a sinner than a virgin'.<sup>55</sup> But Bernard came to the conclusion that only through the witness of Joseph could the virtue of Mary be established and confirmed. He finished the sermon by referring to Joseph, like Chrysostom seven hundred years earlier, as 'a just man'. In an antiphon Bernard spoke of Joseph as the 'fortunate man, blessed Joseph, to whom it was given to see the God whom many kings yearned to see and did not see...not only to see and hear, but to carry, to kiss, to clothe, and protect Him!'.<sup>56</sup>

The Cistercians were not the only Order to focus on the power and spiritual consequence of St Joseph. The Franciscans were devoted to the concept of and belief in Christ's humanity; and therefore were passionate about his relationship with his mother and earthly father Joseph. He was considered as very much a part of God's plan for the humanity of Christ, and this is substantiated in their writings. The Franciscan friar known as the Seraphic Doctor, St Bonaventure's thirteenth century *Commentary on the Gospel of St Luke* repeatedly calls Joseph a righteous man and upholds St Luke's version of the lineage of Christ and Joseph's place within that genealogy. He wrote that Joseph and Mary were 'united in the purest and most perfect of all unions', and it was Joseph who verified the Virgin's sanctity.<sup>57</sup> He continued

Of ineffable praise of Mary, Joseph trusted more to her chastity than to her womb, and more to grace than to nature; he rather believed it possible for a woman to conceive without a man, than that Mary could sin.<sup>58</sup>

In the mid thirteenth century the Dominican St Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* reinforced Joseph's status within the Church by contending that as Jesus was fostered by Joseph therefore Joseph was his main provider and carer, the *Nutritor Domini*. Similar to Bernard of Clairvaux and St Bonaventure, St Thomas Aquinas stipulated that Joseph's role also designated him witness to Christ being born of a virgin. Aquinas maintained that the marriage of the Virgin and Joseph was absolutely true because they both consented to the "nuptial bond" but not "expressly to the bond of flesh ... And for this reason the angel calls Mary the wife of Joseph."<sup>59</sup>

St Bridget of Sweden influenced the form of Nativity representations for many artists, resulting in the emphasis on the great age of Joseph, of him carrying a candle dimmed by the holy effulgence emanating from infant Christ, and of him kneeling in adoration before the child.<sup>60</sup> In her *Revelaciones* written during the 1330s which were widely read, she recounted her vision of the birth of Jesus, describing Joseph's actions and those of the Virgin's in some detail. The visual quality of the account of her dreams came to be reflected in the paintings they inspired.

Born in Sweden in 1303 St Bridget commenced having visions when she was seven. At her father's request she had married and raised a large family but on the death of her husband she pursued her religious calling and with the help of an

amanuensis recorded her visions and her prayers.<sup>61</sup> These highly regarded tracts were made known far and wide amongst the clergy. They became an important and influential source material for artists particularly in Northern Europe. By placing Joseph in adoration and often in parity with the Virgin she drew attention to the spiritual quality of his role.

Joseph the father had even more relevance in the fifteenth century in response to the systemic breakdown in family life that occurred as a result of the Black Death and other plague visitations during the fourteenth century. There was a re-acknowledgement of the importance of sustaining family bonds and the careful rearing and education of children became valuable and esteemed occupation.<sup>62</sup>

Writing and preaching in the early part of the fifteenth century the Dominican friar Giovanni Dominici, a cardinal and papal legate to Bohemia, was like many Dominicans in awe of St Joseph and his role as putative father to Christ.<sup>63</sup> Dominici saw the family as being of great importance and consequence to the stability and welfare of society; therefore the role of both parents was paramount. When he wrote *Regola del Governo di Cura Familiare* in 1403 for the widow Bartolomea degli Alberti in which he emphasised the responsibilities of parenthood in educating children as to the manner in which they were to conduct their lives, he was defining the role of the good Christian father and mother. Joseph and Mary were the paradigms. To this end Dominici recommended the display in the home of holy images as if a mirror for the child to see the Virgin and the angels and saints.<sup>64</sup> Dominici said that parenthood had ‘five ends’;

children had to be educated with regard to God, with regard to their parents, with regard to themselves, with regard to the state and with regard to adversity.<sup>65</sup>

Jean Gerson, a French scholar, theologian and eventually Chancellor of the University of Paris who lived from 1363 to 1429, was a great advocate of both Joseph and Mary. His writings influenced the perception of Joseph in art dispensing with the notion of Joseph being an old feeble man. He promoted the cult of St Joseph in his epic poem entitled *Josephina* written about 1415. The poem concerns the early life of Christ and is recounted from the perspective of Joseph as father and carer. He imagined Joseph teaching the young Jesus the skill of carpentry and insisted that Joseph was Jesus's father because of his duty of care: that he 'nourished, guarded and served' him.<sup>66</sup> Gerson re-introduced the possibility that Joseph could not have been an old man, but young and vigorous in order to be able to fulfil the role assigned to him by God; and he reiterated the belief that Joseph was a virgin by choice.<sup>67</sup> Gerson argued in favour of granting Joseph a saint's day; and regarded Joseph as the exemplar for all fathers and husbands.<sup>68</sup>

St Antoninus, the Dominican prior of the Convent of San Marco and Archbishop of Florence, who was a friend of Giovanni Dominici, was devoted to St Joseph and with great conviction wrote of him and his paternal role in the *Summa Moralis Theologica* completed in 1458. Like Dominici he was conscious of the importance of and the guiding hand of the father figure in society

A ruler ought therefore to be prudent in providing for the people and for the city what is necessary in time, not only for the present, but also for the

future, by avoiding dangerous things, and by providing necessities and services.<sup>69</sup>

And like Gerson Antoninus's concept of Joseph as a significant father figure to Jesus affected representations of Joseph. This can be seen in the work of the Dominican friar and artist working at San Marco at the time: Fra Angelico.

During the mid fifteenth century the charismatic Observant Franciscan preacher St Bernardino of Siena,<sup>70</sup> a subject himself for artists of the fifteenth century was influenced by austerity preached by thirteenth century French Franciscan Peter John Olivi.<sup>71</sup> Bernardino became a powerful advocate for St Joseph. He extolled Joseph, the simple man, to his congregation. He emphasised the virtues of marriage and family at a time when there was growing concern regarding the moral ethics of the younger members of society. In his *Sermons on St Joseph* he exhorted Joseph to "remember us... and plead for us to (his) foster child".

For others Joseph's paternity was symbolic: he was the definitive strong father figure. This was how the Dominican reformer Isidoro Isolano envisaged Joseph. Isolano advocated greater emphasis being placed on Joseph and the celebration of his feast day in his treatise *Summa de donis Sancti Joseph* written between 1514 and 1521, and dedicated to Pope Hadrian VI in 1522. For Isolano Joseph was the ultimate father figure and the compelling leader. He declared Joseph as being at the head of the Church Militant in an era when there was much warring in Italy<sup>72</sup> and the Catholic Church was re-asserting itself in Italy after the sudden upsurge of Protestantism in Northern Europe.<sup>73</sup>

Joseph's authority as a father figure did not subside in response to the Reformation, rather the Catholic renewal it engendered inspired mysticism and personal piety, and as a consequence Joseph as mediator. Throughout her book entitled *The Life of St Teresa of Ávila by Herself* written in 1565 St Teresa refers to Joseph as both 'my glorious father' and 'our glorious father, St Joseph',<sup>74</sup> 'St Joseph, my true lord and father',<sup>75</sup> and 'St Joseph the glorious' as her mediator and advocate.<sup>76</sup> When she eventually founded a convent of discalced nuns she relates in her autobiography that the Lord appeared to her and commanded her to call the establishment St Joseph's. And as the work progressed Joseph appeared to her in visions and encouraged her. Describing these occasions she repeatedly referred to Joseph as 'glorious' and as 'my father'.<sup>77</sup>

Jerónimo Gracián, the Spanish Discalced Carmelite friar, furthering St Teresa's enthusiasm for Joseph and at the insistence of Rome published his *Summary of the Excellencies of the Glorious St Joseph* in 1597. The work was aimed at both the clergy and the laity. It was highly influential in the manner in which Joseph came to be depicted in art as indicated by the six engravings by Christophorus Blancus which accompanied the text. Joseph's central role in Christ's early life is examined and emphasized. In three of the drawings Jesus touches either Joseph's shoulder or brow. In three he is at the centre of the scene; in the last image he is shown dying with the Virgin on his left side and Jesus in the act of blessing on his right side. As a major devotional work it cemented the importance of the cult of St Joseph in Europe and the New World.



## Summary

It has been shown that in order to appreciate the iconography of St Joseph it is necessary to review the important sources of information on which artists and their patrons depended for inspiration, instruction and guidance.

Within the context of the Christian canon the Scriptural texts, specifically the *Gospel of St Matthew* and the *Gospel of St Luke*, were paramount. The Apocryphal texts were utilized in order to expand the story of Joseph and to develop new ones. It was the Early Fathers of the Church, principally St Jerome and St John Chrysostom, who concerned themselves with the theological aspects of Joseph's role and shaped the apprehension of Joseph as a husband and as a virtuous man.

In the Medieval period St Bernard of Clairvaux emphasized Joseph's role as father to the Christ child, while other saints from the same era stressed Joseph's place in Christian doctrine. The *Revelaciones* of St Bridget of Sweden introduced a far deeper understanding of Joseph the humble nurturer and provider. By the fifteenth century Joseph's virtues were being promoted in the writings and sermons of Jean Gerson, St Antoninus and St Bernardino of Siena amongst others. The Dominican Isidoro Isolano advanced Joseph's role by writing of him as being the head of the Church Militant, meaning that he held the foremost position in Christ's Church on earth.

During the sixteenth century the highly influential writings of St Teresa of Ávila and later those of Jerónimo Gracián would impact not only on Joseph's image in the Old World but equally would shape those in the New World.

## **Chapter II**

### **The Visual Tradition**

It is essential to be cognizant of the written sources from which the imagery of St Joseph was to develop, so as to understand the circumstances of where and how the early Christian images that included St Joseph came about; to be aware of the early visual tradition, of the styles utilised, of their chronology and how they grew out of their pre-Christian mythological precursors. Initially these mythological images became the prototypes from which artists drew their inspiration. Gradually the Christian visual tradition emerged: specific scenes from the Scriptures and from Apocryphal texts, populated with the relevant individuals together with their appropriate attributes began to appear. Classicising forms and costumes, namely images evocative of Roman and Greek styles persisted.

#### **1) Early Images of St Joseph**

Few Christian images have survived from the earliest years of the Church's history and those that do reflect their pre-Christian origins. For example *Jesus the Good Shepherd* (pl. 6)<sup>1</sup> resembles those of *Orpheus* (pl. 7)<sup>2</sup> and the image of the *Virgin and Child* (pl. 8)<sup>3</sup> is similar to representations of *Isis and Horus* in that a mother, facing frontal is shown with a young child seated on her lap (pl. 9).<sup>4</sup> Generally they do not represent specific Scriptural or Apocryphal scenes, being iconic rather than narrative images.

One of the earliest identifiable surviving images of Joseph is a marble relief of the *Adoration of the Magi* on a third century sarcophagus, now in the Vatican

Museums in Rome (pl. 10). Joseph is presented as willing protector and guardian of Mary and Jesus, positioned immediately behind the Virgin's woven cane chair which Joseph clasps with his right hand as he leans around it in a proprietorial and a protective manner. His elongated eyes and upturned mouth give the impression that he is joyful and happy as he watches the two Magi deliver their gifts to the infant Jesus seated in his mother's lap.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the two Magi who exhibit their foreign origins through the wearing of Phrygian hats, a soft conical hat of which the point falls either forwards or backwards and has been worn since antiquity being associated with the inhabitants of Phrygia, Joseph is dressed as if he is a Roman; this may be to indicate and emphasise that he is not an exotic stranger from foreign lands.<sup>6</sup> However neither is he portrayed as a Jew as described through his genealogy in the *Gospel of St Matthew* and the *Gospel of St Luke*. As well as wearing Roman style robes Joseph's hair and beard are trim, cropped in Roman fashion.

Indicative of and exemplifying the difficulty in both dating and identifying a work, it will be of value to consider the case of an early image of a mother and child believed to date from the third century CE. According to the Jesuit writer Francis L Filas in his 1962 book entitled *Joseph: the Man closest to Jesus* the relief is to be found on a grave stele in the cemetery of Priscilla in Rome.<sup>7</sup> Filas identifies the image as being a representation of Joseph, Mary and the infant Christ. He describes Joseph as standing behind the Virgin and Child and pointing to a star. However locating the actual subject and figures as described has proved inconclusive and it is suspected that the depiction to which Filas is referring is a fresco rather than a relief, that the subject matter is not consistent with Filas's

surmise and furthermore it is located in the catacombs of Priscilla not in the cemetery of Priscilla. The probable fresco in question is of a mother who is breastfeeding her infant (pl. 11).<sup>8</sup> Behind her and to one side of her there is the figure of a man pointing skywards. It has been suggested that the woman and child may well be the Virgin and baby Jesus; the male figure has been identified as being either Balaam<sup>9</sup> or Isaiah.<sup>10</sup> The fresco is in a poor state of repair but as best as can be discerned the man is clothed in a Roman style toga and tunic. The condition of the fresco makes categorical identification of all three figures open to doubt beyond the simple identification that one is a standing male figure while the other two are a female with a small child on her lap.

Unfortunately like the example given above a number of frescoes and reliefs from the early years of the Church have suffered the ravages of time. Many of the figures included in the scenes are too severely damaged for concrete verification while others do not bear the distinguishing attributes now accredited to them.

This lack of incontrovertible visual evidence indicates the difficulty for art historians and archaeologists alike in accurately identifying images from this era.

To add to the confusion the Romans followed a practice of syncretism within the lands they occupied; they were ambivalent towards other beliefs which were allowed to co-exist alongside their own.<sup>11</sup> The Roman religion was one based on gods and spirits; these deities bound families together and subjects to their ruler. In the Roman household the paterfamilias oversaw acts of worship.

Despite the multiplicity of Jewish sects at the time Jews believed the world was split into two parts only: Jews and Gentiles. Christianity was considered as being a minor Jewish sect rather than a religion in its own right. It eventually split off from Judaism and became an autonomous movement mostly through the influence of St Paul.<sup>12</sup> For this reason and to further complicate discovery, recognition and identification of images, the use of imagery by the Christians had to perforce to be secret and hidden from public view. Those images that were in existence and were not emulating pre-existing mythological representations were usually the fish design<sup>13</sup> and the Chi-Rho symbol.<sup>14</sup> Therefore attributes or locations which serve to distinguish Joseph, such as his flowering rod, purple and gold or blue and white coloured robes, his nearness to the Virgin in Nativity depictions, leading the donkey in images of the Flight into Egypt, etc., had not been established.

The use of Christian imagery increased with Emperor Galarius's Edict of Toleration in 311 CE as it allowed for a greater scope in artistic interpretation;<sup>15</sup> and was followed in 313 CE by Emperor Constantine's decree that property confiscated from Christians should be returned to them and that they should be permitted to practice their religion freely. The term the Peace of the Church refers to this new freedom of expression made possible by Constantine's Edict. The authority of the Virgin as the mother of Christ being amplified through an edict issued by the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE and the declaration that Christ was consubstantial with God the Father stimulated new images.<sup>16</sup> The proclamation generated interest in representing Joseph as part of the Nativity scene to the extent that approximately ten years after the edict the creator of

Roman Senator Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus's<sup>17</sup> sarcophagus depicted Joseph as the only human figure to watch over the manger (pl. 12).<sup>18</sup> The scene shows Joseph standing at the head of the crib. He leans casually on his staff. His left leg is crossed in front of his right in an easy and comfortable manner. Befitting his relaxed and assured stance he is characterized as a young man. Once more his hair and beard are close cropped as in contemporary Roman fashion.

Not all images of Joseph from this period portray him in such an untroubled pose. By comparison the *Sarcophagus of the Nativity* (pl. 13) dating from a few years later presents a more vigilant Joseph.<sup>19</sup> Here he is shown as a man of strong and vigorous disposition wearing a short Roman style tunic. His chest is partially bare in an almost Herculean manner, an allusion which is further emphasised by his carrying of a femur of a large animal over his left shoulder (pl. 14).<sup>20</sup> While Mary sits at the head of the crib, Joseph stands on guard at its foot.

Joseph's status also changed and benefitted from the relaxation of attitudes towards Christians - it became more common for him to be included in representations. Furthermore Joseph's reputation was enhanced as a consequence of changes in the Virgin's importance. In 431 CE the use of the term *Theotokos* - the one who gives birth to God - was granted to the Virgin and affirmed at the Council of Ephesus. This was in opposition to the eastern orthodox Nestorians who believed that her correct title was *Christotokos* - the one who gives birth to Christ. However Joseph's prominent inclusion in the sixth century mosaic that adorns the apsidal arch in the western Orthodox Church of Santa Maria Maggiore<sup>21</sup> - one of the first churches to be built in Rome - confirms that the

Virgin's title of *Theotokos* had a positive consequence on Joseph's role and status.<sup>22</sup> Joseph appears in a number of scenes. On the left side of the arch he is shown receiving a warning from an angel (pl. 15).<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that this is regarded to have occurred in a dream Joseph is shown in a standing position, holding his rod over his left shoulder; and continuing to exhibit Roman influence he is dressed Roman style in *tunica* and sandals. As the honourable man he stands upright facing frontal. On the opposite side of the arch, in the top register Joseph appears in the *Presentation in the Temple* where he is placed in the centre of the little group with the officiating Priest and the Prophetess Anna (pl. 16).<sup>24</sup> On Joseph's right side and standing behind him is the Virgin dressed in the apparel of an empress and carrying the Christ Child. They are accompanied by a host of angels. Joseph turns his head to look back at the Virgin and Child thus drawing attention to his prominent position whilst at the same time directing the beholder's eye towards Mary and Jesus. The *Angel's Second Visitation to Joseph* (pl. 17) on the far right hand side of the mosaic sequence is a foreshadowing of what would become Joseph's archetypal pose that of *humilitas* or humility with his hand to cheek posture.<sup>25</sup> This pose would come to epitomise the contemplative Joseph. He lies on the ground in a humble, meditative, enigmatic pose resting his head against his left hand.

Joseph appears again in the mosaic immediately below the *Angel's Second Visitation*. The scene in question is generally known as the '*Holy Family*' being welcomed by *Aphrodisius* (pl. 18)<sup>26</sup>. Aphrodisius reputedly sheltered Joseph, Mary and Jesus in Hermopolis.<sup>27</sup> Yet as all the other mosaics on the arch are representations of scenes from the Scriptures, it is more probable that the scene



under consideration is that of the *Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*.<sup>28</sup> Joseph and Mary gesture with their right hands towards Jesus who is the size and deportment of a child commensurate with that of a twelve year old rather than an infant. According to the Scriptures Christ returned to the Temple without his parents' knowledge on the occasion of his twelfth Passover celebration in Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> Christ is in the centre of the scene surrounded by a number of attentive, elderly men with Joseph on his immediate left and the Virgin, appressed as an empress, located at his side as if they have just found him.

Many of the early images of Joseph can be found beyond the confines of church or monastic buildings, on more functional items such as caskets, coins, etc., or as part of relief schemes on larger objects. These secular objects and religious artefacts often employed the Apocryphal texts as their narrative source material for the ornamentation. The ivory reliefs from what is believed to have been a wooden reliquary box known as the Werden Casket, is such an example. The reliefs date from the second quarter of the fifth century and show four scenes. They include the *Annunciation at the Spring*, the *Visitation* and *Joseph's First Dream concerning the Virgin's Purity* (pl. 19) in which the humble Joseph lies on the ground supporting his chin with his right hand in contemplative mood as the angel imparts his message.<sup>30</sup> Lastly is the scene of the *Entry of Joseph and the Virgin into the Temple for the Trial by Ordeal of drinking the bitter water* (pl. 20).<sup>31</sup> Joseph is presented as an imposing figure.

Scenes from the Scriptures regularly were represented alongside those from the Apocryphal texts; as the three images on the two 545 CE ivory relief panels from

Archbishop Maximian's throne in Ravenna reveal. The first panel shows the *Trial by drinking bitter water* (pl. 21).<sup>32</sup> Joseph holds his hand up to Mary as if in blessing as she sips from the vessel. Already an accepted attribute of Joseph's he carries over his left shoulder his rod. It is shaped like a Herculean club thereby alluding to Joseph's strength. *Joseph's Dream* and the *Journey to Bethlehem* in the second panel are presented in continuous narrative format that is two episodes within one pictorial space. In *Joseph's Dream* (pl. 22) Joseph sleeps within the confines of a *kline*, a Byzantine term referring to the large cushion or palliasse upon which usually the Virgin reclines.<sup>33</sup> An angel is shown leaning over his reposing form. In the *Journey to Bethlehem* (pl. 22) the image of Joseph is as an elderly man. He is presented as caring and gentle as he assists the heavily pregnant Mary onto the donkey which is being led by the angel.

In the Nativity scene on the sixth century wooden reliquary box<sup>34</sup> known as the *Loca Sancta* (pl. 23)<sup>35</sup> there is an example of Joseph represented as the humble and pensive man.<sup>36</sup> His contemplative pose appears to be well established even at this early date. He is positioned at the foot of the Virgin's *kline* as in so many iconic Byzantine style depictions. These types of representations make no pretence to be illusionistic, they are devotional images; they symbolise the event or person rather than being a pictorial image of an occasion or the personages depicted. As such this particular image is typical of the art of the early Christians, a period which can be identified broadly as being the period between Greco-Roman art and that of the Renaissance.<sup>37</sup> Thus in its flat timeless quality so typical of the Byzantine manner Joseph is shown seated on a small rise in the

ground just within the confines of the cave. With one knee raised the meditative Joseph supports his head against his right hand.

Other representations of Joseph began to occur; symbolic of a mood or behaviour rather than being a narrative description. Representations of the subservient Joseph emerge around the seventh century, as verified in a bronze coin from the Minden grave bearing an image of the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 24).<sup>38</sup> Bearded and middle-aged Joseph stands respectfully behind the seated Virgin as she receives gifts from the wise men. As if emphasising his deferential position the curving figure of Joseph is forced into the remaining space around the edge of the coin.<sup>39</sup> As a form of currency this image would have been influential as it had the potential to reach a wide and disparate audience.

To demonstrate Joseph's subordination to Christ and the Virgin, artists portrayed Joseph smaller than the Virgin and sometimes even smaller than the infant Christ. A tenth century Coptic fresco of the *Nativity* (pl. 25)<sup>40</sup> in the Church of the Holy Virgin in the monastery of the Syrians in Wadi Natrum includes a respectful Joseph. In the centre of the baseline of the representation a diminutive Joseph sits on the ground resting his head in his hand.<sup>41</sup> Even the swaddled figure of Christ is considerably larger than that of Joseph. His position beyond the dark outline that forms the boundary of the cave in which the Virgin and child recline, further diminishes his authority.

As devotion to the Virgin intensified Joseph came to be included more frequently in depictions other than those relating to the Nativity or the Adoration; and in rare

occasions he was presented on his own. A tenth century Benedictine monk at the monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance in Germany produced a manuscript known as the Egbert Codex- a book of Gospels inspired by Egbert the Archbishop of Trier<sup>42</sup> - in which Joseph appears not only in the *Nativity*, but also in a number of other scenes - the *Presentation*, the *Twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple* and significantly by himself in *Joseph's Dream* (pl. 26).<sup>43</sup> In the manuscript picture of *Joseph's Dream* Joseph is represented as a tall, youngish man clothed in a long purple robe with his brown hair and beard still fashioned in Roman classical style. Reposing full length on a cot his face is turned towards the viewer, while the angel, partially hidden in a cloud, hovers above him. So there can be no confusion Joseph's name is inscribed above him against the background of the sky, in a direct line between the gesturing angel and the sleeping man.

Whereas previously there had been little attempt to convey character or the illusionistic effect of setting and locale, at this period in Byzantine art there was a growing interest in indicating the individuality of the figures and the specifics of the surroundings.<sup>44</sup> On occasions Joseph was presented in a more animated manner as can be observed in a Byzantine illumination of the Nativity from the tenth century manuscript the *Menologion of Basil II* (pl. 27). The image of Joseph is positioned within the picture in his traditional hunched pose sitting on the Virgin's right hand side. With his right fist pressed firmly into his right cheek and his head is turned so as to look out at the viewer he seems to be inviting a response.<sup>45</sup> His right eyebrow is cocked slightly adding to the impression that he is about to respond some unspoken question. In accordance with the custom

Joseph is presented smaller than the Virgin.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless he exudes personality plus strength of character and purpose characterized by his dynamic and determined facial expression.

Corresponding to images of the humble Joseph or even the resolute Joseph as in the example quoted above there are representations of the Nativity where Joseph is presented as the prudent sensitive protector. These characteristics can be discerned most readily in depictions of the Flight into Egypt that became commonplace during the tenth and eleventh centuries. A good example is that of a eleventh century ivory relief from Salerno Cathedral of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 28) in which Joseph is shown with his eyes lowered as if in thought and careful consideration.<sup>47</sup> He, respectfully, follows the donkey upon which sit the Virgin and Child. Joseph is shown gently and prudently restraining the animal by placing his left hand on the beast's back. The image of the *Nativity* (pl. 29) from the same cathedral depicts Joseph in his typical location sitting at the bottom corner of the scene though in this instance he is seated on a stool.<sup>48</sup> However, his pose is decidedly more natural and relaxed. Instead of crouching uncomfortably with his hand pressed to his head as in many images of the time, he is shown clasping his left calf quite casually in his right hand as if massaging it. With his left elbow supported on his upraised left knee he leans his cheek calmly into his left hand. His eyes are open, rather than lowered in contemplation or sleep. He is alert but relaxed.

The inclusion of images of Joseph became numerous as representations of the Life of the Virgin and the Life of Christ increased during the eleventh century

onwards. Joseph's function as protector and *Nutritor Domini*, carer and provider similarly became more evident.

Due in part to the writings of St Bernard of Clairvaux, known as 'the mellifluous doctor' for the beauty and wisdom of his sermons and who died in 1153, by and large the twelfth century can be characterized by its emphasis on mystical or spiritual love, and the romanticising of humility and chastity almost as much as physical love.<sup>49</sup> This latter theme was explored by the philosopher and theologian Peter Abélard within his writings as much as in his life, for he is known as much nowadays for falling in love with the young Héloïse as he is for his philosophical works. In a long poem he documented their passion, the birth of their son, their secret wedding and their eventual retirement from the secular world, he at the Abbey Church of St-Denis and she to a nunnery in Argenteuil.<sup>50</sup> Like St Augustine's *Confessions* Abelard wrote *Historia Calamitatum*.<sup>51</sup> To assuage his desire to care directly for his son Astrolabe he wrote *Carmen ad Astrolabium* a book of fatherly advice. Joseph the *Nutritor Domini* can be interpreted as being the source for this expression of medieval of love and duty.

But this idealistic air of humility coupled with obedience was not the only development. A new, different and contrary expression can be recognised on Joseph's face in a mid-twelfth century mosaic of the *Nativity* (pl. 30) from the Palatine Chapel in Palermo, Sicily.<sup>52</sup> There is a fresh veracity in his appearance. Rather than his eyes being lowered or even shut, his eyes are wide open as he fixes the viewer. It is a knowing, confident, assertive look he gives to the viewer. Even though this is a representation of the older Joseph he remains the eager

protector, guardian, *Nutritor Domini*. Joseph, presented smaller than the Virgin, is seated on an open work stool with his back to her. She rests on her *kline* as she attends to the richly and tightly swaddled child lying in the manger. Joseph has shed some of his Roman style attributes; instead he wears a long, flowing, noble-looking garment. The robe is virginal white and its generous proportions are elegantly draped around him. His dark blue undergarment is just visible at his ankles revealing that he wears sandals. The inclusion of footwear is important as he is more commonly depicted barefooted. The sandals stress his nobility and authority. His white cropped hair is neat, as is his beard. Most striking of all is his closed fist. It signifies his strength and resolve. He presses it so firmly and determinedly into his right cheek that it distorts the line of his chin. The pose forces his head round towards the Virgin while looking straight out at the viewer. In this position he acts as intermediary and conducts the viewer through the scene; from the incarnation in the image of the Virgin and Child, to the Old Testament prophecy of the coming of the Messiah in the form of the ox and the ass as they lean over the manger, and on to the two angels bringing the good tidings. Then immediately above Joseph the three Magi - the wise men from the east - embody the universality of the Church.

## **2) Images of St Joseph in the Abbey Church of St-Denis**

The *Infancy Window* (pl. 31), alternatively known as *The Life of the Virgin Window*,<sup>53</sup> is indicative of the new spirituality in which the humble, self-effacing, contemplative Joseph of former images was granted a more conspicuous and proactive role.<sup>54</sup> The window in its entirety consists of eighteen panels of which Joseph appears in six; these being the *Nativity*, the *Flight into Egypt*, the

*Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, Joseph's Dream and the Finding of the Saviour in the Temple.*<sup>55</sup>

When in the early twelfth century Abbot Suger decided to renovate the dilapidated abbey of St- Denis, completing it in 1127. He oversaw all the reconstructions and decorations including the stained glass windows. He desired a strengthening of relationships between the Abbey and the Crown;<sup>56</sup> and for posterity he wished to construct a building that 'might be given to Almighty God by us as well as by our successors'.<sup>57</sup>

In the stained glass panel of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 32) Joseph leads the donkey upon which is seated the Virgin with Jesus in her lap.<sup>58</sup> Jesus is in the act of blessing a passer-by. Joseph is represented as a contemporary figure, dressed in long tunic and cloak typical of twelfth century costume. And also characteristic of the time, as a Jew he is shown wearing a close fitting Jewish hat. Though the execution of these windows predates the Fourth Lateran Council's decree of 1215 concerning the wearing of such headgear its inclusion is testimony to the dichotomy of the age. Prevailing consciousness of Joseph's unassailable lineage - through King David, the prophet Abraham and Adam and thence God - collides with the challenging belief of the time as to Jewish exploitation of usury, charging interest on loans taken on by Gentiles but not on those taken up by fellow Jews<sup>59</sup>; and this complex consciousness of Joseph's Jewish heritage alongside his role as Christ's putative father was to appear more frequently in later images.



In *Joseph's Dreams* (pl. 33) he sleeps with his head resting on the back of his right hand. He is positioned turned away from the angel who touches Joseph's left shoulder as in blessing as it imparts God's message to him.<sup>60</sup>

Joseph is granted the commanding position in the section of the great window that represents the *Nativity* (pl. 34).<sup>61</sup> Diagonal arches cross the space. Halo-like in the brilliance of the white light shining through the each pane of glass Joseph, Mary and the infant Christ are illuminated. Joseph stands impressively large, bigger than either the Virgin or the infant Christ in the manger. Joseph's erect and imposing figure fills the tallest of the three arches. With a benevolent air he looks down on Christ and the Virgin. He wears colours most frequently associated with chastity and virginity; a white robe with a blue mantle across his left shoulder.<sup>62</sup> His *yarmulke* or *kippah*, the Jewish skull cap and symbol of his Jewish identity, is blue. The Virgin lies across the bottom of the glass panel, as if in submission, at Joseph's feet. Her blue-swathed body corresponds to the celestial blue background enclosing the angelic host at the top of the picture with the arch neatly framing her head. The figure of Christ Child beside her swaddled in blue crisscross bands fills the next arch.

The window is situated at the east end of the church beyond the altar in the apse and thus confirms its spiritual closeness to Heaven. The illuminated Joseph connotes to the humble, hard-working, practical man on the path to salvation. His presence and manner of his appearance alludes to the essence of humanity, the temporal world; whereas the light shining from the Virgin is synonymous with the spiritual world and the presence of God. St Augustine had emphasised in his

*Confessions*, that to love God was to experience one's soul 'floodlit by light which space cannot contain'.<sup>63</sup> Abbot Suger used the light shining through glass and the voluminous space within his Gothic church as the tangible expression of true devotion and veneration.<sup>64</sup>

### **3) Joseph visualised as a Jew**

Concurrent with Abbot Suger's construction of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis there took place a significant modification in Joseph's appearance and perceived persona. Joseph's Jewish heritage, through the manner of his dress, came to the fore in many representations of him. This coincided with concerns as to the safety of the country of Christ's birth, a subject that had become a pivotal issue for the Church. In 1095 Pope Urban II had preached a sermon at Clermont in France where he had called on Christians to make a crusade<sup>65</sup> and to free the Holy Land from the tyranny of the Muslims.<sup>66</sup> The effect was to destabilise Europe. Though not specifically aimed at the Jews, Pope Urban's declaration aroused religious and xenophobic passions. These feelings rebounded on the Jews; for instance in England the Church actively encouraged violence against them.<sup>67</sup> At the same time and further destabilising any kind of tolerable relationship that had existed between Christians and Jews, the Church began emphasising the evils of usury, a sin not infrequently associated with the Jews in the minds of Christians. But, ironically, the Christians needed to borrow money in order to finance the Crusades. They could not turn to other Christians for financial assistance as interest on money lent was considered anathema. Their only recourse was to seek aid from Jewish money-lenders. The Jews due to their commercial acumen and their previous entrepreneurial successes were cash rich and not averse to lending

money. Furthermore the Jews needed to trade as they were being forced out of many of their established mercantile enterprises due to the escalating domination of the business world by the Christian merchant guild system.<sup>68</sup> There were trade restrictions on Jews throughout Europe; in fact in England the only profession open to them was money-lending.<sup>69</sup> So though it had dubious legality Jews had little choice but to be usurers.<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps Joseph as the humble outsider and putative father designated to be the servant of Christ fleeing with his precious family to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath, as described in the Apocryphal texts, struck a chord as being akin to the image of the wandering Jew expelled or ghettoised. Certainly it was at this time that it became more common to depict Joseph in Jewish apparel, particularly wearing a hat of some description. Originally Jews wore some kind of 'badge' in order to curtail sexual relations between themselves and Christians.<sup>71</sup> Indeed Jews of their own volition would wear Jewish hats and other symbols of the religion. The stone carving of *St Joseph marvels at the Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 35)<sup>72</sup> on a capital in the Cathedral of St Lazare in Autun in France exemplifies this state of affairs.<sup>73</sup> Joseph, kneeling with awed expression, has his elaborately embroidered hat - his *yarmulke* - securely pulled down on his head.<sup>74</sup> It is to be noted that in the *Gospel of St Luke* the apostle clearly describes Joseph as the conscientious family man and practising Jew who takes his family to Jerusalem for Passover.<sup>75</sup>

A carved relief of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 36) which adorns another twelfth century capital in Autun Cathedral emphasises another characteristic of St Joseph, that of the steadfast, concerned and careful man.<sup>76</sup> He is shown as a humble,

straining, urgent figure, willing to fulfil his duty. Still depicted nonetheless in Roman style clothing of a tunic, his pose is indicative of his function as *Nutritor Domini* - his role as protector is exemplified by his rod in the form of a billhook which he carries over his shoulder, ready both to protect and provide. But in keeping with his Jewish lineage he wears the same elaborate Jewish hat as in Plate 35. It is from this era and for the next few centuries that the inclusion of head wear for Joseph becomes more frequent.

By the late twelfth century though both Old Testament and New Testament teaching remained important for Christians - the Old Testament in fact prophesied the coming Messiah - throughout Europe the attitude towards Jews was deteriorating. The Crusaders saw themselves as freeing the Holy land for Christendom, not for the Jewish people. During the second Crusade in the mid twelfth century animosity towards the Jews spilt over into open hostility. Groups of men supposedly on their way to the Holy Land attacked Jewish communities in Germany.<sup>77</sup> They had been provoked into action by a monk called Rudolph who had urged them to 'annihilate the infidel'.<sup>78</sup>

In keeping with the Church's attitude towards Jews many more images of Joseph represented him wearing a Jew's hat or *judenhut*: a pointed, funnel-shaped hat with a distinctive flattened rim. The contradiction this fact created can be seen in the illustration of the *Nativity* (pl. 37) from the German *Stammheim Missal* produced in Hildesheim in Lower Saxony in 1170.<sup>79</sup> It shows Joseph as the 'just' man of the Scriptures but also as Joseph the Jew. The illumination depicts a middle aged, brown haired, brown bearded Joseph wearing a *judenhut*. The hat is

featured twice in the picture. Its first inclusion is in the top right hand corner of the manuscript illustration immediately above the image of Joseph. It is Moses. He is represented, dressed in a similar manner to Joseph, as a brown haired, brown bearded middle aged man. He, too, wears a *judenhut*. He is shown receiving a message from God who appears from within the burning bush. God says to Moses: 'Come I send you' to which Moses responds: 'I beseech Lord, send whom you will send.'<sup>80</sup> The command and the response would equally be appropriate if it had been between Joseph and God. The physical similarities between the two figures of Moses and Joseph in conjunction with the explicit statement of their Jewishness in the form of their *judenhuts* are pertinent factors in the picture for they confirm Joseph's kinship to King David, his role as Christ's putative father and the affirmation of the Old Testament prophecies. As indicative of his peerless suitability Joseph stands, as if on guard, at the foot of the Virgin's *kline* while at the same time keeps watch on the child in the crib.

The pointed hat originally worn by Jews as a matter of choice became obligatory after the decree of 1215 when the Fourth Lateran Council decree required all Jews to wear a distinguishing mark:

Jews and Saracens of both sexes in every Christian province must be distinguished from the Christian by a difference in dress.<sup>81</sup>

Canon 68 explained that it was forbidden

Most severely, that any one should presume at all to break forth in insult to the Redeemer. And since we ought not to ignore any insult to Him who blotted out our disgraceful deeds, we command that such impudent fellows be checked by the secular princes by imposing them proper punishment so that they shall not at all to blaspheme Him who was crucified for us.<sup>82</sup>

After this ruling Joseph began to be presented if not as a figure of derision at least as being quaint, picturesque and slightly unusual, through the awkwardness of his stance, or the response of others in the picture to him. This can be seen particularly in representations of the Betrothal. And with evermore frequency there were images of the subservient Joseph in four diverse types: humble, reverential, protectorial, and paternal. These were used synchronously.

Nevertheless not all images at this period emphasised Joseph's Jewishness; in a Spanish wooden panel painting dating from early in the thirteenth century a pious Joseph seated facing with the Virgin and child (pl. 38) are placed as if in adoration on either side of the manger despite Joseph being posed in what was his typical humble hand to head posture.<sup>83</sup> Similarly an English stone relief in Worcester Cathedral of the *Nativity* (pl. 39) of the same period depicts the Virgin reclining with Joseph positioned at the bottom of her couch. Though in this instance Joseph's demeanour is more relaxed and naturalistic, he adopts his customary pose of leaning his head on his hand. The baby in the manger has been placed carefully between them, rather than them being carefully arranged around the infant as in the Spanish wooden panel painting.<sup>84</sup>

Yet there can be no doubt that Joseph is represented as a Jew in the representation of the service of Purification in the scene of the *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 40) on the north jamb of the central west portal of Rheims Cathedral. Joseph carries the pair of offertory doves.<sup>85</sup> His coarse straggling hair spills out exuberantly from below his Jew's hat. His fringe is carefully curled, so is his neat, short beard as befits a young, Jewish man.

Joseph wears a *yarmulke* in a stone relief of the *Nativity* (pl. 41) on the north portal of Chartres Cathedral dating from 1240. Though in other ways it bears similarities to the Worcester Cathedral *Nativity* scene in that Joseph's stance, leaning forwards on his staff and patiently looking across at the Virgin from the foot of the bed, has an effortless and natural quality. From the length of Joseph's hair and beard it is clear that he is not old but middle-aged. Both Joseph and the Virgin are in profile emphasising their relationship. The crib, positioned beside the Virgin's bed, is raised so that the infant can be viewed.

To add to the confusion Joseph's Jewish identity was never openly problematic. The Gospel writers Saints Matthew and Luke confirmed his Jewishness through their references to Joseph being the son of David<sup>86</sup> and of the lineage of David.<sup>87</sup> Frequently Joseph is depicted wearing a Jew's hat supposedly to emphasise his heritage; and it has to be remembered that at this time, though a Christian saint, Joseph had not yet been accorded an official Saint's day.<sup>88</sup> It seems as though artists were in a quandary as to whether they should depict Joseph as a good Jew or as paradigmatic Christian. In addition in works of art Joseph's Jewish heritage that gradually had been accentuated in the previous two centuries, now began to impact on his demeanour and the demeanour of others towards him rather than simply on his manner of dress. Being an openly practising Jew,<sup>89</sup> as Joseph was, would have placed him in a climate unsympathetic to non-Christian religions.

#### **4) Joseph the onlooker**

For the most part during the thirteenth century Joseph continued to be presented in a subordinate role as if he were playing the part of our eyewitness to the events unfolding before him; as the marble relief of the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 42) executed in 1260 by Nicola Pisano for the polychrome polygonal pulpit in the Baptistery at Pisa clearly demonstrates. According to White in *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1250 - 1400* there was a brief period of financial and political glory for Pisa after they had overcome the forces of the Genoese in 1258 and that this stimulated the decoration of the Duomo and the Baptistery.<sup>90</sup> Others such as G H and E R Crichton attribute the atmosphere of wealth in Siena and Pisa at this period to the development of the Italian commune which precipitated the rise of the merchant class.<sup>91</sup> The supposition is that the Duomo and the Baptistery in Pisa would not have been built had it not been for the wealth of the entrepreneurs in the respective cities. The pulpit at Pisa was Nicola Pisano's first major work.<sup>92</sup> The classicizing features of the pulpit and other sculptures in Pisa at this time appear to have been influenced by the number of classical remains in the city.<sup>93</sup>

The hexagonal pulpit is supported on seven columns joined by arches. Between each arch there is a figure that has been identified as being three of the Virtues, St John the Baptist, an angel with tablet on which is inscribed a representation of the Crucifixion, and lastly a classical figure of Hercules.<sup>94</sup> He rests his left hand on the head of a lion and carries a lion cub over his right shoulder; the inclusion of the lions suggests that this stature personifies the virtue of Fortitude. In the Adoration panel Joseph is treated as an appendage; squeezed into the upper right



corner. No more than Joseph's face and part of his left shoulder are visible. With head slightly lowered, his eyes have a distant and unfocussed expression. His curling hair framing his face and his style of dress in the accepted Roman fashion either alludes to the Jewish subservience to Rome or that the practice of presenting Joseph in Roman dress was still common. Joseph's expression is one of quiet obedience. Consigned to the extremities of relief he stands in acquiescence. Thus Joseph's presence appears to be chiefly as endorsement of the scriptural accounts. His presence is established and accepted within the visual schema, but the thrust of the imagery is emphatically on Mary and Jesus.

Joseph appears in two additional scenes on the pulpit that of the *Nativity* and the *Presentation in the Temple*. The *Nativity* panel is in fact presented in continuous narrative format and comprises the *Annunciation* and the *Nativity* (pl. 43). Nicola presents Joseph in his customary seated position at the foot of the Nativity scene where, with his legs crossed in a relaxed manner, he looks up at the Virgin. In his subordinate role Joseph is comparable in size to the other figures in the relief; only the Virgin and the Archangel Gabriel are larger indicating their superior significance in the scene. On the same pulpit Nicola grants Joseph a little more space in the *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 44) in order to display the two offertory doves that he carries.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless Joseph is crammed into the edge of the picture behind the preternaturally large form of the Virgin and Simeon. Though he is turned almost full frontal the left side of Joseph's body is obscured behind the Virgin. In spite of this the relief is clear enough for the folds of Joseph's robes and the classical Roman styling of his beard and hair to be easily discerned.

Even by the mid to late thirteenth century in Siena the older style of portraying the diminutive or subservient Joseph persisted. The *Nativity* (pl. 45)<sup>96</sup> understood to have been painted by Guido da Siena<sup>97</sup> in the 1270s follows the well established iconographical tradition of depicting the humble, contemplative Joseph with his hand pressed to his head, crouched in the foreground of the picture. Consequently indicative of his minor role he is represented considerably smaller than the Virgin and smaller even than the six angels that hover around the cave entrance. He is marginally bigger than the swaddled figure of the newborn infant in the crib and approximately the same size as the larger of the two shepherds. His comparable size to at least one of the shepherds suggests that his role is as one of Christ's first disciples. Seated on a stony outcropping he turns his head in order to look back at the Virgin. His pose thereby directs the beholder's gaze and thus the picture intimates at another possible role, that of intermediary.

However Guido da Siena's *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 46) also painted sometime during the late 1270s continues the theme of Joseph's lesser role of onlooker and modest acquiescence.<sup>98</sup> A diffident Joseph holds forth the two offertory doves within the restricting confines of his robes. His expression is mild. He stands discreetly behind the Virgin. As a Jew in a Jewish temple and in keeping with laws passed by the Fourth Lateran Council, Guido da Siena maintains the practice of emphasising Joseph's Jewish lineage and his respect for God by portraying him wearing a *yarmulke*.

## Summary

Representations of St Joseph dating from the first few hundred years of the Church are unusual; but the decree issued by the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE promoted his inclusion in images as an adjunct of the Virgin.

Mythological images were as prototypes for Christian art as can be observed in the similarity between illustrations of Orpheus and his flock and those of Christ and his flock.

Though congregations increased and the Edict of Toleration acceded to the building of new churches representations of Joseph remained infrequent. Joseph's general inclusion into the mainstay of Christian art occurred as a direct result of the Virgin being given the title of *Theotokos* at the Council of Ephesus 431 CE.

Images of Joseph seated in a humble and contemplative pose began to appear in devotional representations of the Nativity from around the sixth century. His subordination to the Virgin and Christ is demonstrated through his smaller size. He is also shown to be respectful by way of his positioning behind the Virgin in representations of the Adoration of the Magi.

The Flight into Egypt illustrating Joseph as protector became more commonplace from the eleventh century; as do images of Joseph wearing a *yarmulke*, indicative of his Jewish heritage, noteworthy for its appearance coincides with the commencement of the Crusades.



## **Chapter III**

### **The Humble Man**

#### **1) The Humble Joseph**

The word 'humble' describes Joseph as the man represented by artists of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. He is meek, modest, and deferential but also he is pictured as caring, reverential and contemplative. Usually in images of the Nativity this would be translated into the diminutive figure of Joseph sitting on the ground, his feet frequently unshod positioned beyond the Virgin on the baseline of the representation.<sup>1</sup> Typically with his eyes closed and resting his elbow on his knee he is shown supporting his chin in his cupped hand.

During the same period there was another pictorial interpretation of Joseph, that of the victim of ridicule and derision. This construal is associated with images of the Betrothal of the Virgin. There is a sense that Joseph's humility is a necessary prerequisite in this scene. The disappointed suitors who had been vying for the hand of the Virgin are shown to crush around Joseph; behind his back their hands are raised in equivocal gestures. Could they be wishing to give him a congratulatory slap across the shoulders, or are their intentions hostile? Joseph appears to be oblivious to their antics. He stands meekly facing the Virgin. Generally his head is bowed as the officiating priest standing between them guides their right hands together.

Images of the Nativity from the early Renaissance period tend to show Joseph in the archetypal humble pose that is seated on the ground. Sometimes he is depicted

with his back to the Virgin as if granting her some degree of privacy; on other occasions he turns his head to look either at her or at the infant Christ. But generally he is represented resting his head against his right hand. He could be asleep or in a state of deep contemplation. The painting attributed to Guido da Siena of the *Nativity* (pl. 45) and mentioned in the previous chapter is no exception. It follows the tradition of placing a diminutive Joseph crouched on the ground in signification of his humility at some distance from the Virgin.<sup>2</sup> This particular *Nativity* is understood to have been one panel from a large polyptych illustrating the life of Christ intended for the high altar of Siena Cathedral. Positioned down left of the Virgin, on her right hand side and on the base line of the picture, Joseph sits on a small rock. This painting is remarkable as, contrary to the norm, it shows Joseph looking back and up at the Virgin who gazes down at him. With her left hand she gesticulates towards the two midwives who are bathing the infant; but it is the Virgin who holds Joseph's attention. The artist presents Joseph as the thoughtful, humble man who knows his place, but cares enough to show concern for his wife's wellbeing by turning to look up at her.

During the last decade of the thirteenth century Pietro Cavallini produced a series of mosaics for Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome of which in the *Nativity* (pl. 47) Joseph is shown seated humbly on the ground in his customary reverential pose with his back to the Virgin; as in the painting accredited to Guido da Siena. The main difference here though is that Joseph and Mary do not exchange glances. Seated adjacent to the bottom of the Virgin's *kline* with his left cheek resting in the palm of his left hand Joseph looks downwards as if in a deep reverie. His appearance is solemn. His expression is almost preternaturally sad, suggesting to

the thirteenth century viewer Joseph's innate spirituality. His distant expression intimates that he is either experiencing some deep insight or is being granted foreknowledge. Behind and to one side of him is the Virgin, reclining on her couch. The infant Jesus in the manger is positioned beside her at an oblique angle to her left arm. Crucially these three principal figures are all physically linked to one another, emphasising a relationship. Joseph's left elbow contacts the Virgin's couch - he all but touches the Virgin's foot - while her left elbow brushes the infant's forehead. Cavallini has created a strong, uninterrupted continuous sweeping line that moves from the bottom left hand corner of the mosaic on through the centre of the picture. Their connection is unmistakable and consequently the composition visually alludes to their common genealogy and their unity as a family. The depth of Joseph's respectful commitment to the Virgin and child is made clear by his profound and contemplative air.

Nevertheless unlike Guido da Siena's portrayal of Joseph and many other similar contemporary interpretations, Cavallini's Joseph is almost the same size as the Virgin. He is the second largest figure in the mosaic; larger than the infant Christ and larger than the three attendant angels. The artist's use of Joseph's greater size implies his increasing importance within spiritual imagery. Furthermore, and suggestive of his growing significance, Virgin's gaze connects with the beholder drawing them into the scene, while the position of her body attracts attention down to the contemplative figure of Joseph. And though he is shown seated on the ground in a position of indicative of his humility it is by the inclusive pose adopted by the Virgin that Joseph's status is enhanced and magnified. In both of

these images of the Nativity the overriding impression of Joseph is of the humble, subservient and thoughtful man.

## **2) The Contemplative Joseph**

Joseph is also the contemplative man. The depth of his thoughtfulness, as illustrated in his pose and position in Nativity representations, is equivalent to his humility. In considering images of the humble Joseph account has to be made of the reasons for representing him in a contemplative and reflective mood. In an era when the acknowledgement of class distinctions and nobility were becoming *de rigueur* and the chivalric title and vigorous function of the knight-errant<sup>3</sup> had just begun to be employed by lordly landowners, kings and princes, images of Joseph as the humble man seated on the floor, deep in thought, would appear to have been challenging.<sup>4</sup> The chivalric code described an active man not a contemplative one. A knight was a man who physically fought injustices and protected the weak. The secular literature of the time reflected the mood. *Parzival* written at the turn of the thirteenth century by Wolfram von Eschenbach was a blend of knightly love and religion.<sup>5</sup> The *Song of Roland* was an anonymous poem relating the noble deeds of a knight at the crusades. *The Arthurian Romances* written by Chrétien de Troyes similarly described the gallant conduct of knights as did the anonymous author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Ramon Lull's *Book of Knighthood and Chivalry* written in third quarter of the thirteenth century describes the physically arduous training required to become a knight and the ethics of knighthood.<sup>6</sup> The image of Joseph seated on the ground in an unconcealed display of humility was not a characteristic necessarily associated with chivalry and knight-errantry.



Yet to medieval society the contemplative Joseph was the epitome of nobility and decency. Contemplation was the prerequisite of great and noble philosophers and theologians as epitomised in the writings of St Augustine's in his *Confessions* in which he relates how he found God through meditation; or the writings of Boethius in *The Philosophy of Consolation* who in a series of philosophical discourses with the mysterious lady comes to understand that happiness and fulfilment emanate from God.

Besides knight-errantry in the thirteenth century the pursuance of an idea or vision in a trance-like or dream-like state had a great fascination and thereby importance; the highly influential book *Roman de la Rose* written by two Frenchmen Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun employs this interest. The story relates how a young man falls asleep and dreams of his pursuit of the Rose - a symbol of love - through much adversity and distractions.<sup>7</sup> More importantly to the understanding of Joseph's contemplative pose, the story opens with a reference to the fifth century pagan Latin philosopher Macrobius's *Commentary* on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* which at the time was a very popular work. In the *Commentary* Macrobius classifies dreams into five distinct types.<sup>8</sup> Joseph's dreams would fall into the third category described by Macrobius in Latin as *oraculum*: the oracular dream in which the dreamer received some kind of divine revelation.<sup>9</sup> In the Bible God speaks directly to man through such dreams, or as in Joseph's case God dispatches an angel to deliver his message. Those receiving either kind of visitation were in some manner unique. For example in *Numbers* 12:6 God tells Aaron and Miriam '...If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in vision, and I will speak unto him in a

dream.’ Such a pose would not only confirm that Joseph was the ‘just man’ chosen by God but also confer upon him the status of ‘prophet’.

Nobility is indicative of graciousness and modesty as well as aristocracy; these were certainly characteristics connected with the Virgin, the Queen of Heaven.<sup>10</sup> By association these characteristics were applied to her spouse, as in the fifth century mosaics in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (pl.48) where she is enthroned as if an empress; and in the same register Joseph is apparelled in flowing robes like a Roman statesman or nobleman.

It follows that images of Joseph seated on the ground in a state of trance or deep contemplation signified his seriousness and the depth of his spirituality.

Cavallini’s Joseph, sitting in the foreground of the *Nativity* mosaic and with his consequential and eloquent expression implies a number of readings: his great insight and holiness resulting from his meditations, his humility demonstrated through his position on the ground and his saintliness through his nearness to the Virgin.

Yet representations of Joseph staring out into space or with eyes lowered in some deep contemplation or trance came to be interpreted in one of two ways; that the pose was indicative of his sagacity and insight as proposed above, or that it was suggestive of his naiveté; which is consistent with the images of Joseph in representations of the Betrothal of the Virgin. He was either a wise old man worthy of being attended to or he was a figure of fun to be derided.

Many of the Mystery plays which appeared from the late thirteenth century up to the middle of the sixteenth century take advantage of Joseph's role as the gullible husband. They recount in a humorous manner Joseph's dismay and self pity on learning of the Virgin's pregnancy. In the 'Pewterers' and Founders' Play' from the mid fourteenth century *York Mystery Cycle* Joseph bemoans his lot for having 'wedded a young wench to my wife.' He continues

Her works me works my wangs to wet<sup>11</sup>  
I am beguiled - how, wot I not  
My young wife is with child full great.  
That makes me now sorrow unsought.<sup>12</sup>

The notion of a cuckolded older man was used to comic effect by Chaucer in 'The Miller's Tale' from *The Canterbury Tales* written sometime during the last quarter of the fourteenth century. It seems to be by no coincidence in the story that the older man John is a carpenter who is married to the beautiful eighteen year old girl. One of the tricksters in the tale emphasising the implied credulousness of carpenters says that

A student has poorly spent his time  
If he can't fool a carpenter<sup>13</sup>

It is evident that artists of this later medieval period were advancing two different characterisations of Joseph, the humble, diffident, self-effacing, 'just' man of the Nativity and that of the apparently abstracted, derided Joseph, recalling the typological connection of the 'suffering servant' in Isaiah 53:7, in Betrothal representations.

He was oppressed, and was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

At this stage these two interpretations ran parallel to one another: the artistic interpretation of Joseph's strength of character through his considered thought and response, his ultimate resolve, and his trust in God; and derision symptomatic of the weakness of humanity both on the part of Joseph and that of the disappointed suitors (this particular interpretation will be discussed further in the following chapters).

On the other hand the role of the pensive Joseph is not just as father, protector, provider and guardian of Mary and Jesus, but also as the first witness to Jesus's birth, as confirming Mary's state of perpetual virginity, and as Christ's first disciple. In contemplative pose the artists' intention was primarily the demonstration of Joseph as the humble, noble, simple man who takes our part and is the exemplar *par excellence* of the good husband and father. Joseph's hesitation is meant to reflect his deferment to God's will; it concurs with the Scriptures and diverges from the sensational treatment accorded to him by the authors of the Apocryphal texts.

Cavallini's late thirteenth century mosaics in the apse of the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome takes two of Joseph's roles. Cavallini presents two iconographical types of Joseph: the diffident Joseph and the more assertive protector/provider Joseph. Cavallini retained the traditional practice of portraying Joseph as saintly yet dressed in Roman fashion (pl. 48). However he continues to

portray Joseph as the respectful, unassuming and reflective man in the other images that make up the mosaic scheme.

In the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 49) Cavallini adopts the traditional approach of representing Joseph smaller than the Virgin; and though Joseph is positioned behind and to one side of the Virgin as if in preparation to receive gifts from the Magi, with his left foot forward and the bulk of his weight on his right foot, his manner is self-assured and easy. He represents the protective manifestation of Joseph. Resembling the Virgin's pose he looks down upon the bowed figures of the three obeisant Magi.

Conversely emphasising his subservience in the *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 50) Joseph is situated behind the Virgin. His position parallels prophetess Anna's location behind Simeon.<sup>14</sup> The altar is at the core of the scene. It is symbolic of sacrifice; the sacrifice made by Christ for the redemption of mankind. Over the altar Simeon holds the infant and in so doing signifies Christ's holiness, his eventual death and resurrection.<sup>15</sup> The *Gospel of St Luke* states that according to Jewish tradition of the 'law of the Lord'<sup>16</sup> after the birth of a male child the mother must visit the temple for purification and to offer the child up to God. It is at this time that the father brings the two turtledoves as an oblation. In the role of Jesus's father Joseph brings the offertory doves; and it is these that Joseph is holding in the mosaic. Around the altar are placed the other figures. Whereas Anna is erect and self-possessed, Joseph bows forward in deep reverence. As he does so he holds forth his offering, two birds wrapped within a cloth that

strikingly resembles a priest's maniple. As the maniple is used by a priest only when celebrating Mass it emphasises Joseph's sacred responsibilities.<sup>17</sup> The iconography was slow to change. Joseph continued to be placed at the side or at the foot of a picture. In the *Annunciation* and *Nativity* (pl. 51), executed for the pulpit of Sant'Andrea in Pistoia in 1300 by Nicola Pisano's son Giovanni, Joseph is situated in his habitual location in a bottom corner of the picture. He sits hunched over resting his chin on his upturned hand seemingly in contemplation. Yet again in the 1302 marble relief of the *Nativity* (pl. 52) for the pulpit of the Duomo in Pisa Giovanni includes Joseph in a similar pose, crouched in the left corner of the relief with his hand pressed against his left cheek, apparently deep in thought.

### **3) Giotto and the image of the humble Joseph**

In Giotto's fresco cycle of the *Life of the Virgin* and the *Life of Christ* for the Arena Chapel in Padua Joseph's persona and disposition is articulated in his expression and comportment. Taken as a whole it is the portrayal of Joseph as the humble man. Though this reading of Joseph is of a man eminently noble of bearing; he is also deferential through the manner in which Giotto locates him within a scene, as well by means of his body language. Joseph's deference is indicated in the manner he bows his head and offers the Virgin his hand in the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 53); or accepts the Magi's gifts in the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 54). His nobility is apparent in his physical bulk and the impression of volume with which Giotto endows his figure of Joseph throughout the cycle.

Indicative of Joseph's humility and significantly in respect of his escalating consequence, Giotto refers to the Apocryphal texts to expand his interpretation of the narrative. As a result he includes special, additional scenes which only concern Joseph. These are the *Presentation of the Rods* (pl. 55) and the *Waiting on the Rods* (pl. 56). Furthermore stylistically Giotto alters Joseph's corporeal appearance thereby granting him a more three-dimensional aspect and accordingly a more naturalistic form.

#### **a) The Commissioning of the Arena Chapel Cycle**

Giotto was commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni sometime around the turn of the fourteenth century to produce a cycle of frescoes on the *Life of Virgin* and the *Life of Christ* for the family's private chapel in the grounds of the Scrovegni home in Padua. Unfortunately details of the commission are inconsistent. Enrico's commission for the Arena Chapel either allowed for or may have instructed Giotto to be audacious, in which case it may explain the inclusion of new scenes in the cycles. Unfortunately there is no documentary evidence to prove the theory beyond the testimony of the frescoes themselves.<sup>18</sup> The two new scenes in this particular interpretation of the cycle are powerful examples of the growing significance of St Joseph. As noted they are the *Presentation of the Rods* and the *Watching of the Rods*. Joseph also is included in the *Marriage at Cana*. Taken in conjunction with the traditional scenes that usually include Joseph and are the *Nativity*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Presentation in the Temple*, the *Flight into Egypt*, and *Christ disputing with the Elders* he is present in eight scenes. The two new scenes relate specifically to Joseph alone and no other member of the 'Holy Family'. Derived from the Apocryphal texts and the *Legenda*

*Sanctorum* - a hagiography compiled by Jacopo Voragine in the middle of the thirteenth century though it does not include a chapter specifically concerning St Joseph - uses new scenes to expand Joseph's history while stylistically increasing and developing the variety of Joseph's body and facial expressions within the established repertoire. Giotto also chose to bestow Joseph with monumental stature and mass.<sup>19</sup> His solid appearance embodies and personifies his resolute demeanour thereby creating a figure that exudes an intense and charismatic presence even when mostly hidden by others in the frescoes.

Giotto was already an artist of some renown when he was commissioned to execute the frescoes for the Arena Chapel. On the evidence of his other work Giotto's style was that of imbuing his figures with a sense of volume and authenticity as can be seen in the Badia Polyptych painted sometime around 1300 (pl.57).<sup>20</sup> Giotto was skilled in conferring upon the figures in his works physical and psychological depth. His ability earned him celebrity status.<sup>21</sup> So much so that in 1301, supposedly before the execution of the Arena Chapel frescoes which are believed to have been painted around 1304,<sup>22</sup> Dante wrote of Giotto in the *Purgatorio* that though 'Cimabue thought he held the field in painting, now the cry is for Giotto'.<sup>23</sup> Regrettably it is uncertain on which works Dante was basing his opinion. Little is known of Giotto's life as revealed by the ongoing argument as to whether Giotto had painted the frescoes of the *Life of St Francis*<sup>24</sup> as well as those of the Four Latin Doctors of the Church - Sts Augustine, Gregory, Jerome and Ambrose - in the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi around 1288.<sup>25</sup>



The Arena Chapel became a site of pilgrimage when Pope Benedict XI, considering Giotto's frescoes to be truly remarkable, issued a Papal Bull on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1304 granting indulgences to all those who visited the Chapel to implore the Virgin for the forgiveness of their sins.<sup>26</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the Pope's pronouncement would have required Enrico to allow some greater degree of access to his chapel by those other than his close relatives therefore making the frescoes more widely known; though how many pilgrims came to the Chapel in response to the Pope's decree is not clear. Furthermore the notion that Enrico had originally commissioned the work in order to absolve his father from the guilt of usury<sup>27</sup> and to ensure eternal salvation for the Scrovegni family as a whole is probably in part apocryphal. However both *Exodus* XXII verse 25 and *Deuteronomy* XXIII verses 19 and 20 strictly forbid the taking of interest, and during the Middle Ages canonical law also forbade usury as it was considered a mortal sin.<sup>28</sup> In addition it cannot be ignored that the sin of usury perpetrated by Enrico's father Reginaldo was of some notoriety and accepted iniquity. Dante had referred to him as sitting in the seventh circle of hell in Canto XVII of the *Inferno*.<sup>29</sup> As a consequence there has been a long standing perception that the frescoes represent an act of reparation on the part of the Scrovegni family.

Nonetheless the thrust of the recent book *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture and Experience* by Laura Jacobus is that the Chapel was not solely intended as an act of expurgation.<sup>30</sup> Rather the scheme's emphasis is on the family and civic life. She suggests that the function of the Chapel was as part of the Scrovegni residence, their seat of power which they were in the process of constructing on the site of an old Roman arena within the city of Padua. She

further writes that the Chapel was also intended as an oratory for the quasi-religious organisation the *Cavalieri Gaudenti* a third order of lay brothers who vowed to protect widows and orphans. The Paduan chronicler Giovanni da Nono writing in the 1350s states that the *Cavalieri Gaudenti* were co-donors of the Chapel and thus may have influenced its construction and decoration.<sup>31</sup> Certainly a friar from the *Cavalieri Gaudenti* brotherhood is pictured in the fresco of *The Last Judgement* (pl. 58) located on the west wall. He helps to support the model of the Arena Chapel as Enrico, also supporting the model on his right hand, offers it up to three figures two of whom may well represent the Annunciate Virgin and the Virgin of Charity.<sup>32</sup>

It seems possible that as a married man Enrico may have joined the order of the *Cavalieri* as a *coniugato* or married layman.<sup>33</sup> As an organisation devoted to the Virgin and dedicated to the expunging of usury their involvement appears plausible.<sup>34</sup> Jacobus theorises in her book that the decoration of the chapel far from being an act of repudiation of the sin of usury is a confirmation of the role of the family man within Paduan civic society.

Certainly the sense of the quiet resolve, integrity and humility of Joseph the husband and father pervades the frescoes. Joseph characterizes modesty and dignity and becomes the definitive model for Enrico the good husband. The chapel, which is dedicated to the Virgin as Santa Maria della Carità - Holy Mary of Charity - and associated in the Paduan mind with the Feast of the Annunciation, thus the Annunciate Virgin underscores the importance of benevolence, family values and kinship in overcoming difficulties encountered.<sup>35</sup>

Giotto stresses fatherhood in the cycle. Hence Joseph is not the only troubled husband to receive prominence in the scheme. The Virgin's father Joachim - a rich business man quite like Enrico's own father - is also featured. He is shown to be in despair because he is childless and for this reason the priests banish him from the temple.<sup>36</sup> But God has blessed him and unbeknownst to Joachim his wife Anna has conceived. The next painting in the sequence shows Joachim's joy when he and the pregnant Anna meet at the Golden Gate. It is one of the emotional climaxes of the cycle highlighting the joy of procreation and family.<sup>37</sup>

With the inclusion of Joachim and Anna as well as the additional instalments to the story of Mary and Joseph, there is a strong sense family unity and family devotion in the cycle and particularly fecundity and procreation. The emphasis on marriage and the concept of the good husband, of which Joseph is clearly the epitome, is at the heart of this section of Giotto's overall scheme.

Accordingly through his expression, through the illusion of volume, through his sheer size, through the nature of the scenes in which he appears and his location within them Giotto infuses the image of Joseph with personality, honourableness, reverence and respect. Giotto emphasises Joseph's nobility, his sincerity, his steadfast paternalism and his humility. Representations of family, obligation, fertility, right and wrong infuse the cycles and as a means of emphasis the allegorical grisaille fresco figures of the Virtues and Vices are situated around the walls of the chapel at the lowest register. They stress the difference between moral exactitude and turpitude. They also epitomise contrition and the hope of ultimate salvation, expounded in the complete format.

### **b) *Presentation of the Rods and the Watching of the Rods***

The *Presentation of the Rods* (pl. 55) and the *Watching of the Rods* (pl. 56) are departures from the customary scheme. They are novel and are solely about Joseph. He makes his initial appearance in the cycle in the *Presentation of the Rods* where he is shown as a large and powerful man standing solemnly at the back of the group of young suitors. He is almost beyond the confines of the picture, as if he is stepping into it. It is in this pose, half way between the real world and the world of the fresco, where Joseph represents the beholder. In this transitory position he becomes our intermediary. His location implies his modesty: a sense of trepidation mixed with humility. His continued participation in the proceedings is attributable to his sense of duty. For the viewer Joseph epitomises the noble, humble and principled man.

The work represents an occurrence that has no Scriptural precedent. It is taken from Apocryphal texts alone only to be taken up in the mid thirteenth century by Jacopo Voragine in the *Legenda Sanctorum*. In *The Presentation of the Rods* Joseph's pose suggests stolid acquiescence. The *Legenda Sanctorum* describes the scene thus

...all they that were of the house of David that were convenable to be married and had no wife, that each of them should bring a rod to the altar, and his rod that flourished, and, after the slaying of Isaiah, the Holy Ghost sit in the form of a dove on it, he should be the man that should be desponsate and married to the Virgin Mary.<sup>38</sup>

Voragine writes that Joseph felt it was 'a thing unconvenable, a man of so old age as he was to have so tender a maid...' <sup>39</sup> Giotto conveys this mood through the manner Joseph holds the rod that he must lay on the altar, for he partially

conceals it in his clothing. Unlike the suitors who are all in profile, looking expectantly towards the priest and the altar, Joseph's chin is slightly lowered, his head is turned to some extent towards the viewer in order to engage and involve us in his misgivings. The pose makes him appear perplexed, diffident and ill at ease; unwilling to disobey, yet reluctant to take what he considers is a wrong action.

Giotto portrays Joseph as an old man; according to the Apocryphal texts he is a widower who already has a family. The High Priest has summoned him, against his will to attend a contest of which he believes he should not be privy to as the prize is betrothal to and guardianship of a girl of fourteen. But duty requires him to play his part.

The *Watching of the Rods* immediately follows the *Presentation of the Rods*. Joseph is hardly visible. All the Suitors are on their knees before the altar upon which their rods have been placed. At the back of the group Joseph is almost hidden by a dark haired, bearded younger man who kneels to one side and in front of him; only Joseph's haloed head, shown in profile can be seen. Again Giotto makes use of Joseph's location in the composition to underline his inherent humility and his doubts concerning his suitability. His position also draws attention to the fact that in accordance with the Apocryphal texts Joseph has not at this stage placed his rod upon the altar.

These two frescoes illustrate the visible distancing of Joseph from the rest of the suitors. It has the effect of removing him from the mundanity of their temporal

existence. It brings us back to the 'just man' of the Scriptures. Giotto's intention therefore appears to be very pictorial in that it represents the affirmation of God's plan being revealed to Joseph as opposed to Joseph being selected by God. And though Giotto's Joseph in the *Nativity* (pl. 59) engages with the viewer directly through his frontal pose and his location in the picture, the subtlety of the artist's interpretation at a further level allows for the witnessing of the dichotomy of the ordinary man and the extraordinary 'servant of God'.

The content of the frescoes makes the connection between a number of Old Testament stories and St Joseph's function in God's Plan. It makes reference to Adam's role in the loss of innocence and St Joseph's in its restoration; it highlights the significance of the flowering of Aaron's rod<sup>40</sup> and the flowering of St Joseph's rod; it reminds the viewer of Joseph son of Jacob dreaming of saving his adopted family of Egypt<sup>41</sup> from famine and St Joseph's dreaming of saving his family by taking them to Egypt.<sup>42</sup> These associations grant St Joseph the distinction of being the last patriarch and prophet of the Old Testament. Certainly his bearing is patriarchal and grave. And his predictive dreams prove he is a prophet.

Through the careful positioning of St Joseph in the cycle as a whole Giotto succeeds in externalising the enormity of his role as a father and the particularising of his unique paternity.

### **c) *The Betrothal of the Virgin***

In images of the Betrothal of the Virgin Joseph has accepted the implication of the flowering of his rod. His manner is fixed and calm and inspires confidence despite the evident hostility of one or more than one of the rejected suitors who crowd in on him. In Giotto's *Betrothal of the Virgin* a suitor standing behind Joseph, raises his hand seemingly in anger (pl. 53). Another young man raises a hand to his companion as if to indicate silence, yet almost mirroring the action of the first man, and thereby adding to the sense of bewilderment in the scene. Only one suitor snaps his rod against his knee. Their disarray appears to be wholly plausible.

To confirm Joseph's powerful presence in the *Betrothal* Giotto depicts him slightly taller even than the Virgin. Mary does not look at Joseph but casts her eyes down submissively. Joseph's position is notable for its profundity; it is he who looks thoughtfully upon her. His height and bulk lend him authority. He seems both the powerful father and the caring husband. Despite the activity of the suitors there is an air of stillness at the heart of the scene represented by Joseph and Mary and the physical space between them that infers a third person: the Incarnation.

### **d) *The Nativity***

Positioned at the golden section Joseph attracts attention. Giotto's *Nativity* (pl. 59) communicates psychological depth through the manipulation of the figures. Leon Battista Alberti a member of one of the powerful families in Florence during the fifteenth century and who was a Greek scholar, writer and architect,

made reference to Giotto in his treatise *Della Pittura* where he wrote of him as being able to move 'the soul of the beholder when each man painted there clearly shows the movement of his own soul'.<sup>43</sup> The psychological implication of the portrayal of Joseph in Giotto's *Nativity* in the Arena Chapel cycle is subtle but overwhelming. It represents the image of the average man undergoing and being transformed by a spiritual experience. Read accordingly Joseph's pose exudes the aura of mysticism that to the early fourteenth century viewer would validate his role of prophet and visionary.<sup>44</sup> In the late medieval period overt displays of contemplation would have signified that the contemplator was a mystic experiencing a psychic union with God.<sup>45</sup> Such events were considered an indication of transcendental piety in which one was granted a foretaste of Heaven. That Joseph should be portrayed so often at this period in this stance implied a great degree of holiness on his part. The pose could and would have been interpreted as Joseph being transported by his mystical contemplations.

Nonetheless the poses and gestures are natural. Giotto's Arena Chapel *Nativity* induces an empathetic response to the basic humanity of the story: the birth of a child. The sense of inevitability - the humanity of Christ's incarnation and his eventual crucifixion - is heightened by the action being presented against a dark, claustrophobic and unsettling background. It is night; the sky is almost black. The mountains behind them are barren and granite-grey. There is nothing to soften or prettify the landscape. Even the shelter is a humble, manmade timber canopy.

Seated humbly on the ground with his back to the manger Joseph is deep in thought. Close examination reveals that his eyes are not closed but lowered;



therefore he is vigilant yet thoughtful, aware yet contemplative. Giotto presents Joseph as the exemplar of the prudent man. Through Joseph's location, with his head being on a line with the Virgin's abdomen and the fall of her blue robes framing his head, Giotto reinforces the connection between Joseph and the Godhead, the manner in which God was to take human form and Joseph's indispensable role as putative father and protector. Thus Joseph's position is uncompromising; he faces directly out and engages with the world. To emphasise his strength and function Giotto presents Joseph as physically resembling an Old Testament patriarch and prophet: an imposing, powerful figure who, however onerous, accepts God's will. He exudes corporality. His bulk is almost tangible. His robes strain across his knees. The impression of depth, volume and body mass is heightened by the obscuring of his right hand within the folds of his clothes.

#### ***e) The Adoration of the Magi***

The scene is of the unassuming, courteous and respectful Joseph. (pl. 54) As the Virgin's husband he stands with determination at her side while the Magi offer their gifts. With his head bowed low in deference his chin is hidden in his beard. His hands are unseen as he clasps his arms tightly together within his sleeves.

#### ***f) The Presentation of Christ in the Temple***

In comparison with earlier works that illustrate the same subject - such as the 1270 painting by Guido da Siena (pl. 46) where Joseph bows forward obediently - in Giotto's *Presentation* (pl. 60) Joseph stands upright. He is a large well built man; fractionally taller even than the Virgin emphasising his singular authority.

Alert and attentive his manner is resolute and his expression solemn. The colours he wears exemplify his growing status: regal gold and expensive ultramarine blue, a high-priced and difficult pigment to prepare <sup>46</sup> derived from the rare mineral lapis lazuli.<sup>47</sup> By being positioned behind Mary his humbleness is extolled. Whilst standing in front of the female, presumably the midwife, and holding out the two offertory doves easily on the palm of his left hand - supporting them gently though he is portrayed as a big man - his location denotes his increasing authority. This is a depiction of Joseph the rightful and confident father.

**g) *The Flight into Egypt***

Significantly all the other figures in this fresco are smaller than Joseph and Mary, who are both imposing and of stern countenance (pl. 61). Joseph is at the head of the group. Carrying a wicker container presumably full of provisions under his cloak, he bears his rod, the symbol of his authority, across his left shoulder. The severity of his expression conveys his command. Joseph strides ahead of the donkey, a youth holds the donkey's rein. But as he walks Joseph twists around with an air of concern in order to look back at his precious family.<sup>48</sup> His eye line connects with that of the Christ Child who sits on the Virgin's lap, child to whom he is the father, rather than connecting with the Virgin. Giotto emphasises Joseph's role. He is a powerful figure; the humble servant of God has transformed into the considerate and conscientious father figure. Giotto presents him as guide, protector and *Nutritor Domini*, literally the one who both nourishes and nurtures the Lord.

#### **h) *Christ disputing with the Elders***

Joseph's stature has increased to that of exemplar as he demonstrates to the beholder how to worship Christ. The fresco is based on the story of the finding of the Saviour in the temple (pl. 62). Joseph is seen in profile standing behind the Virgin. Exaggerating his role as paradigm Giotto has painted Joseph taller than anyone else in the picture, including the Virgin. Both his pose and that of the Virgin's, with their heads slightly bowed suggests that they are watching and listening intently to their son. They extend their hands to him. Their posture is both temporal and reverential, alluding to their paternal and maternal concern for their missing child. Yet with their arms stretched out towards the figure of Christ as if offering him to the temple priests, their gesture combines the emotions of spiritual adoration and love.

#### **i) *Marriage at Cana***

Giotto is innovative in this fresco by including a representation of Joseph; and as such it is Joseph's last appearance within the context of the cycles of the Virgin and of Christ (pl. 63). Aptly at a wedding celebration, the scene is important for a number of reasons; one being that it supports the legality of Joseph's own kinship with Jesus.

The *Marriage at Cana* is of great theological importance as it represents the occasion of Christ's first miracle as documented in the Scriptures. The fresco is positioned below the *Presentation of the Rods*, Joseph's first step towards being Christ's earthly father, and above the *Lamentation* which denotes the end of Christ's earthly existence. These are not arbitrary placements. Giotto's retelling

of the story is intended to be read both horizontally and vertically and this vertical arrangement thus implies that Christ's ultimate sacrifice is as a direct consequence of Joseph being revealed by God as Christ's father. It stresses Joseph's part in God's Plan. The *Presentation of the Rods* and *The Marriage at Cana* are unequivocally related to the subjects of commitment, betrothal and the family.

Only Christ and two further figures, one male and one female, are nimbed in the *Marriage at Cana*. It is credible that the female figure, looking away from Christ and dressed in blue is the Virgin.<sup>49</sup> The other haloed figure in the scene is an elderly, grey-haired, bearded man. It is a convincing interpretation that the figure is Joseph as scriptural accounts make no mention of any other guest being present who would have merited a halo.<sup>50</sup> The man's hair and beard being of greater length than in previous representations of Joseph denote his greater age. The presence of Jesus at Cana establishes the sacrament of marriage and signifies the special relationship that exists between Christ and the Church. Joseph and Mary together are presented as the exemplars of the marriage union. Joseph sits in the far left corner of the painting and has turned to face Christ and thus outward in order to bear witness to Jesus's first miracle of turning the water into wine. His pose is quite unlike that of the Virgin who looks away to watch the wine being sampled. Both eucharistic and salvific implications of this miracle increase the significance of Joseph witnessing the event.

#### 4) Contrasting contemporaneous interpretations of St Joseph

Not all images of Joseph created around the turn of the fourteenth century were as inventive as the representations of him in the story of Christ as executed by Giotto in the Arena Chapel. Many continued to maintain either Roman influences in the style of dress or Byzantine influences in the flat, otherworldly, hieratic formality. A fresco of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 64) in a parish church in Northamptonshire dated to the beginning of the fourteenth century exemplifies the continuance of early Christian and medieval practice of presenting Joseph as wearing Roman style clothes.<sup>51</sup>

Joseph is a white-haired old man in a small panel from the front of Duccio's *Maestà* painted for the high altar of the Duomo in Siena and completed in 1311. In the *Nativity* scene (pl. 65) Joseph is presented as an ancient, pulling the folds of his garments about his neck for warmth.<sup>52</sup> At the extremity of the picture he is shown huddled outside the confines of the cave in which the Virgin clothed in vivid ultramarine robes reclines on her couch. She is a composed and poised figure. Joseph, as in the *Nativity* (pl. 25) in the Coptic church of the Holy Virgin in Wadi Natrum, is positioned both physically and metaphorically beyond the sanctuary of the shelter and cuts a pathetic figure.<sup>53</sup> Beside the Virgin, and within the safety of the shelter, lies the baby Jesus in the manger; the ox and the ass are placed in closer proximity to Christ than Joseph.<sup>54</sup> He is not even included in Duccio's depiction of the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 66).<sup>55</sup>

Duccio's style utilised a method part Byzantine and part Northern European Gothic. He blended the two and introduced a more natural and emotional quality.

The use of the flat hieratic Byzantine manner lends a psychological distance to some of the scenes so that Joseph appears alienated in a number of the panel paintings; as for example in the *Nativity*.<sup>56</sup> In the *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 67) the lack of spatial depth seems a deliberate ploy in order to focus attention on the spirituality of the event. In profile the reverential Joseph stands holding the two doves to one side of the altar; and as if part of a decoration he is almost an enantiomorphic copy of Anna the prophetess on the opposite side of the scene. On the other hand Joseph's presence in the continuous narrative of painting *Joseph's Dream* (pl. 68) and the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 69) is innovative and of a more intimate and corporeal nature.<sup>57</sup> This is the image of a mortal man; and Duccio is at pains to convey him as being human and of this world. Tired from the journey sleep has overcome Joseph. He has slumped heavily forward with his head down and his face is completely encircled by the vibrant scarlet folds of his robes which he has pulled up around the nape of his neck. But as he sleeps an angel appears to him in a dream and warns him of Herod's rage. Next to this image yet still in the same pictorial space Joseph, purposeful of step, follows the donkey upon which the Virgin and infant ride. Joseph's right hand is raised as though he is imparting some encouraging words. As carer and provider Joseph carries across his left shoulder his rod. On it there is tied a small bundle of provisions. This is Joseph the exemplar of fatherhood and thoughtfulness. Duccio has implied Joseph's three-dimensionality through the shading around the knees of the somnolent Joseph and across the right shoulder of the ambulant Joseph. His physicality and humanity confers on Joseph a sense of immediacy and vibrancy, and creates a sense of rapport with the beholder.

Duccio imbues Joseph through the manner of his dress, the colouration of his robes and vulnerability of his sleeping pose, as human. The bold manner with which Joseph is shown to step forth in the *Flight into Egypt* declaims his worthiness to undertake such a task and his obedience to God's will. He turns to give words of encouragement indicative of his care, attention and compassion. He is shown to be a strong, competent yet sensitive father and *Nutritor Domini*.

An early fourteenth century stained glass window in the parish church at East Hagbourne in Oxfordshire shows the contemplative Joseph in an informal nativity scene (pl. 70).<sup>58</sup> He is very much a part of the family, positioned behind the bed upon which the Virgin lies with the infant in her arms. He stands supposedly on guard while in thought he leans his right cheek against his hands which clasp the top of his staff. With his head bowed he is presented as the humble Joseph but also as the considered and thoughtful *Nutritor Domini*.

### **5) Joseph the Provider**

The ultimate act of humility and subservience is expressed in representations of Joseph caring and protecting his young family. The image of the practical father and provider was to develop in the following century, but in the mid fourteenth century the changing character of Joseph from adjunct to spouse and humble, obliging provider began to appear.

Vitale da Bologna's painting is an example of the image of Joseph the very practical father and *Nutritor Domini*. In the 1338 fresco of the *Annunciation* and the *Nativity* (pl. 71) which originally covered the wall above and around the west

door of the church of La Confraternità detta Buon Gesù in Bologna Joseph is depicted pouring water from a large jug into the bowl in which the Virgin dips her hand so as to bathe Christ.<sup>59</sup> At the centre of the painting is a demonstration of Joseph's energetic commitment and enthusiasm in his role as putative father to Jesus and husband of the Virgin, as he bends forward to pour out the water.

Master Bertram, who painted reputedly painted an altarpiece known as either the Petri-Altar or the Grabow Altarpiece for the high altar of St Peter's Church in Hamburg, Germany in the third quarter of the fourteenth century, also emphasised Joseph's role as the practical man and *Nutritor Domini*.<sup>60</sup> He presents Joseph as the caring and thoughtful husband and father. In the painting of the *Nativity* (pl. 72) Joseph is shown handing the restless infant Christ to the impressively large figure of the seated Virgin.<sup>61</sup> As if Joseph is trying to soothe the child and has been walking the restless infant to and fro he leans forward to pass the baby back to the Virgin. Indicative of Joseph's caring and solicitous disposition, at his feet he has a pot of food cooking on a small open fire and around his waist he carries a drinking vessel. Similarly in another panel from the Grabow Altarpiece Master Bertram presents the viewer with another facet of the nurturing Joseph. In the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (pl. 66) a grey haired, grey bearded Joseph wearing a red Phrygian style hat stands over the Virgin and child as if to afford them some protection and shelter. The Virgin looks hardly more than a child with her long golden hair hanging down to her shoulders beneath her veil. The considerate Joseph offers her a drink from a flask whilst she breast feeds the lively infant seated on her lap.<sup>62</sup> Joseph is even shown to have provided



sustenance for the donkey at his side. With its head down the creature is pictured in the act of eating.

### **Summary**

As the humble, subservient man Joseph was frequently relegated to the extremities of scenes during the thirteenth century. On occasions he is restricted to a corner in a Nativity scene as in works by Nicola Pisano and Guido da Siena. Pietro Cavallini introduced a more dynamic interpretation of Joseph in his mosaic of the *Nativity* where the expression on the face of the seated Joseph seems to imply prophetic acumen.

This was an era of heightened spiritual awareness, of chivalric poems and romances concerned with protecting the weak and fighting the foe. One of the most popular works at the time was *Roman de la Rose* which quintessentially draws on both chivalry and prophetic trances within its tale. Joseph's dreams and his role as protector can be equated with those knights errant described in the contemporary literature.

In his frescoes of the cycle of the *Life of the Virgin* and the *Life of Christ* for the Scrovegni Chapel Giotto bestowed Joseph with believable physical volume and psychological depth in order to express his humanity. To advance his concept Giotto introduced two new scenes involving Joseph to the cycle as well as including him in the fresco of the *Marriage at Cana*.

Correspondingly as Joseph the carer and provider gained importance within what was perceived as God's plan for salvation through the Church images of Joseph in a actively caring demeanour, holding the infant or helping to bathe him, became more prevalent as in the work of Vitale da Bologna and Master Bertram.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Waiting on God: Joseph's Contemplative Dedication**

#### **1) Destabilisation within society**

The transformation of the representation of St Joseph into a figure with volume and presence and exuding a sense of humanness and of reality, was not a sudden event. As it has been seen Giotto's and Duccio's modifications were subtle intimations rather than cataclysmic changes in the image of St Joseph, but they were significant. And just as the changes they wrought impacted on society so changes in society were impacting on the art that was being produced. But this state of reciprocity was a slow process. In fact transformations within society and the Church that affected the artistic interpretation of St Joseph trace their origins back to the early thirteenth century. They were many and varied; they embraced the spread of urbanisation throughout Western Europe, the influence of mysticism and the growing acceptance of vernacular theology - that is theology delivered in the recipient's mother tongue.<sup>1</sup>

The growth of scholasticism in the twelfth and thirteen centuries had advanced the atmosphere of mysticism; and attendant on that was the desire to communicate and worship God in a more direct manner.<sup>2</sup> Together with the rise in literacy, specifically the use of the vernacular, the institution of the Church changed. It was the mystics particularly who promoted a more personal and direct relationship with God. They delivered their message in the vernacular and thereby reached a far wider audience than theologians who promulgated their beliefs in Latin.<sup>3</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had pointed the way towards a more

inclusive form of worship with their pronouncements on the *vita apostolic*, the belief in living the apostolic life as exemplified by Christ and his twelve disciples. The *vita apostolic* with its unequivocally mystic associations and its proselytising ways advanced evangelisation and devotion to poverty, prayer and penance. Amongst the lower-classes and uneducated laity this of necessity meant the use of the vernacular. The Fourth Lateran Council also pronounced on the *cura animarum* - pastoral renewal - which by definition implied the rejuvenation of the Church, its duty of care, and its spiritually nurturing role through a one to one relationship with their congregation.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of the thirteenth century the structure of life in general was altering not just between the clerics and laity. Urbanisation was spreading; the emphasis was away from an agrarian economy centred on the production of food as the economic powerhouse to one that was based on commerce within civic communities. In Italy it was the city authorities and the bishop with his diocese who determined whether a village was to grow into a city or not.<sup>5</sup> The ordinary working man had little say in the process. As the area of the city's influence expanded into the countryside or what was called in Italy the *contado*, more and more people ceased working on the land and instead sought their livelihood in the newly created urban areas.<sup>6</sup>

On an international scale as the Holy Roman Empire had declined in power there was a corresponding rise in nationalistic governments with strong monarchs. It was at this point that the Church became evermore separated from the state and was starting to use terms such as 'Christian commonwealth' and 'ecclesiastical

polity' to describe its new function and role. In this changing environment the Church saw itself as the 'perfect society' and the 'Kingdom of God on earth'.<sup>7</sup> In effect the Church positioned itself quite explicitly above that of state.<sup>8</sup> The change in governance brought the Church into conflict with monarchical rule as exemplified in the altercation between the French King Philip IV and Pope Boniface VIII in 1303 which became known as the Outrage of Anagni. The quarrel concerned who had primary authority: was it the Church or the state?<sup>9</sup> When a Frenchman became Pope Clement V in 1305 the papacy moved to Avignon and remained there until 1378. Effectively at this stage it was the French court who had influence over the Church of Rome.<sup>10</sup>

Within the clerical community an atmosphere of humility and obedience was emerging as a result of the resurgence of spiritual mysticism; it was seen firstly in the thirteenth century writings of St Francis of Assisi and St Clare.<sup>11</sup> In Europe a number of monastic orders had been anxious to instigate some reappraisal of their vows and ideals. The works of St Bonaventure<sup>12</sup> and the Spirituals under the leadership of Peter John Olivi during the second and third quarter of the thirteenth century accentuated the mystical quality of the Franciscan order.<sup>13</sup> The Dominicans likewise made changes and the more orthodox amongst them formed Observant orders. Indeed many of the religious communities acknowledged their shortcomings and to rectify the situation instigated institutional reforms, the establishment of new mendicant orders and the reinforcement of the old orders.<sup>14</sup>

St Joseph, characterised as the humble, meditative, sagacious, prudent yet fearful man who waits on and is both heedful and mindful of God's will, typified the new

re-invigorated beliefs. As a result and in response to the changed attitudes the image of the unassuming, subservient Joseph came to be included in many Nativity depictions from this period.

Similarly, as if reflecting the renewed awareness of the importance of personal and institutional piety and of having and practicing a deeper appreciation of Christ's humanity, representations of St Joseph began to emphasise more specifically his contemplative, and spiritual nature together with his humble and deferential temperament. Taddeo Gaddi's <sup>15</sup>*Nativity* (pl. 73) of 1325 is a case in point of the contemplative Joseph.<sup>16</sup> His posture underlines his meditative though self-effacing disposition. He is a large figure, resting his cheek in apparent deep thought against his left fist; signifying his intellect he holds a book in his other hand. Taddeo Gaddi presents Joseph as the pensive, thoughtful pragmatic man: a scholar and a mystic who pauses in order to reflect, who waits on God's will. While his eyes are lowered implying deep contemplation, his brow is furrowed intimating his conscious apprehension of his circumstances and his responsibilities. As a sign of his humility he sits not on the same plane as the Virgin but below her on the ground in the forefront of the picture; in this location he attracts the viewer's immediate attention.

In a later fresco by Taddeo Gaddi dating from the mid 1330s of the *Nativity* (pl. 74), and located in the Baroncelli Chapel in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in Florence, the viewer is presented with the new emotional intensity of Joseph's thoughts. As in the earlier painting Joseph's brow is heavy, suggestive of his feelings and presentiments; and as an expression of his humility he sits on the

ground. But here he clasps his knees close to him. The changed posture reveals a new dynamic to the scene. There is a sense of urgency in his tense posture. The pose adds a further dimension to Joseph's character and to his humanness. The unease implied by his pose - the hugging of his knees as if seeking comfort and warmth both physically and spiritually - transforms him into a person with whom the viewer can relate and empathise; an understandable and accessible figure with misgivings and reservations.

Changing relationships between the State and the Church, within the Church itself and in the monastic orders in particular were not the only catalysts responsible for the evident transformation in the pictorial manifestation of Joseph's state of mind. There were more immediate upheavals. They went further than the banking disasters of the 1340s or the changes in agricultural life.<sup>17</sup> They were more comprehensive and devastating and affected all aspects of society. And they are central to the development at this stage in history of the image of St Joseph as cautious, God fearing and contemplative; and they begin to emphasise Joseph as the paradigmatic father figure.

The destabilisation and fragmentation of society throughout Western Europe in the fourteenth century was due to a number of natural causes. Initially improved climactic conditions had the effect of increasing crop production; but this in turn resulted in considerable population growth.<sup>18</sup> For the working man the population explosion meant more people seeking work. The consequence was that wages slumped and the poor became poorer causing instability and unrest.

Then there came a series of bad harvests and concomitant starvation which was followed by epidemics. More than any other cause the breakdown of normal life can be attributed to the Black Death and the subsequent occurrences of the plague. Its many visitations left a vacuum in the composition of society. As the previously swollen population numbers suddenly plummeted attitudes towards life and the sanctity of the family changed. Temporal existence seemed ephemeral at best. Family life all but collapsed and kinship meant little as Boccaccio related in *Decameron* written in the early 1350s. He wrote that during the plague the fear of disease became so overwhelming that even 'fathers and mothers refused to nurse and assist their own children, as though they did not belong to them.'<sup>19</sup> And Marchione di Coppo Stephani in his *Florentine Chronicle* of 1380 related how children during outbreaks of the plague were abandoned by their parents; spouses abandoned their partners; and siblings abandoned each other.<sup>20</sup>

The population, without the clear cut parameters of government and Church, was directionless. The prevailing mood of insecurity brought about disproportionate displays of religious fervour exemplified in the bands of flagellants<sup>21</sup> who took to the streets at each new outbreak of plague. In Italy these people were known as the *Bianchi* because they dressed in white robes which they stripped to their waists in order to lash their own shoulder with whips and cat o' nine tails.<sup>22</sup> Like many they believed that the sickness was a sign of God's wrath.<sup>23</sup>

As an inevitable corollary of the pandemic the pattern of life changed. With fewer people available to work wages rose; however the incentive to work in the immediate aftermath of the Black Death was diminished, particularly so in Italy



where life was considered to be for the living; a *carpe diem* mentality ruled. In conjunction with their fatalistic attitude was the new fascination with eschatological forms of art.<sup>24</sup>

It was the opinion of Millard Meiss, the American art historian and specialist on art of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, that the effects of the Black Death transformed painting and literature.<sup>25</sup> He maintained that the Black Death resulted in a return to a style of artistic representation characteristic of the previous century, with the emphasis being placed on matters spiritual rather than worldly. He utilised Orcagna's Strozzi Altarpiece (pl. 75)<sup>26</sup> as his main corroborating piece of evidence, presenting it as being a regression in art with the use of a frontally posed Christ as an ethereal and 'transcendent figure' in the Byzantine tradition.<sup>27</sup> To Meiss the image of the front facing Christ the Redeemer was a major innovation. He wrote of Orcagna suppressing 'qualities of the art of Giotto and Ambrogio (Lorenzetti) that were both naturalistic and 'antique''.<sup>28</sup>

As a response to the plagues of the fourteenth century attempts were made to assuage the wrath of God through an increase in church building and renovation. Money for new buildings and the adornment of the new buildings was financed from the many endowments and bequeaths. Churches were renovated; and though in Florence the plague slowed progress on the expansion of the Duomo, it was only a brief interruption.<sup>29</sup> There was a rise in the construction of new colleges and universities in the hope that this would lead to an increase in the number of clergy. As a consequence the University of Florence was built in 1350 from

monies accrued from wealthy benefactors who had died in the city during the Black Death.<sup>30</sup>

Further societal disruption occurred in the last quarter of the fourteenth century when disruption in Church polity resulted in the Great Schism. In this bipolar interlude there existed two papacies, two fathers of the Church: one in Rome and the other in Avignon; at one point there were two anti-popes.<sup>31</sup> When the Church itself could not agree on who was their true father, the notions of parental stability, paternity and family values understandably were confused and shaken to their core. And while heresy and corruption flourished within the Church,<sup>32</sup> the rise in power of the entrepreneurial and mercantile classes presaged general social unrest among the working classes in many states. For example there was the *Ciompi* Revolt in Florence in 1378<sup>33</sup> and the Peasants Revolt in England in 1381.<sup>34</sup>

In an age of pestilence, with associated high mortality, political unrest and instability within the Church the outcome was that of a society in a state of disintegration and despair. The majority of those who survived were the young; and they were inexperienced, disaffected and often fatherless. In the increasingly volatile environment Joseph the elderly, working man, seen to be battling with his doubts and fears yet overcoming them, became the universal caring and compassionate husband and father figure. He was the one sure image and the exemplar of paternal resoluteness and immutability in a shifting and uncertain world.

The emotional demeanour of the disappointed suitors in many representations of the Betrothal of the Virgin can be seen as a metaphor for society in the second half of the fourteenth century.

## **2) The Betrothal of the Virgin**

Characteristic of all the images of the Betrothal of the Virgin is Joseph's calm resolution: his apparent readiness to wait on and be of service to God.

There are two central opposing elements that comprise images of the Betrothal of the Virgin in the fourteenth century. Firstly, that in numerous examples there are displays of aggression and derision ostensibly aimed at Joseph. Secondly there is the repeated image of the quiet, contemplative, resolute Joseph standing at the heart of the picture. Representations of Joseph are bold in their demonstration of his quiet reflection, obedience and acquiescence. In the frenzied images of the Betrothal it was as if a mirror were being put up to the turmoil and uncertainty of everyday fourteenth century life; and Joseph's serenity became the antithesis.

During this period of social dislocation images of the Betrothal of the Virgin and its associations with family and stability, began to increase in number. All representations portrayed Joseph at the centre of the action yet at the same time detached from the tumult and confusion of the temporal world that surrounded him. There is a sense of stillness and tranquillity about his persona in most depictions of the scene, despite any amount of activity created by the disappointed suitors on all sides of him. The image is of Joseph and Mary together, reacting to one another and behaving as one indivisible unit. Thus in

artistic imagery at this point Joseph is catapulted from being an adjunct to the story of Christ's incarnation into that of a major player.

Joseph's alert, steady presence - the serene lacuna created by Joseph and the Virgin as he takes her hand or in some paintings is shown to be in the act of placing the ring on her finger - can be observed repeatedly in Betrothal scenes. As the embodiment of the Church the Virgin's acceptance of Joseph's hand in marriage, their union sanctioned by God, implied permanence in an otherwise chaotic and troubled world.

Thus the notion of stability and strength emerging from disappointment, bewilderment and chaos is the salient feature in all these fourteenth representations of the Betrothal of the Virgin; a feature that would continue into the fifteenth century versions of the Betrothal. Strength and stability of purpose is exemplified in Joseph's bearing. The image of the Betrothal in conjunction with Joseph's determined manner served to accentuate the importance of marriage and acted as a reminder to the beholder that marriage was one of the seven sacraments of the Church.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly the marriage of Joseph and Mary was characterised as a stabilising force, re-establishing order and moral values. More importantly to the representation of Joseph images of the Betrothal showed that an ordinary man could do extraordinary things.

There is a further and important subtext here not to be overlooked. The suitors' state of agitation can be read as a symbol - the visual signification - for the perplexities that had been present in Joseph's own mind. Certainly according to

the Apocryphal texts<sup>36</sup> upon which these pictures were based, Joseph had doubted his own fitness as husband of the Virgin due to, amongst other criteria, their disparity in age.<sup>37</sup> But by contrast the peaceful clearing around Joseph and the Virgin as he offers her the ring signifies their oneness and the strength of his resolution.

Taddeo Gaddi's fresco of the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 76) in the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce at Florence, executed sometime between 1332 and 1338 is an example of the ambiguity of emotions and psychological confusion portrayed in many Betrothal depictions. Joseph seems to be the focus of the apparent aggression. Nothing is known about the wishes of the patrons in regard of the commissioning of the cycle; but as a funerary chapel representing the life of the Virgin it is assumed that the Baroncelli family were seeking her mediation with God on their behalf for wrongs either real or imagined perpetrated by their family.<sup>38</sup>

In the painting astonishment and frustration go hand in hand. The crowd of suitors is boisterous and anarchic; there is much haphazard jostling and movement, and patent disdain in the attitude of some of them. One man raises his hand as if to hit Joseph's back. Another faceless suitor tugs at Joseph's shoulder. A third, standing between the Virgin and Joseph, pulls impatiently at Joseph's mantle as Joseph fixes the Virgin with his extraordinarily steady gaze. There is wonderment in the behaviour of some of the suitors. One suitor displays incredulity and amazement at the events unfolding around him as his compatriots snap their rods in their hands or under foot. He turns to a fellow suitor and with a

querulous gesture - his forehead creased, his hands open in an empty gesture of incomprehension - he looks for an explanation.

The breaking of the rods bears a deeper connotation; of a deed done that cannot be undone, of a contract predestined, drawn up and now sealed. Joseph stands leaning forwards as though in anticipation, his flowering rod, which is crowned by a white dove symbolic of the Holy Spirit, is carried over his shoulder. In accordance with the Apocryphal texts the flowering of Joseph's rod symbolises God's affirmation; Joseph is revealed by God to be the rightful husband of the Virgin and therefore the putative father of Christ.<sup>39</sup> Joseph's rod is emblematic of Aaron's almond rod which by association additionally confers on Joseph God's sanction.<sup>40</sup> The almond rod alludes to the book of *Genesis* and fatherhood; of Jacob the loving father sending gifts including myrrh and almonds to his beloved son Joseph in the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh during a period of famine.<sup>41</sup> The very specific associations and correlations bestow authority on St Joseph. Nevertheless St Joseph is placed lower than the Virgin in the painting. The unifying and stabilising quality of *isocephaly*<sup>42</sup> which can be observed in Giotto's Betrothal is not present in this painting, thereby adding to the atmosphere of emotional uproar in which the modest Joseph accedes to his new responsibilities.<sup>43</sup>

Joseph is elderly and white-haired, surrounded by tumult and disorder. The frantic disposition of the suitors is a noisy affair played out to the accompaniment of young men blowing musical instruments. In contrast the Virgin is presented before the elaborate and sophisticated architectural backdrop of the temple draped

with a richly patterned tapestry. To the rear of the painting there is pastoral tranquillity. A high wall separates the gathering from a garden full of fruit trees and birds. It alludes to the *hortus conclusus* and the Garden of Eden: a place of peace, order, security and ultimate salvation.<sup>44</sup> Moreover the walled garden is symbolic of the Virgin's inviolable purity. In fulfilment of God's wishes, Joseph and Mary are as one in their display of quiet, calm acceptance. It is a composed Joseph who resolutely slips the ring on to the ring finger of the Virgin's right hand.<sup>45</sup> She, equally composed, returns his steady gaze.

A similar mood is created in one of the predella panels from the San Pancrazio Polyptych painted by Bernardo Daddi during the mid 1330s. The representation of the *Marriage of the Virgin* (pl. 77)<sup>46</sup> shows the unsuccessful suitors crowding around the inclining figure of Joseph.<sup>47</sup> The suitors' arms are raised in ambiguous gestures; turning towards each other they appear to talk excitedly. Some of the suitors bend over to snap their rods against their knees or under foot. Notwithstanding Joseph carries his rod easily and lightly over his left shoulder. It has blossomed into the shape of a white dove. As though to emphasise Joseph's acceptance of God's will he is depicted smaller than the Virgin, but lowers himself still further as he bows deferentially in order to slip the ring onto her outstretched finger. As before, Joseph seems oblivious to the commotion occurring behind him. Two young men break their rods whilst a third raises his right hand as if to hit Joseph between his shoulder blades. The Virgin, dressed in traditional blue robes, lowers her head submissively and accepts Joseph's placing of the ring on her right ring finger.

Not all representations of the Betrothal feature boisterous suitors so prominently. The lozenge-shaped marble and terracotta relief of the Betrothal, which in this context is a representation of the sacrament of marriage along with the six other sacraments of the Church (pl. 78), was executed for the Campanile of the Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore, in Florence in the 1330s.<sup>48</sup> It baulks the pattern of including troubled suitors amongst the assemblage.<sup>49</sup> All those present exhibit a quiet demeanour. Joseph, standing taller than the Virgin, is in the act of slipping the ring on to her finger. Joseph and Mary have two attendants each witnessing the proceedings, while the officiating priest is so squeezed between them that the sculptor has seen fit to exclude the lower half of his body completely. Taken together there are seven figures dressed in contemporary costume crowded into the restricted space. Unlike other representations where the Virgin's composure implying her willing acquiescence is countered by Joseph's humble, almost submissive demonstration of commitment, here it is Mary's stance that is exaggeratedly demure and reserved and Joseph who stands boldly upright exuding conviction and confidence. He is comparatively youthful with a light beard and smooth face. His confident and authoritative pose is in sharp contrast to that of the Virgin's. She raises her hand shyly, almost to shoulder level to facilitate Joseph's placing of the wedding ring on her finger; and as she does so modestly arches her back away from him with her left knee bent slightly beneath the flowing lines of her loose robes. In a display of trepidation and foreboding with her free hand she fingers the girdle at her waist.

Some level of commotion is represented in most images of the Betrothal. Andrea Orcagna's 1359 *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 79) is a representation of



demonstrative suitors. The relief is part of the tabernacle constructed in the church of Orsanmichele in Florence to house the devotional panel painting of the *Madonna and Child* which had been painted in 1347 by Bernardo Daddi in order to replace a previous thaumaturgical image of the *Madonna of the Graces*. Around the base of the tabernacle are eight octagonal marble reliefs, one of which is the *Betrothal of the Virgin*.

The relief shows one of the suitors breaking his rod under his foot while another more indistinct figure holds his right hand above Joseph's head. His action is ambiguous. He might be about to hit Joseph, equally he might be holding back the drapes that surround the scene in order to reveal Joseph more clearly to the viewer.

As in earlier representations Joseph is smaller than the Virgin. But otherwise he is a confident figure as demonstrated in his pose and expression: he looks up at the Virgin and smiles at her. He is a comparatively young man and like Giotto's Joseph in the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 53) he has a powerful presence through Orcagna's detailing of the figure. His hair, beard and the folds of his robes have been intricately worked. His features are particularised granting him character and personality. As the exemplar of married men he embodies the sacrament of marriage through his confident gesture as with determination he moves his hand towards the hand of the Virgin.

Derision and satire are much in evidence in Niccolò di Buonaccorso's *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 80) executed around 1380.<sup>50</sup> Joseph is represented as a little man

with disheveled grey hair positioned directly below the Virgin's parents, Joachim and Anna, who tower over him as they observe the event. Anna turns to watch her daughter while Joachim observes the actions of the other suitors. Neither Joachim nor Anna look directly at Joseph. Their presence in the temple precinct recalls Joachim's own humiliation: his expulsion from the temple and the hostility he endured at the hands of the temple priests for his inability to impregnate Anna until God's intervention. Disapproval inexorably links Joseph with his father-in-law Joachim. For Joseph it is the disapproval of the other younger suitors for being chosen over and above them. It is unmistakably expressed by the actions of the young man brandishing his rod immediately to the rear of the diminutive figure of Joseph. Those behind the youth have turned away in order to break their rods. Joseph is depicted guardedly stepping up to the figure of the Virgin. His humility and tentativeness is emphasized by the positioning of his bare feet upon the carpet. He is shown in the act of stepping forward with caution, leaning his weight onto his left foot. He holds the blossoming rod. The ceremony around him is an excited and noisy event, part joyous ceremony, part incomprehensible occasion. Behind the Virgin's accompanying maid there are the signs of celebration. A dark-skinned youth plays a pair of small kettledrums with sticks, another young man blows into a shawm, while two others raise long horns to their lips and blow down them, their cheeks swelling with the effort. Joseph is represented as the calm and resolute man, the exemplar of quiet obedience and dignity amid a hubbub.

Joseph's concentration and calm is in stark contrast to the air of violence and hostility of the disappointed suitors that taints the ceremony in Gregorio di

Lucca's portrayal of the Betrothal dated to the first quarter of the fifteenth century (pl. 81).<sup>51</sup> The scene takes place within the temple. Four young men stand behind the elderly Joseph, three of whom are poised as if to beat him in a display of high emotion. The one nearest to him is noticeably taller than anyone else in the picture. He holds his fist high as if to bring it down on top of Joseph's head. But as God's chosen one Joseph is the model of spiritual duty. He seems oblivious to their display of discontent. Instead he leans forward in earnest concentration as he slips the ring on Mary's finger. In his left hand he carries his rod, the top of which has transformed into the appearance of a white dove.

Fra Angelico's *Betrothal of the Virgin*, a predella panel (pl. 82) from the Cortona Altarpiece painted in the early 1430s,<sup>52</sup> creates an image full of ambiguity.<sup>53</sup> The scene shows a group of well dressed young noble men standing behind Joseph. They are agitated and confused. Three of them have turned slightly away as if accepting the result of the rods, though with apparent fascination they have looked back in order to watch the further proceedings. The others have their hands upraised. One holds his arms down at his sides; but with his fingers stretched wide his pose signifies his unalloyed incomprehension. The meaning of the others' gestures is unclear and can be interpreted in a number of ways; as indicative of congratulations, aggression or enthrallment. Joseph stands straight and steady, watching the Virgin intently as the priest guides their hands together. And in this manner without looking down Joseph places the ring on the ring finger of the Virgin's left hand. His self-assured demeanour and deportment act as unequivocal signs of his commitment to the Virgin and to God.

Domenico Ghirlandaio's representation of the scene is rich, hectic and florid; and Joseph in his blue and gold robes and his sedate bearing stands him out as being distinctive from the rest of the group. The fresco of the *Marriage of the Virgin* (pl. 83) is dated 1486-90 and was executed for the Tornabuoni Chapel which Giovanni Tornabuoni had dedicated to 'the exaltation of his house and family', in the church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.<sup>54</sup> The Tornabuoni were a wealthy family connected to the Medici through the marriage of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, sister of Giovanni, to Piero de' Medici.<sup>55</sup> She was the mother of the powerful Lorenzo the Magnificent de' Medici. The splendour of the depicted ceremony may well have been inspired by the magnificence of Giovanni's and Lucrezia's own wedding and therefore underlines the importance and authority of the Tornabuoni to those who viewed the fresco.

It is an elaborate scene implying the importance and grandeur of the people and the event. Under a barrel-vaulted coffered ceiling upheld by serried ranks of composite pilasters the exchange of rings takes place. Joseph is only slightly smaller than the Virgin. The calm classical architecture that surrounds them echoes the composed bearing of Joseph and Mary. Yet it diverges sharply from the swirling and excited activity of the marriage party: the flourish of ladies' expensive brocaded silk skirts, the musicians playing, the fury of the man with his fist raised, and the impetuosity of another man who snaps his rod under foot. In contradiction to the suitors the composed figures of Joseph and Mary lean in towards each other with quiet resolution.

In contrast but similar to the earlier image of Joseph in the 1330s composition on the Campanile in Florence, Joseph is not a target for derision or hostility, covert or otherwise in Domenico Beccafumi's fresco of the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 84) painted in 1518.<sup>56</sup> The painting demonstrates that though nearly two hundred years apart in execution the tranquil rendering of the scene was still current. In the painting the notion of Joseph the elderly father figure marrying the young and fragile Virgin appears to be a thoroughly acceptable proposition. The white-haired Joseph bends forward to place the ring on Mary's finger. Behind him are the suitors watching the ceremony, some with their heads bowed reverentially; their broken rods are silhouetted against the luminous blue sky. One standing closest to Joseph indicates with his left hand towards the event as he turns to his unseen companion. The implication is clear: this is the 'just' man. Joseph is acknowledged as the rightful choice.

Neither is there any outward show of passion toward Joseph in Giovanni Mansueti's *Marriage of the Virgin* (pl. 85) also from the first quarter of the sixteenth century in the church of San Martino on the Venetian island of Burano.<sup>57</sup> Only one suitor, wearing a red hat, snaps his rod across his left knee, though the others watch his efforts closely. Joseph stands slightly further back in the picture than the Virgin, so that in order to look at her he is turned towards the viewer. With three-quarters of his face visible, looking outwards beyond the confines of the picture as well as at the Virgin he is presented as an accessible figure. While his robes are of imperial colours signifying his status - his long tunic is dark purple and his cloak golden - in his left hand he carries his attribute and symbol of his authority: the flowering rod. He is not formidably old; he looks

middle-aged with brown, receding hair and a neatly cropped beard. His expression is revealing. With his eyes wide and his mouth slightly open he looks as if he is gasping in a mixture of wonderment and awe; as though the full magnitude of his role has just been disclosed to him and he is dumbfounded. He gazes into space rather than at the Virgin who has decorously lowered her eyes. Unlike other depictions of the Betrothal Joseph's appearance here is one of rapture. As in Fra Angelico's 1433 predella panel (pl. 78) of the Betrothal the officiating priest is left to guide the couple's hands together as Joseph is about to slip the ring on the third finger of the Virgin's right hand.

Nevertheless the connection between all these images of the Betrothal is the same. Whether the ceremony takes place to the accompaniment of agitated suitors or is played out before respectful witnesses, above all Joseph is represented as the quiet and conscientious man as he takes Mary's hand in marriage. He is shown to wait on God and then to accomplish God's bidding. There is a sense of tranquillity at the centre of the scene. Joseph is shown to be contemplative, humble, subservient and dignified. In all the representations he is portrayed as the paradigm of the devout and dedicated man.

### **3) The effect of St Bridget of Sweden's vision of the Nativity on the image of Joseph**

The highly visual quality of St Bridget's retelling of her vision of the Nativity influenced artists by encouraging them to present Joseph in one of two ways, either as a suppliant kneeling beside the manger with the Virgin kneeling opposite him and the infant lying on the ground or in a manger between them; or

as a caring figure entering upon the scene of the Nativity with a candle in his hand.

Her vision pioneered images of St Joseph in adoration, and of him waiting on God as his willing servant. St Bridget related her experience thus:

When I was at the manger of the Lord in Bethlehem, I beheld a most beautiful Virgin with child, in a white mantle and finely woven tunic, through which from without I could clearly discern her virginal flesh. Her womb was full and much swollen as she was about to be delivered. With her was a most venerable old man; and with them they had both an ox and an ass. When they entered the cave, the old man tied the ox and ass to the crib; going out he brought the Virgin a lighted torch, and set it in the wall. Then again he withdrew in order not to be present at the birth. And so the Virgin took off her shoes from her feet, put off the white mantle that covered her, removed the veil from her head, and laid these things beside her, remaining in only her tunic, with her beautiful hair - as of gold - spread out upon her shoulders... and then in the twinkling of an eye, she brought forth her Son from whom there went out such a great and ineffable light and splendour that the sun could not be compared to it. Nor did the candle that the old man had put in place to give light... When these things therefore were accomplished, the old man entered, and prostrating himself on his knees on the ground, he adored Him, weeping for joy... Then she arose with the Child in her arms, and both of them together, that is, she and Joseph, laid Him in the manger, and kneeling, adored Him with immense joy and gladness.<sup>58</sup>

St Bridget lived from 1303 to 1373 during a period of reform for the Papacy and the monastic orders. She proved to be an influential advisor; and though she had the ear of clerical leaders, she also had influence with secular leaders.<sup>59</sup> She was known throughout Scandinavia and Europe as were her *Revelaciones* and they influenced many artists interpretation of the Nativity.<sup>60</sup> As she had described Joseph in her vision as an old man the tendency was for artists to represent him as being old rather than a young, middle aged or elderly man. This appears to be in keeping with her use of the Latin word '*senex*' meaning 'old man' when describing St Joseph. It seems probable that St Bridget's purpose was to draw

attention to the wisdom associated with old age. The word '*senex*' in relation to Joseph can be interpreted as meaning that he was a principled and elderly man, and that he could not but conduct himself honourably in all his actions contingent on the Virgin. Similarly the word '*senex*', in such a context also may be translated as 'holy old man', and thus conveys the inference that as pre-ordained to be Christ's earthly father Joseph was endowed by God with all the gifts appropriate for the task. For as St Bernardino of Siena, in a sermon he delivered sometime in the 1420s, had stated 'When God chooses a person by grace for a very elevated mission, He gives all the graces required for it.'<sup>61</sup>

Turino Vanni's painting of *St Bridget's Vision at Bethlehem* (pl. 86) in many ways is the archetypal 'Vision of St Bridget' image though Joseph is presented not as an old and grey-haired man, but rather as a younger man who has brown hair and a brown beard.<sup>62</sup> It was executed around 1390 and clearly demonstrates the power and influence of St Bridget's writings. The scene, set in a cave is adulatory in nature with all the human figures worshipping Christ. The kneeling Joseph is both adoring and carrying a candle. He clutches his red robes around him with his left hand as he holds a long taper in his right hand. Its flame is almost invisible, dimmed by the light coming down from God the Father in a mandorla above the cave. God holds open a book in one hand and raises his right hand in blessing.

Joseph kneels in the opening to one small grotto and St Bridget is shown in the small cave entrance opposite. The Virgin in a similar kneeling posture as the other figures has her hands pressed together in prayer in the largest grotto. Light



exudes from the infant lying on the ground and from the Virgin's brilliant white undergarment. As Joseph looks up God's effulgence falls on his brow as if he is being anointed. The scene expresses Christ's paternal bonds; that of the lordly magnificence of Christ's heavenly Father in contrast to the ingenuousness and humility of his earthly one. Likewise the Virgin and St Bridget receive God's splendour as it radiates down on them. The exaltory and mystical quality of the scene is enhanced by four angels hovering over the cave entrance chorusing the mystical birth and a further four more angels supporting the mandorla in which God sits.

Northern European artists correspondingly were influenced by St Bridget's vision of Joseph and Mary kneeling in adoration of the Christ Child. In the Limbourg Brothers' Flemish manuscript illustration of the Nativity, from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* painted around 1416, the old, dutiful, devoted and grey-haired Joseph dressed in purple is depicted semi-kneeling (pl. 87).<sup>63</sup> He is shown wearing a conical turban with his long white beard flowing over his chest. His headwear in conjunction with his flowering rod seems to be an allusion to his priest-like role and his similarity to the Old Testament Aaron.<sup>64</sup> *Exodus* 28 describes the robes and headdress God asked Moses to prepare for Aaron and Aaron's sons in their roles as priests; this included special head wear: a mitre.<sup>65</sup> The word mitre, coming from the same Greek root *mitra* as the word turban, indicates that the turban in this representation is likely to be an allusion to Joseph's role as a priest: a mediator between God and man.<sup>66</sup> Joseph is positioned on one side of the infant with the Virgin on the other. Dressed in her customary ultramarine with her hands pressed together in prayer she therefore kneels upright

opposite him.<sup>67</sup> And in accordance with his priest-like mitre or turban Joseph raises his left hand as if in a gesture of blessing.

Robert Campin's<sup>68</sup> painting of the *Nativity* believed to have been executed during the 1420s (pl. 88) shows Joseph as a stolid, dependable, temporal figure.<sup>69</sup> He is portrayed as an old, bald-headed man weighed down with copious heavy robes of red, blue and brown. In his weighty garments he contrasts sharply with the delicate, semi-clad figure of the Virgin. Joseph, kneeling on one knee beside the Virgin, has the air of a man on guard, and wary. The bulk of his clothing complements the impression of his strength and devotion. By comparison partially disrobed with her long golden hair resting on her shoulders the Virgin seems vulnerable. She is presented as described by St Bridget in her vision: she '...put off the white mantle...removed the veil from her head...remaining only in her tunic...with her beautiful hair - as of gold - spread out on her shoulders'.<sup>70</sup> With lowered eyes Joseph gives his attention to the lighted candle in his left hand, shielding it with a cupped gesture of his right hand rather than looking at the child on the ground before him. Otherwise the scene is full of exuberant movement; midwives wearing elaborate headdresses hold up their hands in astonishment, angels float above the ramshackle building, the shepherds crowd in from the back of the shelter and fluttering banners fill the air.<sup>71</sup>

A panel painted between 1425 and 1430 by Fra Angelico of the *Nativity* and believed to be part of a retable presents Mary and Joseph clad similarly in vivid crimson robes, kneeling on either side of the tiny infant who lies upon the ground (pl. 89).<sup>72</sup> The likeness of their robes suggests Joseph's growing status. Joseph

and Mary are shown adoring the infant in the manner described by St Bridget. Joseph, kneeling on one knee, holds his arms wide open in the manner of a blessing, while Mary presses her hands together in prayer.

Joseph takes the prominent position and is the epitome of reverential contemplation in the scene depicting the adoration of the child painted by Fra Angelico sometime during the 1430s (pl. 90).<sup>73</sup> As a Dominican friar the subject would have had great significance for Fra Angelico. The veneration of the crucified Christ in particular was habitual and indicative of the Dominican fervour for expressing their humility before Christ (as exemplified in the images of St Dominic demonstrating the Nine Ways of Prayer painted by Fra Angelico throughout the Dominican Convent of San Marco in Florence).<sup>74</sup> But adoration of the Christ Child was equally central to their custom. Fra Angelico's interpretation of the adoration of the child follows the St Bridget archetype with the parents kneeling in worship on opposite sides of the child.

Wearing vibrant red robes, kneeling on one knee and with his arms crossed upon his chest in a gesture of benediction Joseph makes a compelling and resplendent figure in the foreground of the panel painting. He is the largest figure and emanates dedication, respect and submission to God's will. The small panel, probably part of a portable altarpiece, is remarkable for the location of the figure of Joseph. He is positioned closer to the viewer and the infant than the diminutive figure of the Virgin who is in the background. Hence the composition of the painting places Joseph unmistakably in the role of intermediary.

Joseph and the Virgin are positioned on either side of the child who is lying on a small bundle of straw on the ground. The size and frailty of the infant serves to draw attention to the difference in size between Joseph and the Virgin. The painting appears to be both an attempt at realistic representation of linear perspective and a deliberate emphasis of Joseph's role. In all other respects it is a traditional Nativity scene complete with the ox and ass kneeling in adoration in the background, though only the head of the ass is visible. Above them are angels, nine in all. They are diminutive and appavelled in dark blue, dancing in the air.

Rogier van der Weyden's 1446 representation of the *Nativity* (pl. 91), being the central panel of the Middelburg Altarpiece, is a fine example of an archetypal St Bridget inspired representation.<sup>75</sup> It represents the moment of birth as described by St Bridget. Joseph, a balding old man, has just entered the scene; he shields the dim light of his candle with his right hand whilst kneeling in adoration before the infant Christ who lies on the Virgin's blue robe. She, presented larger than Joseph, kneels before the baby and opposite Joseph. Her loose hair flows over her shoulders. She is dressed in white, and her hands are clasped together in prayer. Joseph is the humble man; as Christ's putative father his candlelight is dimmed by the luminescence issuing from the child. Instead of St Bridget being included in the painting, Joseph and Mary are accompanied by the kneeling figure of the donor Peter Bladelin who was a wealthy man from the town of Middelburg, which in this context is almost certainly representative of Bethlehem.<sup>76</sup> As donor he is positioned near the baseline of the painting, thus closer to the viewer and larger in scale than the figure of Joseph.

In the *Nativity* (pl. 92) painted by Petrus Christus in the late 1440s Joseph's pose, taken in conjunction with the attendance of four angels, one of whom is dressed in robes similar to a priest's vestments, suggests that the painting represents a Mass with Joseph as the communicant.<sup>77</sup> This allusion is heightened by the figure of Joseph kneeling on a low stool and leaning forward heavily on his staff, as if at a *prie-dieu*. He faces the Virgin and two of the angels. Implying his humility he has removed his wooden sandals, they lie beside him on the ground; and as if in church he has taken off his black hat and clutches it between his hands. The figures are arranged beneath a wooden canopy supported at the rear on the remnants of an ancient stone wall. There are sculpted figures in the spandrels of the canopy and figures of Adam and Eve are on either side of the opening of the shelter. Thus the association is drawn of Joseph and Mary as the new Adam and Eve and therefore the emphasis is on the redemptive nature of Christ's incarnation. The ox and ass, just visible confirm the prophecy from Isaiah that 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib'; they lie behind the kneeling figures of Mary and Joseph.<sup>78</sup> The Virgin with her hair falling loose on her shoulders alludes to St Bridget's vision 'her beautiful hair...spread out on her shoulders'.<sup>79</sup>

Indicative of his magnified status Joseph wears golden robes and a dark trailing hat in the series of pictures by Fra Angelico on the Annunziata Silver Chest painted sometime between 1451 and 1453.<sup>80</sup> The *Nativity* (pl. 93), shows Joseph and Mary in front of the stable kneeling in equality and in the adoring pose as described by St Bridget, with the glowing infant lying on the earth between them.

As in the vision described by St Bridget, Joseph and Mary kneel in adoration on either side of the Christ child in Fra Angelico's fresco of the *Nativity* (pl. 94) within Cell 5 of the dormitories at the Convent of San Marco which dates from the early 1450s.<sup>81</sup> With the stable opening on to a cave entrance as backdrop an elderly, balding Joseph kneels in prayer before the infant. Indicative of his status Joseph faces towards the viewer, whereas St Peter Martyr, a Dominican saint, presents his back to the viewer.

The central panel of the Portinari Altarpiece, painted in 1475 by Hugo van der Goes, is of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 95).<sup>82</sup> Though it shows the influence of the vision of St Bridget with the infant placed on the ground before Mary whose unfastened hair flows over her shoulders, it differs from other St Bridget inspired depictions in that Joseph and the Virgin do not kneel opposite one another in adoration. Hugo van der Goes's Joseph is a naturalistic realisation of a powerfully built, elderly manual worker. He is a big weather beaten man, humbly taking his place a little distance removed from the worshipping angels at the front of the painting. Joseph's strength is evidenced in one of the wings of the triptych, in which on their way to Bethlehem the weary Virgin has dismounted the donkey and is leaning heavily on Joseph (pl. 92). In the main painting standing meekly and with deference in the shadows of the stable buildings, Joseph presses his large hands together in prayer. The central images are of the delicate Virgin kneeling in adoration before the infant lying on the ground. The fragility of life examined and exaggerated in the image of the unnaturally small and frail looking infant Jesus; and the importance of the family as represented by the inclusion of the donor and his family in the wings of the altarpiece, are the

outstanding features. Commissioned by Benedetto di Tommaso Portinari, the representative in Bruges of the Florentine merchants bankers the Medici, to paint a triptych for the family chapel of Sant' Egidio dell' Arcispedale della Santa Maria Nuova in Florence Hugo van der Goes includes the family. Tommaso Portinari and his two sons are accompanied by Sts Thomas and Anthony Abbott on the left wing of the triptych; while on the right wing are representations of Tommaso's wife Maria Maddalena and their daughter with Sts Margaret and Mary Magdalene. As a role model for the caring and chivalrous behaviour expected of husbands and sons it is behind Tommaso and his sons that one can see the tiny image of Joseph helping the heavily pregnant Mary walk the last few paces to the stable.

### **Summary**

The destabilisation of the population following the Black Death changed peoples' attitudes to life and living. An atmosphere of fatalism came to permeate all aspects of society. The art historian Millard Meiss offers the vision of the frontally posed Christ in Orcagna's Strozzi Altarpiece as corroborating evidence as to this change. However, the disturbed demeanour of the disappointed suitors in paintings of the Betrothal of the Virgin was prevalent before the plague and is a far clearer metaphor for the agitated state of society in general due to many issues that beset them; not least low wages, lack of work and bad harvests before the plague occurred in the second half of the fourteenth century. The equanimity and composure with which Joseph is portrayed and the region of calm that surrounds him in representations of the Betrothal allude directly to the artists' aim

to make manifest Joseph's inner strength and his sense of commitment, resolution and devotion.

St Bridget of Sweden's vision of the Nativity transformed the manner in which Joseph was presented. Though in some representations he came to be shown as the old man bearing a dim candle usually positioned to one side or at the back of a painting, it was St Bridget's vision of him kneeling in prayer and adoration before the crib, either beside or mirroring the pose of the Virgin that was to bring about a greater consciousness of his spirituality.



## Chapter V

### Joseph as Paradigm of Fatherhood

As it has been observed images of Joseph as the ideal father figure began to emerge in response to the many transformations in society; whether these were due to the demographic devastation wrought by the Black Death, through social unrest brought about by urbanisation, or the upheavals occurring within the Church. The desire for a sense of calm, stability and immutability to infuse life can be detected in the manner that artists began to picture Joseph. The figure of Joseph becoming more devout and thereby more exemplary in aspect was the next significant transformation.

Joseph as the unruffled, steady father of Christ and husband of the Virgin is put forward in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 96)<sup>1</sup> painted in 1374 for the convent of San Domenico in San Gimignano in Italy by the Sienese artist Bartolo di Fredi.<sup>2</sup> Joseph is portrayed as the exemplar of humility and piety; this quality is achieved through the manner of his pose and his general deportment. Presented in profile with his palms pressed together the grey haired, grey bearded Joseph kneels praying before the infant Christ. Unlike representations influenced by St Bridget's visions he is not positioned opposite the Virgin but at her side emphasising their shared parental roles. Furthermore though he is smaller than the Virgin, the artist has placed him near to the baseline of the picture where he is physically and spiritually closer to the beholder. The Virgin is viewed as being beyond Joseph. Their comparative positions accentuate Joseph's importance as mediator and paradigm. Opposite them two poorly dressed shepherds have

stumbled to their knees, and as if in imitation of Joseph, have lifted their hands together in a gesture of prayer.

Joseph's effectiveness as paradigm with the secular members of society had developed out of his perceived ability to embody the role of the supposedly average man dealing with life and its vicissitudes as best he can whilst still being credible as the man revealed by God to be Christ's father on earth.<sup>3</sup>

Though religious observance within the orders, particularly the Franciscans and the Dominicans, heightened the mystical element of spirituality - the intimate nature of knowing God intuitively - the image of Joseph the humble working man and father as a role model still fulfilled a basic need. It is the dichotomy and fascination of Joseph the hardworking, grounded artisan and Joseph the just man chosen by God as Christ's earthly father that seems to have stirred passion and stressed commitment within the two Orders.<sup>4</sup> Although Joseph as a man was unremarkable according to the written word of the Scriptures and the Apocryphal texts, worldly events propelled him into a role in which he exemplified fatherhood in both its everyday and its wonderful connotations.

By the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries it was becoming usual for Joseph to be represented reacting and interacting more directly with the Virgin and consequently with Christ. Joseph was the family man, not just the provider of food and the guide on their journey into Egypt; furthermore he came to be shown explicitly fulfilling the function of paradigmatic husband and father.

Joseph's purpose as protector, provider and guardian came to the fore in representations of the Flight into Egypt. Joseph's concerns and his awareness of his responsibilities are evident in a predella panel of the *Flight into Egypt* by Lorenzo Monaco painted sometime around 1405 (pl. 97). Joseph is shown carrying a sack over his left shoulder; presumably it contains provisions for their journey.<sup>5</sup> Doubtless apprehensive as to the welfare of the Virgin and the infant, he has stopped the forward motion of the donkey by pressing his right hand against the front of the beast's neck and has turned back to face the Virgin. He looks directly at her. His expression, with creased forehead and sombre countenance reveals his anxieties as both father and spouse. Of extra interest is Joseph's size and posture. He is a large figure, the largest in the painting. He is portrayed as having a powerful physique. Moreover this tall, thickset, middle-aged man has been painted and posed in order to demonstrate his majestic bearing; while in stark contrast, as if to exaggerate her youth, vulnerability and naïveté, the Virgin is small, smooth skinned and visibly anxious. She looks uncomfortable as she awkwardly twists her neck so as to look down at the infant in her arms. She sits gracelessly with her legs inelegantly splayed in order to accommodate the tiny child and seemingly to facilitate her balance on the donkey whose progress is being impeded by Joseph's restraining hold.

The first decades of the fifteenth century was a time of reassessment of the role of fatherhood and family.<sup>6</sup> The accentuation on the caring and conscientious nature of Joseph's guardianship indicated in Lorenzo's panel painting was not unusual. In art the emphasis was increasingly on Joseph's role as the exemplar with stress laid on his unselfish love and devotion as a father and as a husband to the infant

Christ and his mother Mary. The need to heighten the accent on parental responsibility was due in part to the general breakdown of the family and society as a consequence of the many visitations of plague, discussed in the previous chapters. But it was, as touched on also, in response to the unsettling dilemmas and upheavals within the Church; both the degeneration of strict observance and the consequences of the Great Schism which eventually came to an end in 1417 with the election of Pope Martin V. Such was the attitude to the Church that the city fathers in Florence refused to admit any of the popes into the city while the schism lasted.<sup>7</sup> In addition Florence, as in other city states in Italy at that time, was an unsettling place where corruption and violence was common particularly amongst the ruling classes.<sup>8</sup>

The Dominican friar and Florentine Giovanni Dominici opposed the violence in Florence by extolling family life and preaching sermons based on the theme of 'Love your enemies'.<sup>9</sup> Carnival was an especially difficult period with boys and youths running amok.<sup>10</sup> The poet Franco Sacchetti writing in the fourteenth century had bemoaned the fact that Herod was no longer present to silence all the noisy and detestable children.<sup>11</sup> In response to the general breakdown in behaviour parents and parental substitutes were encouraged to take a more principled, determined and authoritative position with children and young people, as witnessed in the increase in number of youth confraternities not just in Florence but all over Europe during the aftermath of the plague visitations of the second half of the fourteenth century and the early fifteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

The first confraternity for boys (*fanciulli*) as oppose to youths, was the Company of the Archangel Raphael also known as the Company of the Nativity established in 1410.<sup>13</sup> Indeed this type of institution had a long history in Florence, the first being established by the Dominicans at the church of Santa Maria Novella in 1244;<sup>14</sup> but there was an appreciable growth in their number and the number of church *scuole* established for the education of children and youths during the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

It was during these years in the prevailing atmosphere of social disorder in Florence that Dominici wrote his treatise on the education of children entitled *Regola del Governa di Cura Familiare* for Bartolomea degli Alberti.<sup>16</sup> Since the exile of her husband Antonio, the father of her four children, along with all other male members of the Alberti family over the age of eighteen on charges of corruption, Bartolomea had struggled to care for the spiritual and social wellbeing of her children. She was desperate for guidance and so she turned to Dominici for help. The message that Dominici wished to convey was of the immense importance of the father figure in terms of the welfare of the family unit and society as a whole. He stressed that the father should protect the family; ensure that his children were raised 'rich in virtue', that they should be 'faithful to God' and subject to their fathers; and that they should not be infected 'with the alluring poison of money, the betrayer of all who love it.'<sup>17</sup> To this end Dominici set out his work in four main sections, the last of which concentrates on the rearing of children, in which his overriding stipulation is that parents should ensure that children are brought up to both fear and love God.<sup>18</sup>

The chancellor of the University of Paris Jean Gerson in 1413 went further in his acknowledgement of the need for a father figure when he called for the adoption of a feast day for Joseph the Father to be included in the liturgy.<sup>19</sup> As a staunch upholder of the institution of marriage Gerson stressed that it was a practice much revered in the Gospels.<sup>20</sup> In Gerson's *Considérations sur St Joseph* he writes of Joseph and Mary fulfilling the 'three goods of marriage', which he identifies as loyalty, offspring and sacrament. Gerson regarded the marriage of Joseph and Mary as being perfect and exemplary; and that through God's intervention they accomplished all three vows.<sup>21</sup> As a *bona fide* extrapolation he deemed that Joseph had every right to be regarded as the head of the Holy Family; and for that reason alone deserved to be included as the patron saint of families.<sup>22</sup> Gerson judged that Joseph's inclusion would encourage husbands to do their duty towards their wives and children with love and kindness.<sup>23</sup>

St Bernardino of Siena, preaching to his congregation before the Palazzo Pubblico in the Piazza del Campo at Siena in 1424, spoke of the essence of the *Sacra Famiglia*, of Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus. Being a great advocate of St Joseph, St Bernardino explained in *Sermon 2: On St Joseph* that Joseph was chosen as Christ's foster-father so that Christ could 'enter the world fittingly and in an appropriate way'. His sermon continued that if the Church owed the Virgin a debt of gratitude for her role in Christ's birth and his subsequent care, so equally the Church owed 'Joseph special thanks and veneration.'<sup>24</sup> Consequently St Bernardino complained vehemently of the manner in which Joseph often had been misrepresented in art; he said that at times Joseph appeared to be sad and

dislocated from Mary and the infant Jesus. Later Bernardino was to insist that in fact Joseph was

the most joyful old man that there was in all the world... And yet the stupid painters depict him as a melancholic old man with hand to cheek as though he had some great sorrow or sadness.<sup>25</sup>

The early fourteenth century Giottoesque fresco of the *Nativity* (pl. 98) in the North Transept of the Lower Church at San Francesco in Assisi is characteristic example of the 'melancholic' type of St Joseph that St Bernardino railed against. Joseph is shown as an old grey haired man seated on the ground with his head down and his hand to his cheek. He has a heavy brow and a poignant yet distant expression. St Bernardino must have been acquainted with the fresco as he had spent time in Assisi in 1426.<sup>26</sup> As an Observant Franciscan the church of San Francesco would have been a site of pilgrimage for him. What is more he was an influential figure within the religious community at Assisi. It was at St Bernardino's instigation that the hermitage of the Carceri, which was the first home that St Francis established for himself and his followers on the side of Monte Subasio in Assisi, was enlarged in 1426.<sup>27</sup>

St Bernardino's allusion to melancholy refers to the widespread and accepted understanding of Galenic philosophy in which melancholia had long been associated with despondency, irritability and gloom.<sup>28</sup> To Bernardino artists perceived Joseph as a melancholic who had 'some great sorrow or sadness'. But not all fifteenth century thinkers interpreted Joseph's profound expression as bad because it was a manifestation of melancholia. When Marsilio Ficino<sup>29</sup> wrote *De Vita Triplici* in the 1480s he opined that it was only those with a melancholic

nature who were capable of the 'divine madness' - Plato's concept of 'inspired frenzy'<sup>30</sup> - and that it was associated with the artistic and the contemplative nature.<sup>31</sup> It was supposed that if Joseph's pose were redolent of melancholy it did not necessarily indicate he was suffering from the brooding misery produced by black bile, but rather implied that he was a wise and gifted man: a thinker, a philosopher, an artist and a craftsman; and that when in pensive mood was awaiting divine inspiration.<sup>32</sup>

In the Mérode Altarpiece<sup>33</sup> believed to have been painted by Robert Campin in the 1420s (pl. 2) Joseph's concentration is indicative of his appropriateness for the role as *Nutritor Domini* rather than suggestive of his sanguine humours. The thoughtful hardworking craftsman sits with his head down and eyes lowered absorbed in his work and his thoughts.<sup>34</sup> The triptych comprises of two wings; in one of them Joseph is shown actively engaged in his workshop. The donors occupy the other wing, while the central panel is of the *Annunciation*. The scene in the workshop presents Joseph as the exemplar *par excellence*: the committed father/protector/provider (pl. 99). The artist portrays him as the sagacious man. Shown concentrating on his work the pose conveys his level of application to the job in hand and with his eyes averted his pose indicates his *humilitas*. He is presented as the practical man; the dedicated and knowledgeable workman in his carpentry shop. He is in the act of drilling a lattice pattern into a piece of wood. The objects apparently scattered around him have not been casually included by the artist. They are all important to his task as foster father to the Son of God. So it is of some significance that as protector/provider Joseph is seated near to a



wooden mouse trap. The overall effect is of a man conscious of and prepared for the role he is to play.

The explanation for the inclusion of the mousetrap was put forward in the mid twentieth century. For modern art historians the iconography of Joseph in his workshop in the Mérode Altarpiece has proved singularly difficult to decipher with many proposing their premises only to be rebuffed by counter premises. The initial impression is that he has just completed the mousetrap and has laid it momentarily to one side; but as hypothesised by Meyer Schapiro in his 1945 article for the *Art Bulletin* the mouse trap has a deeper meaning, one that would have been readily understood by the altarpiece's fifteenth century audience. They would have been aware that it was a symbolic device for trapping the devil.<sup>35</sup> St Augustine in the early fifth century had submitted the notion in *Sermons* 263 that Christ had deceived the devil by ostensibly dying on a Cross to save mankind.<sup>36</sup> He wrote that the 'cross of the Lord was a mousetrap for the Devil'.<sup>37</sup> He referred to Christ as the bait, the lure with which to ensnare the devil; and the cross of Christ's crucifixion corresponded to the mousetrap, not least because both were fashioned out of wood. Assuming this construal as being accurate the inclusion of the mousetrap in a painting of Joseph at work with his carpentry tools implies that his function went far beyond that of an ordinary father. He was the ultimate protector of the infant Christ. By making the trap he was the enabler of Christ's purpose on earth and thereby becomes the deceiver of the devil.<sup>38</sup>

As discussed in the Preface Meyer Schapiro wrote a significant article on the Mérode Altarpiece in 1945 examining Joseph's role as deceiver of the devil and

suggesting that it was no mere fluke that Joseph the carpenter is placed in conjunction with the Virgin of the Annunciation or that the Holy Spirit rather than being shown as a dove is represented as a figure of a tiny child carrying a small wooden cross.<sup>39</sup> Joseph's inclusion as the carpenter stresses the general acceptance that for Christ to redeem sins and grant salvation the devil has to be ensnared and this was Joseph's very purpose. The flight into Egypt under Joseph's care and protection in order to escape the wrath of Herod, representative of the devil as the devil in disguise, confirms Joseph's function. Additionally with the wooden bench, the wood of the fire screen before which the Virgin sits and the intricate design of the wooden shutters at the window all work to create a sense of continuity which in their turn emphasises that Joseph the carpenter is the fabricator of these objects. He has furnished the room in which the Annunciation occurs with objects he has made for her comfort and protection.

But other art historians had different ideas. Charles Ilsley Minott was of the opinion that the piece of wood on which Joseph is working is the lid to the bait box.<sup>40</sup> Conversely and in keeping with Panofsky's understanding that the article in question was part of a warming device, a perforated cover to a specially designed footstool,<sup>41</sup> Louis Marin concurs that Joseph is shown making part of some warming mechanism. Although on another point he deviates from Panofsky, in considering that instead of the object on the table being the supposed 'mousetrap', it is in fact a carpenter's plane.<sup>42</sup>

As Panofsky states there are two mousetraps in the painting, one on the table and another one on the window sill behind Joseph. In respect of the item upon which

Joseph is working Lavin proffers the notion that Joseph is making part of a wine press; therefore through the connection of wine and Holy Communion the artist was bestowing the object with strong Eucharistic associations.<sup>43</sup> It has even been mooted that the item Joseph is in the process of fabricating is intended for holding the rods of the disappointed suitors. Others have proposed that the tools ranged around Joseph on the workbench that the artist has deliberately raked in order for them to be easily displayed to the viewer, look more like weapons - the weapons of the *Ecclesia Militans* of which Joseph is the principal - rather than joinery implements.<sup>44</sup>

The common factor in all these interpretations is that in Campin's rendering Joseph is the industrious, responsible, reliable husband and father who is visibly in the act of both protecting and nurturing his wife Mary and the infant that is to be born. With great prescience Joseph is shown preparing the weapons with which to protect the Christ Child at the very moment of his conception. Through his quiet acquiescence Campin presents Joseph as epitomising the definitive father figure. Joseph becomes the paradigm of fatherhood.

The role and value of fathers, whether putative or biological, is explored in the first book of Leon Battista Alberti's *I Libri della Famiglia* written in the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>45</sup> In the book Alberti stresses the importance of a father figure leading by example and guiding the child.

Alberti was describing elements of his own childhood experiences when he recounted how the young Battista and his brother Carlo were entrusted to the care

of their uncle Ricciardo.<sup>46</sup> Their dying biological father Lorenzo asked that his sons would be reared in an environment imbued with the attribute of *virtù*.<sup>47</sup> For Alberti *virtù* meant honour; and in pursuing that honour one brought decency and respect to one's family. He writes that Lorenzo tells his sons that where vice will only bring 'remorse', 'sorrow' and 'waste'; virtue results in happiness, graciousness and gentleness.<sup>48</sup> Alberti continues that his father saw the pursuit of virtue as making 'man blessed and happy.'<sup>49</sup> The thrust of Alberti's book is that the man who is 'father' to his sons and the community around him is a true father, and that this level of care imbues those under his guardianship with standards that remain with them all their lives: 'The old, then, should be common fathers to all the young.'<sup>50</sup> Lorenzo Alberti, the dying father, cites his own father's opinion on virtuous fatherhood when he says that 'the duty of the father is not only ... to stock the cupboard and the cradle', but also that he should 'always put first the good, the peace and the tranquillity of his entire family'. Most significantly for the evermore revered manner in which Joseph in the fifteenth century was being perceived, Alberti adds that 'in the father's watchfulness lies the son's character.'<sup>51</sup>

A manuscript illumination by Belbello da Pavia painted in the middle of the fifteenth century presents Joseph in his practical role; discharging his responsibilities in his position as father, protector and guide. In the picture Joseph stands beside Mary (pl. 100).<sup>52</sup> Over his shoulder he carries a large bag doubtless full of their provisions. Holding his staff in both hands he looks purposefully ahead, as though preparing himself for the hardship of the journey before them. His golden hair and his divided golden beard imbue him with the appearance of a

patriarch.<sup>53</sup> Mary has her lips parted as in speech. She gazes intently at Joseph as though awaiting his response to her question.

The subject matter of the picture is unclear. It maybe symbolic of the Virgin's role as protector of the city, as she was in the case of Siena: as substantiation Joseph and Mary are shown to have paused outside the gates of a walled city. She carries the infant Christ cradled in her arms. As though a variation on the image of the Virgin of Mercy or *Misericordia* sheltering supplicants under her cloak, two unidentified small children cling to her robes for protection. One of them stares out vacantly while the other looks up at the Virgin.

*The Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (pl. 101) painted by Petrus Christus around 1460 exemplifies the theme of Joseph as the provider, characterized in the image of him hurrying back into the house as if from some employment.<sup>54</sup> His resolute manner and deportment intimate his role as nurturer.

The painting of a comfortable family home with its implication that such graciousness of living is being supported by Joseph's hard work unequivocally accentuates Joseph's role as the *Nutritor Domini*. The scene is of two rooms in a wealthy house; one a bedroom, the other a reception room. Joseph is viewed coming home from a bright and affluent city. Though elderly his stride is vigorous and determined as he crosses the threshold. Judging from the décor of the house Joseph is a successful man. There are large half-mullioned windows complete with wooden shutters in the rooms, the bed and canopy are opulently dressed, an ornate candelabrum hangs from the ceiling, white linen lies neatly

folded on the table. There are patterned ceramic floor tiles and oranges on the window sill. The Virgin and child appear to be perusing a large book.<sup>55</sup> All the items indicate a considerable degree of prosperity. Visually this has all the appearance of a comfortable, safe and cherishing environment in which to raise the infant Christ and the provider is plainly Joseph.

As the fifteenth century progressed Joseph's advocates became more influential. One such advocate was the observant Dominican St Antoninus. He was the Archbishop of Florence and Prior of the Convent of San Marco and a passionate supporter of St Joseph praising him frequently in his sermons. In both the *Summa Theologica Moralis*, which proved to be very popular with fifteen editions being printed at Venice, Nuremberg, Strasburg, Lyons and Basle within the first fifteen years of its initial publication in Venice in 1477,<sup>56</sup> and *De desponsatione Mariae* Antoninus talked about and remarked on Joseph and the importance of his role in relation to both the Virgin and Christ. He also wrote of Joseph as the patron of the Church.<sup>57</sup>

Antoninus was in residence at the convent at the same time as the artist Fra Angelico was in residence there as a friar.<sup>58</sup> How much Fra Angelico was constrained or inspired by those who influenced him spiritually is unknown. Similarly details of the commissioning have not been established, though it is thought that the powerful entrepreneur and Renaissance Neo-Platonist<sup>59</sup> Cosimo de' Medici<sup>60</sup> would have financed the frescoes as he had financed the renovation of the church and the conventual buildings.<sup>61</sup>

Fra Angelico's fresco of the *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 102) in Cell 10 of the Convent of San Marco is just one example in the scheme where Joseph is portrayed as having real presence.<sup>62</sup> It shows Joseph in the temple. He stands in profile offering up the two turtle doves in a wicker basket. His full loose robes that give him an impression of physical bulk and volume are gold in colour and slightly open at the neck in a relaxed manner. He wears a deep brown cap that hangs down onto his shoulders. There is a sense of tenderness about his appearance. His beard and hair are sand gold. His expression is open, warm and smiling; there are laughter lines around his eyes and while indicating that he is not a young man, they also disclose that he is a mild, pleasant man.

By comparison the tondo-shaped depiction of *The Nativity of the Holy Family* (pl. 103) attributed to Botticelli and from a similar period, represents a more reverential aspect to Joseph.<sup>63</sup> His muscularity and maturity create a vivid impression of a powerful and staunch man. The artist presents him as the paramount example of fatherhood through the manner of his pose, leaning over the child he is holding as though shielding him. The classical form of the semi-ruinous architecture behind the little group imbues the scene with a mystical, other-worldly quality. Painted sometime during the last quarter of the fifteenth century the tempera and oil panel is of the Virgin kneeling in adoration with her palms pressed together in prayer and the infant lying before on her robes. As such it epitomises an archetypal representation of the Virgin in a St Bridget inspired pose. Joseph is represented as a muscular figure; he squats on the ground in the appearance of lifting the newborn child up from, where in St Bridget's own words, Christ is born in the 'twinkling of an eye'.<sup>64</sup> Under these circumstances in

effect Joseph becomes the first person to touch Christ, it might even be suggested prior to the child's mother placing her hands on the infant. At its most basic level Joseph's action is highly significant to the perception of his putative fatherhood; and it arrests the viewer's gaze. But his conduct has yet more profound interpretations. Joseph is the sole witness to Christ's incarnation. The two figures, probably shepherds, in the rear of the scene are not participators in the miracle; their gaze is not directed towards Joseph, Mary or the baby Jesus. One looks at something in his hands while the other gazes up at the sky, his hand shielding his eyes from the heavenly effulgence.

Joseph's pose not just reveals but confirms him as father and protector; and more significantly it presents him as the first communicant to literally receive the body and blood of Christ. Equally Joseph's close proximity to the miraculous birth confirms him as witness to the perpetuity of Mary's virginity. Furthermore his participation endorses him as Christ's first disciple. For the worshipper kneeling or standing before the painting Joseph has become the ultimate intermediary between the spiritual and the temporal worlds.

The tondo format of painting has additional significance in respect of a nativity scene. Its shape is reminiscent of the *desco da parto* or birth tray used to carry gifts and confectioneries to a wife who has just given birth; therefore it is not only appropriate to the subject of the scene but also represents the continuance of the family at its most fundamental level. A nativity painting to be produced in this shape leads to the assumption that the work was intended as a good luck charm or as a congratulatory gesture and was a meaningful symbol of procreation for the



couple for whom it was painted. In terms of the family and family values the magnitude and manner of Joseph's participation establishes explicitly Joseph's increasing familial and paternal influence and importance. More crucially it validates him as the paradigm of fatherhood, highlights his authority within the earthly trinity and illuminates his tender, willing and complete devotion.

The image of Joseph as the involved and caring father came to be employed with increasing frequency during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, generating new manifestations in the physical and psychological way in which he was portrayed.

Michelangelo's panel painting of 1504 - 1506 commissioned by Agnolo Doni and known as the *Doni Tondo* (pl. 104) is a representation of family unity and love through emphasis on the corporeal and tactile relationship between the figures of Joseph, Mary and Jesus.<sup>65</sup> Joseph's all-encompassing presence informs the picture. The Virgin and Christ are shown within the embrace of Joseph the caring and protective father. The painting serves as an example of Joseph's increasing authority and sphere of influence. The circular composition of the figures complementing the shape of the frame, instils the image with further nuances of unity and harmony within a circular framework denoting God's eternal and everlasting omnipresence. The configuration, wherein Joseph and the Virgin are seated on the ground, emphasises their humility and Joseph's humanity. The painting alludes heavily to the symbolism of family and power. Agnolo Doni celebrated his marriage to Maddalena di Giovanni di Maria Strozzi in 1503. She was his junior by fifteen years. Maddalena was a member of the powerful

Florentine family. Agnolo had contracted a political coup by marrying her. However to secure the alliance between the two powerful families the production of male heirs were paramount. Moreover with the Doni family living near the Franciscan convent of Santa Croce and the Strozzi family near the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella the two families linked together two of the most important religious communities of the city.

Angels are visible behind the wall in the picture. Their presence may be significant. Agnolo's first born child was born in September 1507, four years after the marriage. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the angels may represent unfulfilled wishes or even dead infants, denoting a family lost.<sup>66</sup>

Mirella Levi d'Ancona is of the opinion that not only does the painting stress the unity of the Holy Family but in addition and more importantly it is a representation of the Maculists' view of the Incarnation, to be precise that the Virgin was sanctified at the moment of Christ's birth. This is opposition to the more traditional Immaculists' view that it was predestined that the Virgin was sanctified from the beginning of Creation. Levi d'Ancona supports her theory by pointing out that the Maculists stance had the backing of the Dominicans of whom the powerful friar Savonarola was one; and that he had influenced Michelangelo on points of religious dogma.<sup>67</sup> Thus Christ with his hands held over his mother's head is postulated as being in the process of blessing her as he mysteriously springs from her side, from within the encompassing embrace of Joseph. The interpretation of the painting as a Maculist view of Christ's Incarnation and the Virgin's sanctification is a separate issue from that of the

importance granted to Joseph in Michelangelo's painting; and as the latter it is significant in the panoply of images representing Joseph as the ultimate paradigm of the caring and protective father figure.

The composition Michelangelo has created in the *Doni Tondo*, with Mary leaning back comfortably and with conspicuous familiarity into Joseph's haunches as he rests on a low stone wall, conveys an air of physicality between them that up to this time had rarely been expressed. Their unconscious ease with one another's bodies is almost a shock. Joseph's right knee becomes an arm rest for the Virgin. The elderly yet virile-looking Joseph intently watches the high-spirited child as he balances precariously on both the Virgin's right shoulder and Joseph's thigh in order to play with his mother's hair. Meanwhile Joseph's left arm passes behind the Virgin so as to add extra support to the active infant.

The compassion and contentment emanating from this subtle, organic, conjunction of all three participants, coupled with the circular, spiralling movement created by their positions - with Joseph's body encircling them - infuses the picture with not only a sense of safety and love, but also with an impression of family unanimity and concord. This is the representation of a cohesive and comfortable family. As a description of a child at ease, frolicking with his parents, Michelangelo captures the moment to perfection, while imbuing it with that edgy conjunction of affection and alarm familiar to all parents as they become aware of the child's strivings for ultimate individuality and independence. As a representation of this particular and special child the very precariousness of his position enforces the viewer to acknowledge and

contemplate the inevitable conclusion of his temporal existence in his eventual crucifixion

By the sixteenth century iconic images of Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus became more frequent. Set against a broad, unidentifiable background the oil painting *The Holy Family* by Giorgione executed in 1508 (pl. 105) concentrates on the unity of the three figures.<sup>68</sup> Their physical concord is indicative of Joseph's role as the perfect putative father of Christ and the faultless father figure. The elderly balding and white bearded Joseph sits on a long low box structure. He leans forward a little onto his staff so as to create a defensive shield with his body to protect the child into whose face he gazes intently. The Virgin is seated on a small rocky outcropping with the naked baby lying across her two hands. An open archway seen over the Virgin's left shoulder reveals an idyllic pastoral scene of blue sky, countryside, and a hill upon which there is a ruined wall, intimating the old religion of the Old Testament, and single tower pointing heavenwards indicative of the Church of the New Testament.

Albrecht Altdorfer's early sixteenth century painting (pl. 106) of Joseph and Mary with the baby Jesus at a fountain and known as the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* is a representation of the ideal quintessential earthly family.<sup>69</sup> The love of both parents for the child is evident through their absorption in the mundane task of washing the naked child that lies across the Virgin's lap. As she dips her fingers into a bowl Joseph holds out ready for her there are clear intimations of baptism in their shared assignment.

Lorenzo Lotto's pen and ink drawing of *The Christ Child Exalted by the Virgin and St Joseph* (pl. 107) executed in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, emphasises the enduring and paradigmatic image of the worshipful, adulatory Joseph.<sup>70</sup> Despite humble quality of Joseph's role as his earthly father, the grouping of the figures still strongly implies family unity. Overt fatherly protectiveness exuded by Joseph in both Michelangelo's and Botticelli's paintings is down played in this drawing. While everything about Joseph's expression is of warmth and affection, his stance and location accentuates his *humilitas* and his adoration of the Christ Child.

The Christ child, almost unassisted, seems to be standing on Mary's right hand; whilst with his concealed right hand it can only be assumed that Joseph is helping the Virgin to steady the child. Joseph's pose is not that of a protector but that of a devotee; he looks up to both Mary and Jesus. Being placed in a slightly lower position it is as if he is in the process of stepping up onto a dais. His deportment works as a precedent in devotional behaviour. Christ's arms are outstretched towards Joseph his stalwart adoptive father for protection, but it is towards his mother that he turns for tenderness. Jesus, being portrayed with the halo of the resurrection, confirms him as Christ the Saviour and ultimately not of this world. Mary and Joseph are presented in an adulatory pose, standing on either side of the Christ child. It is an iconic vision of the earthly trinity. This assumption is borne out by Carolyn Wilson's surmise that work was intended as a banner for a Bergamo confraternity of St Joseph as Lotto had already produced a similar one for another confraternity of St Joseph where the design was described as

representing 'the image of the Madonna and that of the father St Joseph with the Baby in the middle'.<sup>71</sup>

Another work by Lorenzo Lotto dating from 1534, the *Madonna and Child with St Jerome, St Joseph and St Anne* (pl. 108), portrays Joseph the father as the exemplar of devotional behaviour.<sup>72</sup> Through his expression and his pose the depth of his adulation and love are conveyed. His demeanour is a manifestation of reverence and subservience. The Christ child, while embracing his mother, yet in response to his father's tender expression, looks down with compassion at him. Whereas St Anne (the Virgin's mother) prays as she sits on the couch, her arms crossed over her chest as she encircles the Virgin and child with her body. St Jerome, with his open hand motioning in the direction of the Virgin and child, assumes a deferential stance. It is Joseph, as the exemplar of gentleness and adoration, who crouching on the floor - a position regarded as signifying humility - and with his left arm as a counter-balance, fervently leans forward onto the edge of the couch. His straining body posture is illustrative of deep respect and adoration as he bends towards the mother and child. Joseph looks up at Jesus; and Jesus returns his gaze. In such a configuration Joseph acts as intermediary, he directs the viewer's attention towards Mary and the infant Christ. Joseph's location, in combination with his yearning, devoted expression all come together to create a reflection of ultimate piety. Lotto has created in Joseph an image of a man who embodies humbleness, faithfulness and loving care: in other words he is the paradigm of fatherhood.

## Summary

During the fifteenth century emphasis on presenting Joseph, Mary and Jesus as a family, and in particular of portraying Joseph the putative father of Christ as the paradigmatic father figure, became as commonplace as those depicting narratives images. The change coincides with the growing establishment of boys' confraternities in northern Italy. One such confraternity in Florence enjoyed Cosimo de' Medici as its benefactor. He financed the buildings and the upkeep of the institution; and it is suggested that he may well have envisaged himself as a surrogate father figure to the boys and youths.

The role of the father figure became a current topic. Dominici wrote of the importance of a father figure in a young person's life. Gerson, in his *Considérations sur Joseph*, emphasised all the virtues Joseph brought to his marriage with the Virgin including his qualities as a father. St Bernardino called on his congregation for a greater dedication to fatherhood with Joseph as their exemplar. Alberti catalogued in detail the requirements that made a good father in his book on the family.

Stress on the importance of the father figure and Joseph's role as Jesus's father was taken up and illustrated by artists. Campin showed Joseph as both a practical and spiritual carer of Jesus in the Mérode Altarpiece. Botticelli in his tondo painting of the *Nativity of the Holy Family* depicted Joseph the practical father lifting up the newborn baby Jesus as the adoring Virgin clasps her hands together in prayer. Michelangelo presented Joseph as the central guardian figure in the *Doni Tondo*. The intimate and intricate intertwining of the bodies of Joseph,

Mary and Jesus creates a single form with Joseph both physically and spiritually enfolding both the Virgin and the child. The concept of Joseph the respectful, worshipful father offered in Lorenzo Lotto's *The Christ Child Exalted by the Virgin and St Joseph*, is encapsulated in the image of Joseph the humble but adoring father who looks up to and stretches his arms forth towards the Christ child.



## **Chapter VI**

### **Emergence of the Cult of St Joseph**

The emergence of the cult of St Joseph was contingent on modifications to the perception of Joseph. Images of the paradigmatic Joseph, examined in the previous chapter, are indicative and resonant of the changes. His deferential virtuousness, sincerity, quiet obedience and trust in God as evidenced in representations of his humble submission to God's will was the inspiring force; and the visual presentation of his goodness and integrity became the focus of cult devotion.

#### **1) Joseph as inspiration**

One of the most explicit and frequently used scenes in which to convey the modest and subservient aspects of Joseph's role are those that show Joseph in his inspirational capacity, as the calm yet determined *Nutritor Domini* - the tender and undemonstrative protector, provider and nurturer of Christ. This manifestation of his humanness is fundamental to his emergence as a being worthy and deserving of cult devotion; and his evident humanity allowed for the connection with the suppliant. These qualities can be most easily be recognised in representations of the Flight into Egypt.

In France the Limbourg brothers' image of Joseph in the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 109) executed in 1409 in the *Trés Belles Heures du Duc de Berry*, is a very human portrayal of the saint in which his earthly corporeality is stressed.<sup>1</sup> The manner of his pose highlights his intrinsic thoughtfulness. As customary Joseph's

role as *Nutritor Domini* is the primary and most readily explicit characteristic of his pose. He carries the provisions for their journey: a large heavy bundle strapped to his back and a water container hanging from his left shoulder. And ever concerned as to the welfare of the Virgin and child he is depicted half turning to look back at them. But the displaying of his bare legs, while emphasising his strength and vigour, also underlines his temporality: his simple humanity. The manuscript illustration is suggestive of the dual function of Joseph's developing role as a motivating force, and through his selfless commitment, as a person worthy of cult devotion.

The fifteenth century was yet another period to experience a general atmosphere of instability within society, as witnessed in the breakdown of familial cohesion and the rise of individualism.<sup>2</sup> This was set against the background fear of the forthcoming half millennium and the ensuing apocalypse.

The growing success of the merchant class, particularly in the city states such as Florence and Venice, was unsettling; trade was not perceived as a noble occupation.<sup>3</sup> In Florence officials of the governing body - the *Signoria* - only held office for short cycles simply because of general attitude of distrust that was prevalent.<sup>4</sup> The government of Florence was cliquey and could be best described as a 'fraternity of fathers' rather than an interrelated system with a unified ethical code.<sup>5</sup> Warring patrician families only added to the sense of fragmentation within society.

The dominance of the Medicean rule in Florence typifies the atmosphere of anarchy. Cosimo had attained his position through vote rigging and ballot box falsification. The Medici family had prevailed over Florence from the time when Cosimo de' Medici the Elder had acceded to the head of the family banking and mercantile business on the death of his father Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici in 1429. But his rise to power was not universally acclaimed by the ruling elite in the *Signoria*. A conspiracy against Cosimo was led by his rivals in the *Signoria* for political office - specifically from Rinaldo degli Albizzi which resulted in Cosimo's exile in Venice in 1433.<sup>6</sup> But the Albizzi could not maintain their rule and Cosimo's return to Florence in October 1434 heralded the further rise of the Medici hegemony.<sup>7</sup> When Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo the Magnificent took power sectors of the Florentine ruling classes became so incensed that under the auspices of another influential family, the Pazzi, a strategy was formulated to assassinate Lorenzo in the Duomo. In the event they only managed to kill his younger brother Giuliano.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile as the Church debated Conciliarism<sup>9</sup> with a view to curbing the Pope's powers, the intellectual elite stimulated by the Platonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino dreamt of a return to the 'golden age', epitomized in the growing interest in things *all'antica*: the poetry, rhetoric, sculpture and architecture of ancient Rome and Greece.

The volatility of the power struggles in turn led to incidences of sexual misconduct, depravity and general criminality within the city. The offences were mostly perpetrated by boys and young men who had little or no form of

occupation, inadequate parental guidance and dubious authoritarian exemplars.<sup>10</sup> The increase in the incidence of homosexual activity was blamed as one of the reasons for the collapse in familial structure.<sup>11</sup> Eventually the male elders of society felt duty bound to rectify anti-social behaviour; the *paterfamilias*, particularly of the well established noble and rich families came to realise that to some degree they had an obligation to initiate control. However their interest was double edged. Where St Bernardino had used his vehement sermons to issue warnings and consequences of such behaviour in his home city of Siena, the governing elite in Florence took their own preferred course of action.<sup>12</sup> Thus for their own political motives the individual *paterfamilias* of the wealthy and powerful families in the city decided to exploit young unruly men (*giovani*) and boys to reinforce their own seats of power. To this end boys' confraternities became crucial to the maintenance of the authority of the ruling classes. The tactic was one that Cosimo de' Medici, believing that the confraternities conferred authority through solidarity of the families of his enemies, disapproved and did all in his power to curtail. But soon he came to acknowledge their potential; and used them for his own aggrandisement.<sup>13</sup>

Joseph's advocates, advancing the importance of the role of the father in society with the purpose of instilling some amount of familial cohesion and morality, helped to shape the modifications in Joseph's perceived persona. Like St Bridget in the fourteenth century and St Bernardino, St Catherine of Siena and Jean Gerson in the early fifteenth century, in Florence during the mid fifteenth century it was St Antoninus who played a major role in the elevation of Joseph by promoting him as an inspirational example of the resolute, honest and devoted

*paterfamilias*. Antoninus collected and collated all the writings he could find concerning Joseph. Writing on Joseph's purpose in God's plan in the chapter entitled 'De desponsatione Mariae' from his treatise *Summa Theologica Moralis*, Antoninus spoke of Joseph's essential role, and of his own concurrence with the belief that the Virgin had to be espoused to an honourable man in order to deceive the devil.<sup>14</sup> To this end Antoninus authorised the content<sup>15</sup> of the *Litany*<sup>16</sup> of *St Joseph*<sup>17</sup> in which Joseph is called the deceiver of the Devil<sup>18</sup> and the 'Terror of Demons'.<sup>19</sup> Antoninus clarified the stance taken by Gratian,<sup>20</sup> a twelfth century scholar on canon law, that Christ wanted Joseph as his carer, provider and protector; and that therefore it is right that Joseph is called 'the father of Christ, not from the effect of geniture but from the task and care of providing'<sup>21</sup> by saying that Joseph 'is *father* here by reason of his *care*'.<sup>22</sup> Antoninus further amplified this assertion by writing that

Joseph was to give Mary help in various needs that would arise demanding his assistance: accompanying her when she would go to Bethlehem where her delivery would take place, being with her when she went to the Temple for Purification, going with her into Egypt, from there returning to Nazareth. By labour of his hands he procured whatever was necessary for sustenance of themselves and the *Child*. For according to Chrysostom<sup>23</sup> he was a Carpenter, in this teaching all to work for their own and the dear ones.<sup>24</sup>

As an elderly man Joseph's suitability as spouse to a young woman would not have been problematic. At that time a large age differential between partners was not unusual.<sup>25</sup> Antoninus wrote in 'De desponsatione Mariae' that 'Blessed Mary was not concerned that her spouse was old, but only about doing the will of God...' and adds as in both confirmation and explanation that '...never should a spouse be given to an unwilling girl.'<sup>26</sup> Antoninus also emphasised that St Luke's

specific naming of St Joseph in his Gospel - 'to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph'<sup>27</sup> - was indicative of God's will being done.<sup>28</sup>

St Antoninus was Prior of the Convent when Fra Angelico began decorating the walls with inspiring religious images including those representing Christ's life, *Sacra Conversazioni* and illustrations of St Dominic's Nine Ways of Prayer. By 1446 Antoninus had been awarded the additional role of Archbishop of Florence.

As shepherd to his extended flock Antoninus used every opportunity to influence the attitude and understanding of the role of the father within both the Church and amongst the laity in Florence. To this end he sermonised on Joseph. Through the magnitude of his position Antoninus's advancement of Joseph had authority; and his opinions on the content of religious pictures helped to establish a growing trend away from over reliance on the Apocryphal texts for artistic inspiration. Antoninus believed that the visual aspects of faith should reflect the unadorned simplicity of the Scriptures, stating in his *Summa Theologica Moralis* that for this reason artists should be warned that

when they paint things contrary to the faith, when they make an image of the Trinity as one person with three heads ... or, in the Annunciation of the Virgin, a formed little child, that is Jesus, being sent into the womb of the Virgin ... Nor are they to be praised who paint apocryphal tales, such as midwives in the Nativity ...<sup>29</sup>

explaining that the scene in the stable that confronts the shepherds and which is related in *St Luke's Gospel* is described in the sparest of terms. They '... found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger'.<sup>30</sup> No midwives are mentioned, neither is there a description of Joseph's demeanour. Antoninus's

contention underlined his fundamental attitude towards the overzealous use of the Apocryphal stories.

As spiritual guide Antoninus would have influenced the work of artists Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli in their conception of Dominican imagery as they worked in the Convent of San Marco. In most instances identification of the frescoes as being by Fra Angelico or Benozzo Gozzoli has been made. But there are a few instances where authorship is contentious. It is thought that Benozzo Gozzoli completed Fra Angelico's work after the friar had been summoned to the Vatican in Rome in 1445 at the behest of Pope Eugenius IV. Furthermore it is conjectured that the hand of Benozzo Gozzoli can be detected in some of the figures in the earlier work, that of the San Marco Altarpiece painted by Fra Angelico sometime in the late 1430s.<sup>31</sup> Similarly an assistant's hand can be identified in many of the frescoes on the walls of the lay brothers' cells which were painted after Fra Angelico's return from Rome in 1450.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of who painted them the influence of Antoninus the Prior/Archbishop would have been inevitable.

Certainly Antoninus was influential in affecting Joseph's 'magnanimous and benign appearance' in contemporaneous art as confirmed in the predella panel of the *Adoration of the Magi*<sup>33</sup> from the Cortona Altarpiece (pl. 110) executed by Fra Angelico between 1433 and 1434.<sup>34</sup> In the painting an elderly but noble looking Joseph, clad in pink and blue robes edged in gold, stands to one side of the Virgin. He leans towards one of the magi in a kindly and dignified gesture of

appreciation. It is as equals that the magus and Joseph warmly take each other's hands.

In Fra Angelico's *Flight into Egypt* on the Annunziata Silver Chest (pl. 111) painted sometime between 1451 and 1453 the physical practicalities of Joseph's nurturing role are clearly displayed.<sup>35</sup> With a relaxed bearing Joseph strides out easily and steadily behind the donkey that bears the Virgin and Christ. Joseph carries the necessary provisions for the journey: a bucket, a cup, a large shawl all hanging from the staff that he bears over his left shoulder. Though his stance gives him the appearance of composure he is alert and his head is raised. He marches on with purpose. Typical of the growing trend to represent Joseph as an attractive, younger man, he is lithe and energetic. Despite the long dark hat a profusion of brown curling locks of hair can be discerned falling about his shoulders. He knows his place; both out of deference for the Virgin and as a precautionary measure he follows the donkey on which she is seated. Though she appears oblivious to everything save for the child, her relaxed manner infers her implicit trust in Joseph. His assured presence is motivating and assuring; and his attitude confirms his unobtrusive authority as protector and nurturer, also as the Virgin's husband and Christ's putative father.

In the 1470 engraving of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 112) by Martin Schongauer, the German painter and engraver, the image is of Joseph as provider.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore it confirms that though the Scriptures as a source of inspiration for artists and their patrons was encouraged in northern Italy, in northern Europe the Apocryphal stories were still exploited. Taking the Apocryphal story of the infant



Jesus compelling the date palm to lower its branches so that Joseph and Mary can easily grasp the fruit, Schongauer advances Joseph's reputation by manipulating the story so that it is Joseph who reaches up to the dates while baby Jesus sits meekly in his mother's embrace.<sup>37</sup> Joseph is pictured in the act of plucking the fruit from a palm tree with the assistance of five angels. As further evidence of his care and attention a drinks flask hangs from Joseph's neck.

In general during the second half of the fifteenth century Joseph's status progressed from that of his previously subordinate role in the Church to one that was central and defined. The greatest difference between images of Joseph in the first half of the fifteenth century and those from the last thirty years of the century is in his more practical and/or positive demeanour. In addition there emerged a new, mystical aspect to his appearance and comportment. Cosimo Tura's early 1470s tondo painting of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 113), understood to be part of the Roverella Altarpiece, presents the viewer with both aspects of the transformed image of Joseph.<sup>38</sup> Tura emphasises Joseph's elevated and fundamental roles through the specificity of his location in the painting in which he stands alongside and in conjunction with the Virgin and child. Tura also presents Joseph as a spiritual figure through the manner of his bearing.

Both Joseph on foot and Mary seated with the child on the donkey, move towards the onlooker. They are not viewed as they usually are as though they are passing across the picture plane; rather it is as if Tura is offering them up for our contemplation. Their downcast gaze and natural reserve is non confrontational.

None of the figures in the painting looks directly at the viewer. It is the viewer who observes them and therefore is allowed to identify with them.

Joseph holds the donkey's reins almost imperceptibly in his left hand while in his right he loosely clasps the slender, insubstantial staff. In evident humility Joseph's head is lowered and turned slightly in the direction of the Virgin. His expression is contemplative, almost spiritual in its pensive quality; and his eyes are closed as one in deep meditation. Mary holds up the naked infant - marble white - in a similar manner in which she holds the dead Christ in the lunette of the *Pietà* believed to have been intended as the upper section of the Roverella Altarpiece. Both she and the donkey are aligned so as to be turned to face the beholder. The Virgin looks downwards at Joseph's crossed hands. The composition is difficult to characterise as it is neither a straightforward representation of the Flight into Egypt nor one of the Holy Family.

## **2) The image of Joseph the Father as employed by Cosimo de' Medici**

It has been seen that in the opinion of a number of religious intellectuals the need for a strong father figure was paramount. Gerson and Dominici wrote of it while St Bernardino and St Antonius preached it. The image of Joseph the father figure had a major influence with certain members of the laity, in particular Cosimo de' Medici. The established patrician families in Florence had long vied for power over one another. The Medici family was no exception. The economic structure of Florence had grown out of and depended on a few rich, powerful families; and to sustain these families the continuance of their wealth and solidarity was vital.<sup>39</sup> Yet Brucker reports that for some the acquisition of wealth caused them some

pangs of remorse; and he qualifies his opinion by quoting the fifteenth century librarian Vespasiano da Bisticci<sup>40</sup> that Cosimo de' Medici for one 'had prickings of conscience that certain portions of his wealth...had not been righteously gained'; and suggests that Cosimo's financing of the renovation of the Convent of San Marco was as an act of expiation.<sup>41</sup> Certainly it placed him in good standing with Archbishop Antoninus and Pope Eugenius IV who, with the papal court, was in residence in Florence in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella from 1434 – 1443. With his return from Venice and his successful installation as the head of the Signoria Cosimo became in effect the secular ruler of Florence.

Cosimo associated himself with the festival of Epiphany.<sup>42</sup> The Magi were perceived as being wise and as being kings as well as being pilgrims; possibly through his involvement with high status, noble people Cosimo envisaged himself as one of them. The gift of myrrh offered by one magus though usually considered to be symbolic of Christ's death is also associated with Christ as doctor and that this may go some way to explain Cosimo's interest in the Magi.<sup>43</sup> There is the additional connection of Cosimo's own family name Medici coming from the Latin *medicus* meaning physician. Certainly Sts Damian and Cosmas, who were the patron saints of the Medici and Cosimo in particular, were regarded as doctors.<sup>44</sup> The visual result of the permutation, of Cosimo the sage, the doctor, the father of the Medici clan and even as the self-styled father of Florence can be discerned in a specific fresco in the Convent of San Marco in Florence. In the representation the venerable and esteemed Joseph melds into the image of Cosimo de' Medici the successful merchant banker and the most powerful lay person in Florence at that era. The figure of Joseph is the inspirational and

emotive focus of the fresco of the *Adoration of the Magi* in Cell 39 (pl. 1). Along with Cell 38 these two cells formed Cosimo de' Medici's own private retreat in the Convent of San Marco.

Cosimo was influential in many spheres of Florentine life; not just paying for the renovation and redecoration of the Convent of San Marco, or giving financial support to Pope Eugenius IV and his court whilst they were in residence in Santa Maria Novella. Cosimo was engaged in the establishment and maintenance of youth confraternities and boys' clubs and he had a particular interest in the lay confraternity of the *Compagnia de' Magi* being both patron and benefactor, as well as having a seat on the festival commission.<sup>45</sup> On the feast of the Epiphany, also believed to be the day on which St John the Baptist baptised Jesus, the *Compagnia* put on a magnificent festival: a procession through the heart of the city appropriately taking in the Baptistery as an element of its route. Cosimo is known to have played a part in the event not least as chief benefactor in 1436 on his return from exile.<sup>46</sup> The procession<sup>47</sup> made its way between the Piazza San Giovanni and the Duomo passing by Cosimo's own palazzo on its progress down the Via Larga.<sup>48</sup> The culmination of the parade was the church of San Marco; where according to a contemporary report of the *Feste de' Magi* on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1428 a platform in the piazza represented Herod's palace.<sup>49</sup> In the earlier pageants it was the Baptistery which represented Herod's palace, probably due to its connections with John the Baptist.<sup>50</sup> There is some dispute amongst scholars as to the direction of the processions. Cardini describes the procession in 1429 as moving from the Convent of San Marco to the Baptistery.<sup>51</sup> Others suggest it

processed from the Baptistery or the Palazzo del Signoria to San Marco. However it is clear that the celebrations included all these locations at some time.

Cosimo is understood to have joined the throng dressed as a magus on at least one occasion. Cosimo and members of the Medici family dressed themselves in their richest fabrics and furs for the event and joined the procession on horseback; and in this way they could overtly display their wealth and power before the citizens of Florence.<sup>52</sup> With the most important members of his family Cosimo dressed either as the Magi or as one of their entourage. This has been endorsed by the traditional identification of them in Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco completed in 1461 in the Chapel of the Magi in the Palazzo Medici and more recently by Hatfield.<sup>53</sup> The fresco charts the progress of the Magi (pl. 114) and is presented over three walls of the Chapel.<sup>54</sup> Behind the young magus, who on his white steed looks out quizzically at the viewer, there is a much older man on horseback. He is seen only in profile. He has white hair protruding from below his red hat and has a long face and a large patrician nose. His countenance is stern. It takes but little stretch of the imagination to identify this figure with Cosimo. His features in addition bear similarities to other images attributed wholly or partly to Benozzo: St Joseph in the *Adoration of the Magi* and Cosimo's patron saint St Cosmas in the San Marco Altarpiece by Fra Angelico.

Cosimo had many other prominent roles within Florentine life including the financing of the library that had been collected by the humanist Niccolò Niccoli and was housed at the Convent of San Marco.<sup>55</sup> On his return from exile Cosimo helped to fund a boys' confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin and

instigated the building of a place for them to meet at the Convent of San Marco.<sup>56</sup> Records show that from the commencement of Cosimo's involvement membership numbers soared; most were either newly qualified artisans or *garzoni* - that is youths still learning their trades - and that most were not the sons of noble families but those from the working classes known as the *popolo minuto*.<sup>57</sup>

It was for his role as patron of the Convent that Cosimo had been granted the two conjoined cells. Upon the wall of the outer cell there is a fresco of the *Crucifixion*.<sup>58</sup> In the inner cell is the lunette fresco of the *Adoration of the Magi* with its depiction of the *Man of Sorrows* superimposed at the centre of the base line. Though painted around 1450 its design is suggestive of the International Gothic style employed by Lorenzo Monaco (pl. 115)<sup>59</sup> and Gentile Fabriano (pl. 116)<sup>60</sup> in that the Virgin and child with Joseph either standing slightly behind them or as in Lorenzo's painting seated on the ground looking up intently at the Virgin, are located in the left hand corner of the picture so that the entourage of the Magi are arrayed across two thirds of the width of the painting.<sup>61</sup> However unlike Lorenzo's and Gentile's representations of the scene, Benozzo Gozzoli places Joseph a little removed from the Virgin and child. He stands above the throng facing forward. He wears a long dark cap similar to that which he wears in Fra Angelico's panel painting of the *Flight to Egypt* (pl. 111) on the Annunziata Silver Chest. He holds one of the gifts in his hands. It is a small cylindrical gold casket, and he has tilted the lid open. In neither the usual cave nor stable, the location of Gozzoli's Adoration exudes a timeless quality. Joseph is the only figure in the painting to present almost a frontal aspect to the viewer. Most of the assembly are viewed from the rear. The impression of movement is created

through the diverse use of colour and the varied attitudes adopted by the figures which constitute the entourage of the Magi. There are similarities between this scene and the hectic bustle in many Betrothal scenes, where the divergent commotion and colour of the suitors provides the movement in the picture. Here again it is only Joseph and the Virgin who are composed and motionless.

Set against a series of striated cliffs the characters accompanying the Magi are comprised of a disparate assortment of races and religions - Jews alongside Muslims and Gentiles. Men in turbans sporting long white plaits rub shoulders with those in contemporary garb; one in flowing green robes holds up his hand as if in the act of greeting or blessing, while others jostle for prominence. Some of the company fix Joseph with their glances, as, in the role of intercessor, he directs them towards the Virgin and the infant. Representatives from all over the known world are demonstrated to have come together before the earthly trinity: Joseph the father, Mary the mother and the child Jesus.

In Gozzoli's characterisation of Joseph he has created an inspiring figure. He is a tall, slim man with a long lean face and large nose. His beard is dark and trim. His hair is carefully tucked underneath a flowing black hat. His long sleeved tunic is purple, a colour often associated with imperial power but also with sorrow and penitence; and his flowing golden yellow robe, which he wears swept up over his left arm, is the colour associated with divinity.<sup>62</sup> St Joseph's features - the high forehead, the thin face with sculpted cheekbones, the resolute chin and the long nose - are similar to the portraits of Cosimo de' Medici on a bronze medallion from 1465 (pl. 117)<sup>63</sup> and a painting by Pontormo (pl. 118) amongst others.<sup>64</sup> But

he is particularly similar to Fra Angelico's interpretation of St Cosmas in the convincing reality of the San Marco Altarpiece (pl. 119)<sup>65</sup> which had been painted over the period 1438 - 1440 for the high altar of San Marco and has been suggested Gozzoli may have worked on himself.<sup>66</sup> Even though Gozzoli's depiction of Joseph appears to be intended as an idealised portrait of Cosimo, it still remains a fascinating vanity on Cosimo's part that he should consider himself worthy of association with Christ's putative father. And, conversely, it appears that Cosimo was satisfied for Joseph, the lowly carpenter, to be associated with him the wealthy merchant, banker to the Curia, supporter of the Pope and covert power behind the *Signoria* - the seat of Florentine authority.

The correlation between Cosimo and St Joseph appears to rest on their representative roles as fathers: Cosimo to the Medici family, to the confraternities benefiting from his largesse and to the city of Florence in general; while Joseph through the dignity of his demeanour as the essential and inspirational father figure.

Just as Cosmas, looking back at the viewer, acts as our intermediary with the Virgin and child seated in majesty in the San Marco Altarpiece, so Joseph in his commanding position acts as intermediary between the Magi and Mary and the infant Jesus in Gozzoli's fresco of the Adoration. Looking down on the gathered assembly Joseph lowers his chin. He exudes an air of *gravitas*. Standing erect and purposeful he faces the gathering with dignity and conviction. At the golden section, the optimum and inherently aesthetic position to attract the eye Joseph, dislocated from the group and framed by the huge, sombre slab of pale-coloured



marble, looks down benevolently on those paying homage before Christ. His presence overwhelms the scene. Being perceptively taller than the bare almost funereal block of stone that forms his immediate backdrop he oversees the proceedings.

The inclusion of a monumental smooth stone clearly makes reference to the stone sepulchre in which Christ's dead body would be eventually laid; and thereby the painting alludes to another Joseph,<sup>67</sup> another principled man, the 'honourable' counsellor of Arimathæa, who in the role of the grieving father took the body of Christ and

wrapped it in clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed...<sup>68</sup>

### **3) Joseph exalted**

The cult of St Joseph depended on the level of adulation and devotion afforded him. With Pope Sixtus the IV's incorporation of a feast day for St Joseph into the Church calendar in 1470 and the publication of Isodoro Isolano's *Summa de donis Sancte Joseph* in 1522 many chapels, churches, altars, confraternities and trade guilds were established with his name.<sup>69</sup> Certain subjects allowed for more reverential treatment. Interpretations of the Flight into Egypt allowed for artists to extemporise on the bare facts as written in the Scriptures. Characteristics typical of the growing development in presenting the exalted Joseph can be found in Albrecht Dürer's representation (pl. 120) of the scene painted around 1496.<sup>70</sup> Joseph is clad in rich and beautiful light reflecting clothing suggesting that they are made of silk. His cloak is pink over his pale blue robe. Like the Virgin's

white veil, the pink folds of his cloak flutter out behind him in the breeze. He wears an extraordinary hat quite unlike the pointed *judenhut* or the Jewish trailing hat seen previously. In its place he wears an object that is comprised of voluminous swathes of golden cloth that in no manner resembles Jewish head wear. Rather it is a timeless, non specific piece of finery. Unlike the Virgin who has a traditional halo, it is this astonishing gold hat that represents Joseph's saintliness. Carrying his staff over his left shoulder he leads the donkey. He gazes back with an expression of great tenderness as he observes the wriggling infant in the Virgin's arms.

In Vittore Carpaccio's representation of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 121) dating from 1500 the image of Joseph as the inspirational husband and father figure is enhanced and his exalted status alluded to through the colouration of his clothes.<sup>71</sup> Though not elaborately embroidered as the Virgin's they are of the same colours, thereby creating a sense of balance and equanimity.

There is a determined purposefulness to Joseph's actions. The hatless and balding Joseph is a resolute and strong figure as he strides forth. The depiction is closer in type to those from the early to middle of the fifteenth century in that Joseph is presented as an older man, but his exalted role as protector is emphasised in his close attention to the progress of the donkey over the uneven ground. Thus he is presented as the caring father and the *Nutritor Domini*, both worthy of praise. As in Cosimo Tura's painting of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 113) it is the lightness of Joseph's touch on the donkey's reins that attract the eye; and in so doing highlights the way that they are looped gently round Joseph's right hand. His

spiritual quality is seen to be enough to urge the beast onwards. Furthermore his manner of leading the donkey creates a focal point on his hand and serves to emphasise the wedding ring on his ring finger. Its presence calls attention to Joseph's role as the Virgin's husband and Christ's father. Its inclusion also serves to add weight to the veracity and validity of Joseph's paternity and the sincerity of his betrothal vows; thus his worthiness for exaltation.

Fra Bartolomeo also used the theme of the Flight into Egypt to emphasise Joseph's spiritual dimension as well as his role of protector. He characterizes Joseph as a contemplative and gentle person with a pensive aspect in the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt with St John the Baptist* (pl. 122).<sup>72</sup> Joseph sits beside the Virgin who plays with the two small children. The bald but beardless Joseph has a wistful countenance. He watches Jesus intently; there is a quality indicative of his prescience in the manner of his expression. The palm tree behind Joseph both signifies Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and his subsequent martyrdom on Good Friday. Joseph's intimated foreknowledge evinced in his abstracted expression, in conjunction with his location against the palm tree give him a pre-occupied air. The conjunction also stresses Joseph's integral part in God's plan.

#### **4) Joseph as aspiration**

By the late fifteenth century with fears of an apocalyptic event only a few years away, in Florence young men particularly became disaffected by the tight financial and irreverent ambience in the city. They lacked guidance and found themselves adrift in a spiritual wilderness.<sup>73</sup> The populace were still suffering

from feelings of dislocation and trauma resulting from the many visitations of plague. Where there had been an approximated population of 120,000 in Florence prior to the Black Death, by 1427 the number had reduced to about 40,000.<sup>74</sup> It was within this environment that Cosimo de' Medici had determined to assist by funding and supporting many enterprises, not just the *Compagnia de' Magi*, the Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin, the renovation of the Convent of San Marco or the establishment of a library. By the second half of the fifteenth century for the economic and social advantage of the *comune* it became imperative in cities like Florence for the population to be at least maintained but preferably increased in number. The main objective was for eligible men to marry and father children, for as Marsilio Ficino indicated it was women and children who had succumbed most to the pestilence.<sup>75</sup> Thus to maintain the patriciate the importance of fatherhood and the sustenance of the family became essential. But due to the disproportionate number of young men, many of whom were the sons of the oligarchic leaders of the city, they saw no future for themselves and liked nothing better than to pass their time in lawless revelries; the result of which was civil unrest.<sup>76</sup>

As the model of male responsibility, humility and virtue Joseph the 'just' man was the ideal archetype of father, carer and guardian of the family. As the fifteenth century witnessed a major development in youth confraternities so the importance of the father figure developed.<sup>77</sup> Virginity and chastity were important qualities, not only within the immediate community but in the city at large if family life was to be encouraged and preserved. High ethical and moral standards were particularly stressed in the Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin.<sup>78</sup>

Emphasis was placed on the importance of moral purity of confraternity members in order to restrict homosexual practices, other forms of delinquency and to create stable, hardworking families.<sup>79</sup>

These institutions were intentionally constituted in a manner that would encourage family life and civic pride, social stability and collective harmony through mimesis of the ideal governing body. And the governance of the city was expected to resemble that of the fundamental family unit with the strong, firm but fair minded father figure at its head. Just as the city was perceived as a macrocosm of the family then each man bore a responsibility to the wider family, to the city as its putative father; and in order to reinforce symbolic familial bonds and duties certain disciplinary obligations and concomitant strictures were placed on confraternal members.<sup>80</sup> Responsibility towards the extended family of Florence therefore was emphasized; often through the singing of songs or *laudes* that mentioned the city by name. The lyrics from one of their *laudes* reads: 'Blessed Virgin Mother, May Florence be placed in your care; through you may peace be ordained...' The name of the city would be changed accordingly to fit the required location.<sup>81</sup> 'Boys' confraternities... were started by adults and matured in the womb of their fathers' associations.'<sup>82</sup>

This, then, was the atmosphere in which the inviolable Joseph was promoted. Luca Signorelli's tondo painting of the *Holy Family* (pl. 123) executed in the last decade of the fifteenth century presents Joseph as the resolute yet reverential and protective father as he kneels over the Virgin and child, protecting them from harm with his body.<sup>83</sup> His work roughened hands are crossed over his chest in a

gesture of prayer. His bare feet, indicative of his humility and modesty, are visible below the hem of his robes. Joseph is presented as the 'good' man. This is emphasised in Jesus's gesture as, turning his head towards Joseph, the infant holds up his left hand in the act of acknowledging and blessing his putative father.

Lorenzo Costa's image of St Joseph (pl. 124) painted in 1490, depicts the mystical, prescient Joseph.<sup>84</sup> He is of middle-age and dark haired. Joseph's face is furrowed by anxiety as he crosses his arms over his chest in prayer and adulation. His apprehensive expression indicates his deeper understanding of the circumstances that face him. It also signals the depth of his resolve and his acceptance of the duty of care incumbent on him in looking after the small naked child lying semi-prone between him and the Virgin. The emotional intensity of the painting is heightened by the vulnerability of the child's sleeping form, and the vision of the dark apocalyptic hills immediately outside the window with the delicate blue promise of heaven beyond.

In Raphael's *Holy Family with St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist* (pl. 125), painted in 1507 Joseph's spiritual and prophetic roles are further emphasised.<sup>85</sup> Raphael has placed Joseph at the apex of an equilateral triangle formed by the conjunction of the five figures. The two mothers sit on the ground with the two children playing between them. Joseph standing leans over them in a protective, thoughtful attitude. He is presented as an elderly, wise man. The bit of hair that he has is grey, as is his beard. He is clothed in a green robe symbolising immortality and the triumph of life over death, while his gold coloured mantle signifies the

presence of God.<sup>86</sup> His central position with St Elizabeth looking up at him, her lips parted in speech, demonstrates Joseph's increasing importance as a saint worthy of veneration.

### **Summary**

To become a cult figure first Joseph had to be both a source of inspiration and a source of aspiration. In the dissipated atmosphere of fifteenth century Florence St Antoninus promoted St Joseph as a motivational figure with Joseph's attitude and moral fortitude as the desired objectives. Artists painted him as the strong protective father, physically surrounding Mary and Jesus, or standing tall over them shielding them from harm with his body. His purity, steadfastness and devotion to Jesus and Mary made him the ideal role model. He was the father figure to which young men growing up in the hectic and sometimes lawless quarters of the city of Florence could aspire.

Cosimo de' Medici saw himself as a strong father figure not only to his immediate family but to the city of Florence as witnessed in his financing of certain institutions and feast days. That the features of St Joseph in Gozzoli's the *Adoration of the Magi* in Cosimo's own cell in the Convent of San Marco resemble those of Cosimo himself does not seem coincidental. Similarly Joseph is placed in a prominent position over the gathered worshipful ensemble. Thus in Gozzoli's fresco Cosimo, in the guise of Joseph, assumes the role of the universal father figure.

By the turn of the century Joseph increasingly was being presented as an exalted individual symbolising the power of matrimonial, familial and paternal bonds as evidenced in Raphael's *The Holy family with St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist*. Joseph, envisioned as the sagacious, elderly man stands protectively over the little group. Even the colours of his robes are emblematic of his emergent spirituality and stature.



## Chapter VII

### St Joseph: Intermediary between the Secular and the Spiritual Worlds

As a consequence of the imminent half-millennium the latter years of the fifteenth century were shaped by fears arising from the expectations of the second coming and of it presaging the Apocalypse. It was an anxiety that in Florence the influential Dominican friar Savonarola utilised to his advantage.<sup>1</sup> As a possible corollary to apocalyptic uncertainties works of art began to emerge in which Joseph came to personify not only the temporal father figure and the *Nutritor Domini*, but also intercessor with God. Benozzo Gozzoli's *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 1) has been advanced as a foremost and key example of this major transformation. Moreover images depicting the blooming of Joseph's rod and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovering over Joseph's head in images of the Betrothal were used to underscore the truth that he not only embraced the mantle of adoptive fatherhood of Christ but through the embodiment of his spouse the Virgin as *Maria Ecclesia*, Joseph had accepted the responsibility attendant on him as the protector of the *Ecclesia Militans*.<sup>2</sup>

As intimated a result concurrent with the concept of Joseph the paradigm of virtuousness and fatherhood - a concept that would eventually reach its zenith in the devotional worship of St Joseph - was the notion of Joseph, in equality with Mary, as intermediary between the secular and the spiritual realms. In effect he became a pathway between the two worlds. This new role which cast Joseph as direct conduit to God was reflected evermore frequently in works of art dating from the second half of the fifteenth century.

### **1) *Nativity with Gloria in Excelsis* by Luca della Robbia**

The terracotta relief executed in the 1470s of the corresponding figures of Mary and Joseph kneeling on either side of the Christ child (pl. 126) is a case in point.<sup>3</sup> There is no suggestion of superiority. Their hands pressed to together with equal fervour they lean forward to watch and worship the infant. Though Joseph has a beard he is depicted as a young, attractive man with short curling hair. He is positioned on slightly higher ground than the Virgin which makes him seem taller and more imposing. Unlike the Virgin who is seen in profile, Luca della Robbia has turned the figure of Joseph so that he faces the viewer with only his head tilted downwards. His forward facing pose suggests his accessibility: his new intermediary function. Being able to see most of his face allows for the viewer to contemplate Joseph's expression fully, to relate to him and therefore be able to emulate his pose and attempt to imitate his sentiment when praying. Joseph has a graceful and noble demeanour indicative of the alteration in his status. This change is emphasised by the three angels who, hovering above both their heads, support a banner on which are written the words 'Gloria in Excelsis'. The presence of the angels with their banner not only confirms the mystery of the infant's birth, but also underlines Joseph's spiritual association with and importance in Christ's incarnation.

### **2) *Adoration of the Magi* by Botticelli**

Botticelli's *Adoration* (pl. 127), through its intelligent composition, uses a complex arrangement of figures to create a large triangular shape with Joseph at the apex. It presents Joseph, though an undemonstrative figure in consideration of his deferential bearing, still a figure of paternal authority by reason of his location

above the worshipful company ranged below him.<sup>4</sup> The *Adoration of the Magi*<sup>5</sup> was painted by Botticelli during the 1470s for the altar in Guasparre dal Lama's chapel and situated on the façade of an inner wall in Santa Maria Novella, Florence.<sup>6</sup> Vasari<sup>7</sup> described the figures of the small panel painting, placed on the left of the main central door, as 'not possible to describe the beauty that Sandro (Botticelli) depicted in the heads that are therein seen.'<sup>8</sup> All the signs of Joseph's eminent position and intermediary function are in place. Joseph's elevated location, far above anyone else in the picture, alludes to his relationship with God the Father. God's holy effulgence shines down first on Joseph, upon his left cheek and shoulder, then on the Virgin and child; and lastly it radiates onto the regal gathering arrayed below. Stressing the continuity in Joseph's increasing stature, the painting acts as a conjunction of the old and new archetypes of Joseph. With his hand to his cheek Joseph is in a typical 'melancholic' pose that as discussed in previous chapters has been evinced as being a sign of meditation, prudence, genius and wisdom. The unemotional quality of his bearing in this instance in conjunction with his lofty site is suggestive of him being removed from the temporal plane occupied by the Magi and their entourage. Joseph's sartorial constraint also serves as a distancing ploy between him and the assemblage. Both Joseph and the figure traditionally held to be Botticelli (at the bottom right hand side of the painting) contrast sharply in their manner of dress with Vasari's description of 'the first old man, who, kissing the foot of Our Lord, (is) melting with tenderness'<sup>9</sup> and the finery of the other Magi and their party - a number of whom Vasari identifies as being members of the powerful Medici family.<sup>10</sup> To stress their importance and grandeur the painting, according to Vasari, was 'placed between two doors in the principal façade of Santa Maria Novella'.<sup>11</sup>

Botticelli's presence seems emblematic; as if it is his way of signing his work. Even further his inclusion of his own likeness has a familial dimension; it intimates that he felt some gratitude as well as a sense of kinship with the Medici, who had patronised him.<sup>12</sup>

The imagery of family and paternal strength is accentuated in the painting through the additional portraits of the Medici family amongst the company of the Magi. The Magus kneeling at the feet of the Virgin is recognisable from contemporary portraits, such as the bronze medallion dated 1465 (pl. 114) as Cosimo de' Medici; though both it and Botticelli's painting must be posthumous depictions as Cosimo died in 1464.<sup>13</sup>

The stress on family affiliation operates as a subtext to the painting. It is a reminder that all, including the viewer can have a relationship with God through his intermediaries. Thus Joseph's position, directly over and above Mary and the infant, with the flowing lines of his robes forming the backdrop for them, signifies his mediatory role and the security his presence can offer.

With its stress on the role of fatherhood - whether that of God the Father in the heavenly world pouring his light down on the earthbound assembly, Joseph the putative father of Christ in the position of intermediary between the two worlds, or Cosimo de' Medici in the temporal world as head of the Medici family and self-styled father of Florence in the guise of the leading Magi bringing his entourage to adore the infant - the painting invites a response from the beholder.

It solicits a reconsideration of the role of the father figure and Joseph's position in that role.

### 3) The Feast Day of St Joseph

In 1481 and in direct conjunction with his encouragement of devotion to the Immaculate Conception, in other words the Virgin Mary, Pope Sixtus IV stipulated that the 19<sup>th</sup> March should become the feast day of St Joseph and be celebrated as such by the whole Church.<sup>14</sup> Not only was this, as forty years later the Dominican reformer Isidoro Isolano called it, the 'unveiling of Joseph's hidden merits', but it was the acknowledgement of Joseph as the protector and head of the *Ecclesia Militans*.<sup>15</sup> Isodoro fervently believed that the Holy Spirit would not rest until Joseph's role in the Church was comprehensively acknowledged. In Isodoro's own words Joseph was 'godly'.<sup>16</sup> Where the thirteenth century Peter John Olivi<sup>17</sup> the Franciscan philosopher and advocate of St Joseph in his admiration for St Joseph had referred to him as spouse to the Church.<sup>18</sup> It was Isodoro Isolano, appointed to create a Mass in tribute to St Joseph who went one step further and wrote his *Summa de donis Sancti Joseph* which was published in 1522.<sup>19</sup> In the work Isolano presented his the opinion that Joseph was not only the defender of the *Ecclesia Militans*, but that through prayers specifically directed to him Joseph could bring peace to the warring Italian city states, make an alliance with the invading French king Charles VIII, put an end to the fear surrounding the forthcoming half-millennium and bring harmony through communion.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4) Savonarola: the father of Florence**

Taking advantage of the sense of unease engendered by the forthcoming turn of the century and its associations with the Apocalypse as related by St John the Evangelist in *Revelation*<sup>21</sup> Fra Girolamo Savonarola began lecturing to citizens and clerics in the church of San Marco in Florence. He spoke to them on the subject of Judgement Day, of the need for an improvement in their moral standards and the moral standards in the city as a whole. Crucially he maintained the importance of the reaffirmation of faith.<sup>22</sup> In the beginning he aroused little reaction in Florence so went to preach in a number of locations including Genoa, Bologna and Brescia.<sup>23</sup> But in 1489 he was recalled to Florence from Brescia by Lorenzo de' Medici 'the Magnificent'. Such a recall inevitably attracted much public attention.<sup>24</sup> He returned to San Marco where he lectured to the novices and others at the Convent, expounding on the Apocalypse; but at each lecture his congregation grew. Whether he was taking his cue from Joseph's elevated status can only be surmised; however Savonarola saw himself as source of moral rectitude in Florence and as father to the Florentines. He was not to be questioned; in the margin of his own Bible he wrote 'My visions come directly from God, and would therefore stand in no need of proof, were the men of today less incredulous.'<sup>25</sup> He came to believe that only through his intervention could virtue be restored to the city; to this end he published a number of pamphlets.<sup>26</sup> Like a father he told the citizens how to behave and how to pray; even how widows should conduct themselves; and he warned them all with threats of the coming punishments and retributions if they did not improve their ways.<sup>27</sup>

He was asked to give the Lenten lecture of 1491 in San Marco; but by now his repute was so great and the expected crowds so large that he was asked to give his sermon in the Duomo to which he consented. In the great cathedral he took the opportunity to criticise the clergy for being greedy and base; declaring that the attraction of wealth ( which he referred to as 'this false idol') caused 'Fathers to make sacrifices to this false idol, urging their sons to enter the ecclesiastical life, (only) in order to obtain benefices and prebends...'.<sup>28</sup> Savonarola spoke of himself being like Christ in the house of the Pharisee, that both clerics and the laity had turned the 'house of God into a den of thieves, especially during holidays.'<sup>29</sup> He said that 'Tyrants are incorrigible because they are proud, because they love flattery, and because they will not restore ill-gotten gains'.<sup>30</sup> But more provocatively he gave a sermon to the *Signoria* in the *Palazzo della Signoria* in which in hardly veiled terms he criticised Lorenzo de' Medici. Then a few weeks later in the Sacristy of San Marco he predicted that Lorenzo, Pope Innocent VIII and the King of Naples were near to death.<sup>31</sup>

When Lorenzo the Magnificent died in 1492 followed shortly by Innocent VIII and the King of Naples many of the Florentine citizens became afraid of Savonarola but rallied behind him perceiving him to be in direct opposition to the Medici domination.<sup>32</sup> It is understood that it was at this time that Savonarola had his vision of the sword in the sky upon which was written the words '*Ecce Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter*' which means 'Behold the sword of the Lord, over the earth, swift and sure', the implication being that the judgement of God was at hand and that the people should renounce evil and ask forgiveness.<sup>33</sup> His vision reputedly ended with him being exhorted to tell his

congregation to repent. In his didactic and patriarchal manner<sup>34</sup> he took upon himself the role of spiritual father and advisor. He prophesied doom unless Florence purified itself and used its money to help the poor rather than spending it on ostentatious religious imagery.<sup>35</sup> He urged the establishment of a new Grand Council for the city,<sup>36</sup> saying that it was God's will. The Council members, following Savonarola's lead, identified their parental role as being one of controlling the lawless children and youths who roamed the streets; and of moderating the behaviour of the women. Savonarola encouraged them with inflammatory language, saying that he would like to see them 'make a lovely fire or two or three there in the piazza, of those sodomites male and female...'<sup>37</sup> By 1496 Savonarola publicly voiced his wish to don the *cappuccio* and *lucco* (the hood and gown of a magistrate) in order to quell the fears of the Florentines who had been living under what he regarded as the continuing Medicean tyranny.<sup>38</sup> He continued to preach against the excess of extravagance and the sin of *superfluità*,<sup>39</sup> to which he said the rich families of Florence, like the Medici, and many artists, sculptors, and musicians under their patronage, had succumbed.<sup>40</sup>

For over a century the elite upper classes living in the city of Florence had enjoyed certain pleasures and refinements that had been financed by profits accrued through the efforts of entrepreneurial bankers and merchants, to which the ordinary citizen had no recourse.<sup>41</sup> But by the latter years of the fifteenth century Savonarola saw economic wealth as a symptom of vainglory. Using indoctrination and the innocent enthusiasm of children to further his aims - as reported by Guicciardini - Savonarola trained them to go 'about during Carnival collecting cards, dice, cosmetics, paintings, and indecent books', to be burnt



publicly on his great Bonfires of the Vanities.<sup>42</sup> His interpretation of paternalism was dynamic and aggressive. He urged the city elders to act like fathers 'let the more advanced amongst you and the elder in years surpass the rest in humility, and let them be an example to the younger.'<sup>43</sup> His adoption by the Florentine citizens exemplifies their need for a strong and pious father figure to free them from their addiction to over excessiveness.

The 1490s was a period that saw very few new commissions in Florence, due in part to Savonarola's stipulations as to the manner and comportment of representations of the saints and of Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Savonarola asserted that 'Creatures are beautiful in proportion to their participation in the nearness and beauty of God', not to their style of dress or the richness of the cloth.<sup>44</sup>

Artists familiar with Savonarola's stance on superfluity and the diminution of moral values may have intentionally represented Joseph as a strong individual clothed in modest robes - as Botticelli had done in his *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 127). Certainly visually Joseph's modest restraint was amplified. The image of Joseph as father, defender, provider and custodian of the faith was not merely a tolerable interpretation of his function. In an age of vehement, confrontational, self-imposed paternalism Joseph the calm, composed and protective father figure revealed by God continued to be the desired prime exemplar and aspiration for both ordinary citizens and the ruling classes alike. More than anything, in what Savonarola perceived as a morally decadent milieu, the unwavering figure of Joseph as defender of the Virgin and intermediary with God was a powerful image for regeneration. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo appears to be advancing

Savonarola's point of view through the manner in which he expressed Joseph's humility, spirituality and his intercessory role in the *Adoration of the Shepherds*.

##### **5) *Adoration of the Shepherds* by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo**

An ensemble of singing and instrument carolling angels in Fiorenzo di Lorenzo's late fifteenth century painting confirms Joseph's importance and worth at the intersection between the temporal and spiritual worlds (pl. 128).<sup>45</sup> As a man Joseph represents humanity; but by including the heavenly host in close proximity to him the artist emphasises his saintliness. Joseph's clothes are constrained and simple: a yellow cloak edged in scarlet and a long, dark brown robe; therefore in keeping with Savonarola's dictum on ostentatious representations of the Madonna and saints. The cord tied about Joseph's waist is reminiscent of that worn with a humble Franciscan habit. His bald pate is similarly suggestive of a monk's tonsure. Joseph and Mary kneel in adoration on either side of the tiny infant who lies on the ground within a *mandorla* shaped thus by his parents robes.<sup>46</sup> Fiorenzo di Lorenzo arranged the parents' garments in such a way that the child lies with his head on Joseph's robe and his feet on Mary's cloak, thus forming a physical link connecting the three of them in an earthly trinity.

##### **6) *Adoration of the Magi* by Gerard David**

In 1495 the Flemish artist Gerard David painted an *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 129) that reflects another change which was occurring in representations of Joseph. In this realisation Joseph is presented as a tall richly dressed young man with short cropped brown hair and an insubstantial beard. He stands beside the

Virgin and child.<sup>47</sup> Superficially it may appear to be the usual representation of the submissive Joseph, waiting on God, standing beside the seated Virgin; but closer inspection proves otherwise. He is located at the extreme right of the picture. In his hands he holds his hat as if in a mark of respect; his appearance is solemn and unsmiling. But significantly he leans to his left, placing all his weight onto his left foot thereby giving the impression that he is in the act of stepping towards the Magi. His lips are parted as if he is speaking to the kneeling Magus. However there are deeper implications in his unyielding posture and grave expression. Indeed his stance is both uncompromising and defensive. He gives the impression that he is about to physically place himself between the Magi and Mary, who is distracted by the activity of the infant Jesus on her lap. Joseph's bearing implies that any approach to the Virgin and the child will be through him. The painting exemplifies the transformation in the image of St Joseph: here is a man with unselfconscious authority. It is complete the opposite of the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 113) by Gentile da Fabriano painted in 1423 where Joseph is located subserviently with bowed head, behind the Virgin. In David's painting, besides offering security and sanctuary to Jesus and Mary, Joseph's act of stepping forward in order to place himself between the Virgin and child and the Magi confirms him as conduit between the temporal and spiritual worlds.

It is specifically Joseph's intercessory characteristic that Gerard David presents to the viewer in the painting. David's Joseph is proactive; he is not contemplative, introspective or reserved; rather he is bold and unwavering. He looks at the Magi, speaks directly to them and steps forward to face those, whoever they are, who approach the infant Jesus.

### **7) *The Betrothal of the Virgin* by Perugino and by Raphael**

Perugino and Raphael emphasised Joseph's increasing importance and spirituality through the splendour and symbolism of the location depicted, while at the same time creating a sense of genuine place - a place to which the viewer could both connect with and believe in. In what Berenson calls 'space-composition', an opening out of pictorial space in which the boundaries created are 'only ideal to the roof of heaven', each artist produced a realistic environment to thrill the viewer.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore within these constructs Perugino and Raphael fashioned a relationship between the characters depicted. Specifically their intention appears to be that of establishing a connection between the viewer and Joseph, who is the only dynamic and mobile figure within the main action of either scene. The attention centres on him, particularly so in Raphael's painting on account of his position and stance - the significance of which will be discussed further.

In 1504 the two artists, Perugino (pl. 4)<sup>49</sup> and the youthful Raphael (pl. 5)<sup>50</sup>, simultaneously painted the same subject: that of *The Betrothal of the Virgin*.<sup>51</sup> The paintings reflect the transformation in the perception of Joseph from the meek and deferential man as described in Apocryphal texts, the Scriptures and represented in many previous depictions to that of the bold, charismatic, commanding father figure.

In each painting Joseph is presented as a noble and righteous man by way of his attire, his comportment and the prosperous appearance of his fellow suitors. The scene, though not an event recorded in the Scriptures, has great significance as it celebrates one of the sacraments of the Church, that of marriage. Not unlike all

other Betrothal representations such as those by Bernardo Daddi painted in the 1330s and Gregorio di Lucca from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Perugino's and Raphael's paintings define the moment at which the Virgin is officially betrothed to Joseph before a number of identifiable witnesses: the presiding priest, the temple virgins with whom the Virgin has been raised and the disappointed suitors.<sup>52</sup> More importantly and indicative of Joseph's rise in status, the specificity of the setting in Perugino's and Raphael's paintings alludes to the trappings of nobility and power.

It is understood that Perugino's interpretation of the *Betrothal of the Virgin* was commissioned by the officials of the Duomo in Perugia, specifically for the Altar of the Sacrament which housed the Virgin's wedding ring.<sup>53</sup> Raphael's painting was commissioned by the wealthy Scr Filippo di Ludovico Albizzini, a notary and wool merchant, for the Chapel of St Joseph in the church of San Francesco of the Friars Minor at Città di Castello in Umbria, thus explaining Raphael's emphasis on Joseph.<sup>54</sup> By utilising classical architectural designs both artists refer back to the Golden Age of Greek antiquity and to the power and glory of ancient Rome so loved by the Florentine Neo-Platonists and humanist scholars; thereby making the paintings enlightened, contemporary and aspiratory.<sup>55</sup>

Perugino, having been born in 1446 in Perugia, according to Vasari went to Florence to study his craft at the studio of Andrea Verrocchio.<sup>56</sup> In its stiff grouping across the bottom of the painting Perugino's *Betrothal of the Virgin* bears similarities to Betrothal paintings from the first half of fifteenth century Florence. Similarly Joseph is an older more established conception of the man, as

seen in the earlier Renaissance examples of the Betrothal. In Perugino's painting Joseph has straggly, greying hair thinning at the crown and his bearing is far more diffident than Raphael's Joseph. However, Perugino's style with its keen awareness of linear perspective and Albertian notions of the 'perfect city', evident in the balance and harmony of the construction of the piazza and the temple building, indicates a familiarity and grasp of early and high Renaissance styles. In comparison, though Raphael initially studied under Perugino in Perugia, his approach is different. Raphael was born nearly forty years after Perugino in 1483 in the city of Urbino, a sophisticated place of great cultural activity attracting artists from the Netherlands and Spain as well as the Italian masters from Florence and the Veneto.<sup>57</sup> Subsequently there is an urbane and sophisticated quality to Raphael's painting style even at this early stage in his career that is not so evident in Perugino's work. Raphael represents Joseph as a young dignified man wearing classical style garments. Over his arm he catches up a long sweep of his gold robe. The gesture calls to the viewer's attention Joseph's noble and patrilineal descent through King David.

Perugino and Raphael present the Betrothal scene in a grandiose position. It is large open vista, an ideal location for the ceremony. The betrothal enacted appears to conform to strict Roman Law with the presence of the temple priest, witnesses and the ring being placed on the ring finger of the bride's right hand.<sup>58</sup> The building representing the temple is placed within a substantial and imposing piazza elaborately and meticulously tiled in a strict geometric configuration.<sup>59</sup> Vasari wrote of the painting of the temple that 'it was drawn in perspective with such loving care, that it is a marvellous thing to see ...'<sup>60</sup> The betrothed couple in

the two paintings are placed beyond the immediate environs of the temple that in both paintings can be understood as representing the church of the Old Testament: thus the marriage ceremony occurs outside the strictures of Judaism. Joseph's and Mary's presence in the open arena of the piazza is clearly symbolic of the establishment and authority of God's new Church on earth. Reference to antique architecture is utilised by both artists, and is consistent with Humanist and Neo-platonic studies current in Northern Italy, as well as alluding to the old religion. The influence of Brunelleschi, a Florentine architect and sculptor who achieved renown for having succeeded in designing and overseeing the construction of the great dome of Duomo in Florence between 1420 and 1436; and the influence of Romanesque architecture must have been an ongoing inspiration for Perugino when he was studying art in the city of Florence. The Baptistery in Florence, long assumed to be Roman in origin, was a determiner of style. Brunelleschi had studied antique architecture in Rome. He had studied the piazza and the Baptistery in his experiments in three dimensional perspective,<sup>61</sup> and being conversant with the Temple of Minerva Medica he had based the octagonal Santa Maria degli Angeli, built by in Florence in 1434, upon it.<sup>62</sup> The rounded arch ways and windows of the temples in the two Betrothal paintings are characteristic of Romanesque style seen on many of the great buildings around northern Italy at the time. Perugino would have been conversant with that of the Duomo in Perugia where he was born. It has a number of Romanesque features such as round doors and arches typical of the style. It was built between 1345 and completed in 1490. Other similar buildings, ones designed by Brunelleschi and built between 1418 and 1436 in Florence include the Old Sacristy in the church of San Lorenzo, the Pazzi Chapel in Santa Croce and the Ospedale degli Innocenti in

the piazza Santissima Annunziata just around the corner from the Convent of San Marco. The large ciborium from the Church of Santo Stefano in Rome dating from approximately 1150, with which Brunelleschi may have been acquainted and thereby influenced during his stay in Rome, and having a double order of colonettes is echoed in the design of the temple buildings in both Perugino's and Raphael's works.<sup>63</sup>

Nobility and heritage are prominent in Joseph's elevated status and his association with antiquity lent him gravity. The implication that the building in Perugino's and Raphael's *Betrothal of the Virgin* is symbolic of Solomon's temple described in the Old Testament in *First Kings* Chapter 5 raises Joseph's eminence by association.

Leon Battista Alberti describes the significance of a temple and its environs in great detail. In *De re aedificatoria* which he wrote in 1452, a work closely fashioned on Vitruvius's classic first-century treatise *De architectura*<sup>64</sup>, Alberti states that the majestic temple must be demonstrated to stand within a large open environment of a splendid piazza in the centre of an impressive city.<sup>65</sup> He goes on to say that the joy of the design and structure should lie in the pleasing conjunction of lines and angles, proportionality and apposite number.<sup>66</sup> Alberti perceived the scheme of classical antique cities as being the paradigm for fifteenth-century architecture and urban design indeed his designs are similar to the description of the perfect city in Plato's *Laws* in which the author portrays a highly regulated society.<sup>67</sup> Plato had described how the city was to be divided into areas according to profession, rank or nobility.<sup>68</sup> Alberti articulated the same



distinctions in *De re aedificatoria*.<sup>69</sup> Family was important to Alberti; therefore he wanted to create a commodious environment that would promote the wellbeing of the family whether of a merchant, banker, client or servant. In accordance with the criteria of both Plato and Alberti the most suitable location and perfect environment for the temple was in the middle of the city. There it would be a safe haven for families: for fathers, matrons and virgins and yet be capable through its position to maintain an air of reverence and majesty.<sup>70</sup> The paintings hold close to Platonic principles in that the design of a church should correspond to those temples of antiquity by being either circular or polygonal.<sup>71</sup> This emphasis on history and nobility - the allusions to the temple of Solomon - confer spiritual authority on Joseph.

Furthermore as an image of the New Jerusalem - St Augustine's vision of the *City of God* - the city in both paintings equates with redemption and salvation.<sup>72</sup> Here, in a flawless location the ritual of the Betrothal of the Virgin is enacted.<sup>73</sup> The Virgin 'as a bride adorned for her husband' signifies the instigation of the new church as an intrinsic component of the 'holy city'.<sup>74</sup> Mary's betrothal to Joseph, the touching of their two hands on receiving the ring, establishes the point at which Christ's incarnation and hence the prospect of man's redemption becomes a reality. The betrothal serves as a conduit to salvation with Joseph the mediator as guide. By placing the marriage party at some distance from the temple building both artists assert the non-confinable quality of their subject.

Even though there is equality in the placement of the two figures Perugino's Joseph is more reserved than in Raphael's representation. In Perugino's painting

it is the Virgin, indicating the imminent incarnation by resting her left hand on her already swollen abdomen, who dominates the scene. Joseph steps forward onto his left leg, while his right is so heavily bent only the tip of his big toe touches the ground. It is a delicate pose. In reality this stance would be awkward and unbalanced. He is unshod as are others in the painting. The painting is less constrained by strict balance than Raphael's. Neither does it strictly conform to Neo-Platonist notions of harmony and equilibrium; for example Perugino's six suitors correspond to only five virgins. Between Joseph and Mary the stiff form of the officiating priest stands preternaturally upright. Perugino's depiction acts as a record of the betrothal; as an indicator of Joseph's increasing stature it comes as an appropriate bridge between the old style acquiescent Joseph in betrothal scenes as exemplified by Taddeo Gaddi (pl. 71) and the aspiratory vision of Joseph as presented by Raphael.

Raphael's painting is altogether more spiritual and symbolic. It is a display of balanced perfection and poise; thereby accentuating the Neo-Platonic concept of harmony. Joseph's and Mary's comportment and positioning is congruent; here their equality is echoed in the symmetry of the building behind them. Physically everything in the picture, as in classical style, is complementary.

Raphael presents Joseph as a young, virile man; a man well able to father a child of his own. But Joseph's celibacy is confirmed by his otherworldly beauty and his almost angelic aspect as he places the ring on the Virgin's finger. He is confident and assured. There is no evidence of doubt. He stands with his left foot forward in a naturalistic posture so that he leans backwards slightly in a relaxed

manner with most of his weight being borne on his right foot. Thus his left leg is slightly bent at the knee. There is a regal quality in his bearing.<sup>75</sup> Yet the manner of his stance is also indicative of his intermediary role. With his left foot pointed directly at the viewer one is drawn into the ceremony through connection with Joseph. As spouse and intermediary his whole disposition is positive and self-assured; there is no sign of the contemplative hesitancy that permeated many earlier works of the same subject such as that by Giotto in the Arena Chapel. That only Joseph of all the company has bare feet is symbolic of his supreme humility and reverence. Furthermore Joseph is larger than any other figure present indicating the augmentation of his authority and standing; to stress the change in his status Raphael places Joseph on the priest's left implying that by marrying the Virgin and accepting the role of putative father of Christ he is therefore moving to the right hand of God.<sup>76</sup>

The science of numbers and harmony is important to the scheme for the reason that it relates to Joseph's increasing holiness and intermediary function; he is a vital part of the complex numerical system Raphael utilises. Through the use of mathematics and geometry there is balance and order throughout the painting. Five virgins are balanced by five suitors. Those present at the betrothal ceremony - including the priest, Mary and Joseph - total thirteen: a number correlating with that of the twelve Apostles and Christ. Neither are the number of columns, sides, arches and windows visible in the depiction of the Temple arbitrary. The twelve columns additionally signify the twelve apostles.<sup>77</sup> Moreover the number seven features prominently. It is a significant number for it accords with the number of days in which God created the heaven and the earth allowing for the Sabbath.<sup>78</sup> It

is the figure referred to on several occasions in *Revelation*. St John addresses seven churches in Asia,<sup>79</sup> and writes of seven stars and seven candlesticks.<sup>80</sup> Seven also computes with the number of notes in a diatonic scale.<sup>81</sup> Seven relates to the number of known celestial bodies in the planetary system when Raphael was executing the painting.<sup>82</sup> In terms of the picture there are seven visible sides of the temple, seven visible windows in the drum; and furthermore seven is the number of figures in the middle distance within the temple piazza.

The heightened sense of equilibrium is consistent with the re-emerging interest in numerology,<sup>83</sup> *Cabala*<sup>84</sup> and *Gematria*<sup>85</sup> as well as referencing Joachite traditions.<sup>86</sup> The Neo-Platonists were fascinated with numerical values. They believed everything could be sufficiently explained through the utilisation of numbers.<sup>87</sup> Raphael's painting epitomises this fascination. The writings of Marsilio Ficino, the humanist scholar and Neo-Platonist and the friend of Cosimo de' Medici influenced philosophers and artists alike including Raphael.<sup>88</sup> Ficino, having written on the immortality of the soul, spoke of the visual arts reminding the soul of its divine origins. In 1473 Ficino wrote of the dignity of man and the divinity of man's soul in his work entitled *De religione christiana*.<sup>89</sup> Other Neo-Platonists held similar views. In *De hominis dignitate*<sup>90</sup> Pico della Mirandola asserts that man had the ability to expand his mind and think higher thoughts in terms of Protagoras's epigram that 'of all things the measure is man...'<sup>91</sup>

The artistic and humanistic reappraisal of Joseph the new empowered interpretation can be detected in the increasing number of images of Joseph as the dignified, bold, hardworking man; a figure at times similar in appearance to St

Peter the skilled, brave fisherman and salt of the earth.<sup>92</sup> The conflation evolved into the archetype and exemplar. He became the measure of man. St Joseph and St Peter in conjunction were to represent Christ's Church; a line of reasoning that is to be further examined in the next chapter.

Raphael's *Betrothal of the Virgin* embodies the divinity of which Ficino wrote: 'man is made in the image of God and that through loving him man will become one with God and in turn God will become one with man.'<sup>93</sup> God's will, the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, is endorsed. This two-way process, this equal covenant Raphael repeatedly presents to the viewer in the betrothal scene. Balance, equanimity and concord are the central themes exemplified in the harmonious pairing of Joseph with Mary; and Joseph's pose places him as intermediary between man and God.

#### **8) *Adoration of the Shepherds* by Cima da Conegliano**

Cima da Conegliano places the monumental figure of St Joseph emphatically in the centre of his painting of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl.130) dated to approximately 1504.<sup>94</sup> The infant Christ looking as if dead, alluding to his eventual sacrifice and resurrection, is as white as alabaster. He lies asleep in a wicker manger at Joseph's feet. The young, almost child-like Virgin kneels in awe and adoration on the opposite side of the manger in the entrance to the grotto; behind her, holding the hand of Tobias, is the archangel Raphael. Unlike the other figures in the painting Joseph's pose alone is as intermediary. With his right hand cupped around the back of head of the shepherd who is kneeling on one knee with his arms crossed over his chest as he gazes down in wonder at the

tiny child, Joseph invites him to look at the baby. With his left hand Joseph gesticulates towards the infant. Another curly-haired shepherd peers round Joseph's right arm. Behind the shepherds stand St Catherine of Alexandria with her martyrs palm and her wheel, and to her left is St Helena carrying the True Cross. This painting with its strong centrally placed image of St Joseph was an altarpiece in Santa Maria dei Carmini in Venice, a Carmelite church which had deep devotion for the Holy House of Nazareth and hence for St Joseph.<sup>95</sup>

#### **9) *The Holy Family with a Shepherd* by Titian**

Titian's painting stresses the cohesion between Joseph, Mary and Jesus through the composition of the picture (pl. 131). Executed in 1510 Joseph is the central figure in the composition, flanked by the Virgin and Child on one side of him and the young adoring shepherd boy on the other.<sup>96</sup> Joseph's head is at the apex of the triangle formed by the figures. Depicted as an elderly man with grey hair and full beard, Joseph is large and imposing, and acts as both shield and intercessor between Mary and Jesus and the youth. Though Joseph sits beside Mary who holds Christ on her lap, he turns away from them to look down on the kneeling boy. With his right hand slipped under the left leg of the infant he both presents the child to the boy while at the same time indicating custody of and fatherly affection for Jesus. He is the intermediary; and the shepherd boy, with all the allusions of childlike innocence, represents Christ's following.<sup>97</sup>

#### **10) *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* by Correggio**

Joseph the *Nutritor Domini* evermore frequently was depicted as the physical link between the spiritual and the temporal worlds, as for example in Correggio's the

*Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (pl. 132) painted during the 1520s for the Confraternity of St Joseph in Parma.<sup>98</sup> In this painting Joseph, Mary and Jesus create a strong diagonal across the whole of the frame of the picture, stretching from the bottom left hand corner to the springing line of the arch on the upper right. On the left the smiling Virgin, in demonstration of her humility is seated on the ground. The Christ Child rests in her lap facing his mother. However he turns from her to look out of the picture and to engage the attention of the beholder. Meanwhile he reaches up his right hand to take that of Joseph's. Thus Joseph, portrayed as a muscular, virile and animated man, stands full frontal taking up almost half of the picture. He stretches up his left hand to pull down the palm branch - indicative of martyrdom - thereby providing them with fruit to eat. Playful angels hover above to assist him in his duty; Joseph's dominion over them being indicative of his increasing authority. In this pose it is as if Joseph touches both earth and heaven.

### **Summary**

In the latter part of the fifteenth century Joseph's increasing holiness and his parity with the Virgin impacted on artists' interpretation of him, as observed in Luca della Robbia's *Nativity with Gloria in Excelsis* where both Mary and Joseph kneel in prayer with the same degree of passion before the infant Christ. Furthermore fears of an Apocalypse presaged by the imminent half-millennium resulted in Joseph acquiring an extra role: one of intermediary. In the 1470s Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* presented Joseph as the kindly paternal figure placed between the assembled worshippers - of whom it is suggested by Vasari were members of Cosimo de' Medici's family - and the glory of God. As the end

of the century approached the atmosphere of trepidation was heightened by the vehement sermons of Savonarola on the subject of Judgement Day. He criticised the sensational manner in which Joseph, Mary, Jesus and many saints were often portrayed, believing that any beauty they should demonstrate was due solely to the presence of God. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo's Joseph is correspondingly attired in subdued clothes and David's constrained Joseph is shown in an intercessory position, about to place himself between the Magi and the infant Christ.

By the turn of the century Raphael and Perugino expressed Joseph's growing spirituality and magnitude through location of setting and Joseph's prominent position within that setting. Meanwhile Joseph's centrality within the Church as the earthly father was being accentuated. Artists like Cima da Conegliano unequivocally emphasised the extent of Joseph's intermediary role as father; where in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* Cima placed Joseph in the middle of the painting. He is a monumental, authoritative and pivotal figure who with a deft touch of his hand guides the young shepherd, representative of Christ's Church on earth, towards the infant.



## Chapter VIII

### Touched by God: St Joseph's 'divinity'

Raphael's 1504 painting of the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 5) is typical of the new image of St Joseph. It is the representation of someone who is more than a mere man. By demonstrating that Joseph has such grace and beauty it implies that he has been touched by God. Analogous to Raphael's *Betrothal of the Virgin*, is his painting of the *Holy Family below the oak*<sup>1</sup> (pl. 133) executed in 1518.<sup>2</sup> It describes the change in Joseph's appearance and his *raison d'être*, signifying his transformation from adjunct into indispensable part of Christ's incarnation. Joseph is shown as an idealised, beautiful man. He appears to be in early middle age, has a high forehead and thick curls of greying hair. He leans forward, resting his elbows on the fallen remains of an ancient classical stone capital. His expression is pensive; he twists at his moustache as he watches Mary with the two young children: Jesus and John the Baptist. The painting is not an interpretation of a specific event from any of the traditional sources; it makes no recourse to any of the Apocryphal texts. The painting describes no specific occasion. It is a statement; the manifestation of divinity through perfection.

The scene presents the Holy Family as a divine icon. With the addition of John the Baptist the combination of the four figures signifies the end of the old regime; the religion of the Old Testament is signalled by the inclusion of the broken antique column. The beginning of Christ's new Church is implied by the playful children watched over by Mary and Joseph. The infant John the Baptist, the first prophet of the new religion holds a scroll across his lap; the Christ Child turning

to his mother and Joseph points to the words inscribed on it, beseeching them: *Ecce Agnus Dei*: Behold the Lamb of God. Raphael presents the viewer with a painting that is a proclamation of faith and divinity.

Perfection as the indication of divinity is implied through symmetry, union and harmony in the painting; through the demeanour of the figures and through the careful geometric construction of the composition. A diagonal which springs from the crown of Joseph's head in the top left corner terminates significantly at John the Baptist's head in the bottom right corner. Jesus, seated on his mother's lap and positioned between her and John the Baptist, is set lower than John and is positioned at the golden section; therefore he is physically as well as spiritually the focal point of the picture.

Their cohesion is accentuated through the direction of their gazes, which move from one to the other. In addition each figure touches the next in an unbroken line. Joseph's right arm touches the Virgin's left arm. She encircles Jesus's waist with her right hand and Jesus touches John's left arm with his right hand. Their interrelationship is unequivocal.

*The Holy Family with St John* (pl. 134)<sup>3</sup> by Raphael and thought to have been executed in 1511, but believed to have been finished after Raphael's death probably by Giulio Romano or Gianfrancesco Penni, is extraordinary in its massive figure of St Joseph.<sup>4</sup> His standing form surrounds the seated Virgin with the Christ child on her lap, at the same time he leans forwards to clasp St John by

the forearm in order to help him up from the child's obeisant position before Christ. Joseph's encircling pose underlines his authority as well as his sanctity. Joseph's advancement is demonstrated in the evermore frequent examples, with artists representing Joseph as a beautiful and distinctive looking man. His beauty would have been perceived and accepted as a signification of 'divinity'. Many scholars and theologians had made the same connection between divinity and beauty prior to Raphael's portrayals of St Joseph; the theologian William of Auxerre writing as early thirteenth century had stated that 'the goodness of a substance, and its beauty, are the same thing'.<sup>5</sup> In his short work investigating the aesthetics of the Middle Ages Umberto Eco concurs with this statement when he writes that the medieval mind perceived 'of a beauty that was purely intelligible, the beauty of moral harmony and of metaphysical splendour'.<sup>6</sup>

In the middle of the fifteenth century beauty was uppermost in the minds of the humanist Neo-Platonists: the beauty of a well written phrase, the beauty of an idea, the beauty of proportion and the beauty of equilibrium. The Florentine Neo-Platonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino wrote that 'the body is the shadow of the soul' and that its beauty 'shows us the harmony and splendour of justice'.<sup>7</sup> With other like-minded scholars Ficino had sought out the beauty and proportion in the philosophical ideas of the ancient Greek and Latin scholars; in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Ovid, Cicero, Virgil and Plotinus amongst others so as to make sense of the world around them. Ancient texts were perceived to be the epitome of beauty; and studying them was considered to be the path to truth and enlightenment. And enlightenment would result in spiritual concord.<sup>8</sup>

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, the late fifteenth century scholar and philosopher, went further in his pursuit of harmony. In 1486 being desirous of finding a divine world, an intellectual environment in which peace and accord co-existed, he presented his treatise *De hominis dignitate - On the Dignity of Man* - as an introduction to his 900 theses which he hoped to give to the Vatican and the incumbent Pope. Like Ficino he wished to find a general truth, prove the existence of a world soul through drawing together the classics of Aristotle and Plato with the natural sciences, Christianity, Judaism and Hermeticism into a form of humanist syncretism.<sup>9</sup> Pico promoted the *Cabala*, a system of mystical Jewish doctrine originating with Moses, believing that understanding the Hebrew texts would lead him to a deeper understanding of Christianity.<sup>10</sup> A painting such as Raphael's *Holy Family below an oak* epitomised Neo-Platonic expression; the broken stone capital that exhibited classical ornamentation and beauty, and the sun setting behind the ruined building on the rise represented erstwhile theology and philosophies; while the exuberance of the children and the vitality of the Virgin under the luxuriant olive tree was emblematic of the new order, the New Church. The ever thoughtful Joseph watching over them was the divinely blessed father and guardian.

Accordingly Joseph's holiness came to be observed in a number of guises: through the filter of religious mystery, through numeration, through the *Cabala*, through harmony and through the philosophical association between truth and beauty. Ficino was of the opinion that:

The beauty of the body lies not in the shadow of matter, but in the light and grace of form; not in dark mass, but in clear proportion; not in sluggish and senseless weight, but in harmonious number and measure.<sup>11</sup>

And there grew an additional association, that between the tender fatherly image of St Joseph and the powerful image of St Peter the rock on which Christ built his Church.<sup>12</sup> All of these aspects of the perception of St Joseph will be examined.

### **1) Joseph's 'divinity' as represented by number**

Raphael's representation of Joseph in the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (pl. 5), set against the depiction of the perfect city, is an allegorical expression of divinity. The painting signifies Joseph as the exalted instrument of God through physical appurtenances - apparent opposites, those of abnormality and beauty. Joseph is shown to have a deformed foot (pl. 135). According to an article in the *British Medical Journal* of December 2000 written by Daniel, Francis and Marc Mimouni, Joseph suffers from the affliction known nowadays as *postaxial polydactyly*, a condition in which the sufferer has a complete or partial sixth digit, in this case the development of an extra toe.<sup>13</sup> The doctors, who identified that Raphael's St Joseph exhibits this particular medical condition remark that it is unusual.<sup>14</sup> However they indicate that this is not the only time Raphael portrays a figure with such a deformity; the infant John the Baptist displays the same affliction in *La Belle Jardinière*. In the *British Medical Journal USA* of May 2001 Alfio Cantini of the Department of Neurology at the City Hospital Prato, Italy confirms their findings and that the painting of the *Virgin and Child* in the Raphael House at Urbino shows the child to have six toes and the figure of the Pope in *La Madonna Sistina* has six fingers on his right hand and that this may be significant as he acts as intermediary between the viewer and the Virgin and child, gesticulating with his deformed hand. Cantini goes on to quote from Max Heindel's book *Ancient and Modern Initiation* that 'by the six fingers in the

Pope's picture and the six toes of Joseph, Raphael wants to show us that both possessed a sixth sense such as awakened by Initiation.'<sup>15</sup> In the same issue of the *British Medical Journal* J M Fernandez-Menendez and C Perez-Mendez of the Hospital de Cabuenes in Gijón in Spain also report similar instances in Raphael's work. It has been posited that the inclusion of the flaw is possibly due to Raphael using a deformed model. However it is highly improbable that an artist of Raphael's calibre would forget to expunge the abnormality from his final work if it were of no relevance.<sup>16</sup> Equally if the model did not suffer from this infirmity then its inclusion unquestionably is deliberate. The deformity appears to be intended to add mystery and emphasis to the paintings in which the device is used.

Therefore Joseph's sixth toe denotes him as being special and astounding. It accords with the miraculous flowering of his rod being an act of revelation by God rather than it being a manifestation of choice or simply the case that the pluck branch had burst into flower. Raphael draws attention to the temporality and the intrinsic humanness of Joseph through the use of a physical anomaly; yet at the same time uses the same physical imperfection to attract attention to Joseph's divinity through the phenomenon of number.

Raphael's allusion to numerology within the painting, as observed and commented upon in the previous chapter, underlines the existing contention amongst Neo-Platonist philosophers that Neo-Platonism and Christianity were syncretistic.

Numerology had an extensive history and profile in Christian theology during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the world of mathematical philosophy the Pythagorean notion of mathematical magic was considered superior to natural magic, specifically the manipulation of number and value.<sup>17</sup> To Giovanni Ippoliti the Count of Gazzoldo, Ficino wrote that when the mind is freed from desires it should be furnished with the knowledge of mathematics and that this includes the science of numbers, figures and forms.<sup>18</sup> Both Pico and Ficino - who wrote of God tempering both the individual and the universal with 'the numbers of music and the measures of poetry'<sup>19</sup> - stressed the significance of *Gematria* in particular.<sup>20</sup> *Gematria* is the study of the Hebraic language in terms of number; in effect a numerical value is allotted to each letter thereby illuminating interrelationships between ideas and concepts.<sup>21</sup> In a Christian context the importance and implication of the science of numbers had been registered hundreds of years previously by St Augustine when he referred to the study and interpretation of numbers in his great work the *City of God*.<sup>22</sup> In terms of the *Betrothal of the Virgin Joseph*'s six toes can be directly related to Book XI Chapter 30 of *City of God* entitled *The Perfection of the Number Six*. St Augustine was passionate in his support of the number six. He wrote that six is perfect because it is the first number to be the sum of its parts; and as confirmation of its great significance he reminded his reader that God completed his works of Creation in six days.<sup>23</sup> By depicting Joseph with six toes Raphael imbued him with a singular and extraordinary prominence. The flaw becomes the sign that he has been touched by the divine. Joseph is revealed as both great and remarkable; and this is confirmed by his youth and beauty.

## **2) Joseph's 'divinity' as demonstrated through beauty**

Joseph's 'divinity' as demonstrated through beauty is indicated in one of two ways; firstly through the beauty and spirituality of image and location as exemplified as in the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt with Saints John the Baptist and Lucy* (pl. 136) dated to the last decade of the fifteenth century painted by Cima da Conegliano. It is yet another example of Joseph's 'divinity' being demonstrated through the beauty and spirituality of the image.<sup>24</sup> Cima paints an exquisite location - a beautiful, crystal clear landscape with distant idyllic blue mountains reminiscent of heaven. One of the mountains is capped with a crenellated building; and a small city, probably Conegliano with its towers and churches, nestles in a valley bathed by the soft, golden rays of the sun. The sapling with its intricate display of the leaves, emerging as it were from the conjunction of the Virgin and Christ and the elderly Joseph symbolises Christ's new Church. Joseph stands beside the Virgin. On a throne-like rock the Virgin sits with the naked infant Jesus seated on her lap. Joseph watches intently the actions of the child as he proffers his left hand to an angel whilst making the sign of the blessing with his right. In reverence the 'divine' Joseph leans forward onto the rocky outcropping as if leaning on a prayer desk. Thus being at the apex of the triangle formed by himself, the angel and the infant Jesus it is as if Joseph is representing God the Father through his careful attention and his location in the picture.

Fra Bartolomeo's picture of the *Holy Family with St John the Baptist* (pl. 137) painted sometime between 1500 and 1507 presents the viewer with the 'divine' Joseph.<sup>25</sup> The scene in the foreground of the painting is that of a ruined antique



building. There is evidence of a Romanesque arch and column with capital. The figures of Joseph, Mary, the baby Jesus, and the young St John the Baptist are arranged within the building's crumbling confines; the landscape behind them is beautiful and haunting. Beyond the Virgin lies a silvery city that borders a still, white lake. A meandering river flows down to the lake. Distant hills appear white as if covered with snow. Behind Joseph there is a green hill on which grow some delicate tracery-like trees and lush dark bushes. The loving parents sit on either side of the naked infant Christ who extends his arms towards his cousin St John the Baptist who equally naked, stands with his arms crossed over his chest. Joseph, seated in profile with his rod resting against his left shoulder, raises his right hand in a graceful gesture of blessing, indicative of his 'divinity', as he looks down on the infant Christ seated on the ground and propped up by the use of a white bolster. The child's position is such that he sits on a commingling of both his parents' robes. This simple arrangement is redolent in meaning. It indicates the importance of both parents in the child's immediate care and welfare; but also in terms of God's plan for humanity.

Secondly, as in Raphael's painting of the *Betrothal of the Virgin*, Joseph's 'divinity' is explored through the manner of his bearing. He came to be presented as an elegant, poised and noble figure. In terms of the perception of Joseph's role the painting in effect set the tone for images yet to come. Within Raphael's picture the ideals of beauty and truth coalesce. Two of Raphael's acquaintances Baldessare Castiglione and Cardinal Pietro Bembo observed that divinity, beauty, goodness and truth were interrelated. In his widely read discourse *Il Libro del Cortegiano* of 1528 Castiglione quoted his friend Cardinal Pietro Bembo in

saying that 'the kind of beauty seen in the human body and especially the face ...prompts ardent desire'.<sup>26</sup> More specifically the Cardinal had said that beauty was a 'sacred thing' that it 'springs from God and is like a circle, the centre of which is goodness.'<sup>27</sup>

Cardinal Bembo and Baldessare Castiglione were not being original in making these statements; the notion of beauty emanating from truth and God's goodness had many precedents. St Augustine had written of there being unmistakable evidence of God's goodness in the very design of the human body.<sup>28</sup> Of wisdom St Bernard of Clairvaux writing in the twelfth century said that 'the beauty of an angel and the beauty of a soul are the same. Either is a rough, shapeless mass without that wisdom. But with it, there is not only shapeliness but beauty.'<sup>29</sup> Likewise in the late fifteenth century Savonarola drew the same association between beauty and the closeness of God when he wrote that 'creatures are beautiful in proportion to their participation in the nearness and beauty of God.'<sup>30</sup>

Of a similar opinion was the disclalced Carmelite friar Jerónimo Gracián. He had been inspired by St Teresa of Avilà's devotion for St Joseph. She had written that she regarded Joseph as her 'lord and advocate' and spoke of him as her father, saying '... greater troubles involving my honour and the salvation of my soul, ... my lord and father delivered me'.<sup>31</sup> Gracián wrote his *Summary of the Excellencies of St Joseph* in 1597 in which he stated that Joseph's good looks were due to his patrician descent through King David, that there was a correlation between truth and beauty and that a handsome face was indicative of a pure soul.<sup>32</sup> Gracián reflected that as Jesus through God had chosen Joseph as his

father, then he should obey, respect and revere Joseph as befits a son and that consequently it was appropriate that Joseph should command, rule and govern Jesus as befitted a father.<sup>33</sup>

In artistic representation Joseph's physical beauty came to be equated with his holiness and his closeness to God. To facilitate these sentiments the viewer's emotions had to be aroused. As a result beauty and truth are juxtaposed in Agnolo Bronzino's highly stylised and almost tactile representation of the *Panciatichi Holy Family* (pl. 138) painted in 1540.<sup>34</sup> The beauty is in the palpable quality of the figures. They have believable volume and physical attractive qualities such as convincing tangible flesh, full rounded limbs and voluptuous features. The skin of the two infants is full, plump and rosy; qualities that are echoed in the beauty of the Virgin's neck. Joseph's face is weather beaten, but even so his rounded cheeks display a healthy glow. It is a highly affecting and symbolic work denoting the beauty and yet the fragility of life exemplified in the vulnerability of the sleeping Jesus. Joseph is shown as a handsome, young man with brown hair. The Virgin leans into him emphasising their intimacy and their ease with one another as they both watch over the infants. The cherubic St John the Baptist cradles the sleeping infant Christ in his arms. The truth of Christ's inevitable sacrifice is evidenced in Joseph's hands clasped together as if in prayer half hidden behind the Virgin's shoulder; and the thin swaddling bands, reminiscent of the swathes of a winding sheet, bind the infant Christ.

Careful positioning of the figures allows for Joseph's body to come in conjunction with everyone in the painting, instilling the beautiful composition

with deeper exquisiteness through its circular and harmonious progression from one person to the next; each individual being linked to the other. The divinity of all four figures is emphasised through the congruent beauty of their physical connection. However there is drama and pathos here in the stylised background of a stormy sky and steep, dark cliffs. They allude to the truth of Christ's death and his deposition from the cross at Calvary. Suggestive of their anticipated salvation the patrons' (the Panciatichi) coat of arms is displayed on a pennant that flies from the flagstaff situated on top of the castellated building upon the cliffs.<sup>35</sup>

Likewise El Greco presents an exquisite Joseph striking a formidable pose in his 1570 painting of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 139).<sup>36</sup> Joseph is shown as an elderly man. But his upright posture, positioned immediately behind the Virgin, gives him the impression of power and protection. Joseph holds his arms wide as he shows the infant to the Shepherds. His gesture is welcoming; yet also it serves as a benediction. Equally his stance signifies the pose of Christ on the cross thereby indicating Joseph's mystical prescience. El Greco uses chiaroscuro to enhance the quality of divine mystery. As in a St Bridget vision light radiates from the infant lying on the ground; it catches the curls of Joseph's silver beard and hair like a halo.

### **3) Joseph's 'divinity' as disclosed through visual conflation with images of St Peter**

The conflation of saints Joseph and Peter can be attributed to their roles as the foundation and continuance of the Church. The earliest recorded image of St Joseph according to Filas is in the necropolis in the cemetery of Priscilla in the

Via Salaria Nova in Rome.<sup>37</sup> The catacombs can be directly associated with St Peter. Its name - Priscilla - refers to the mother of Senator Pudens in whose house St Peter reputedly took refuge; and within these catacombs Peter allegedly performed baptisms in the underground reservoir.<sup>38</sup> Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven in recognition of his role as the rock on which the Church of Christ was to be built. Peter was assigned the function of the physical root, the bedrock and supporter - that is the foundation and the backbone - of the Church.<sup>39</sup>

Images of St Joseph and St Peter resembling one another can be discerned in the Arena Chapel frescoes by Giotto dating from the early fourteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The contemplative image of St Joseph in the *Nativity* (pl. 59) and the image of St Peter in the *Washing of the feet* (pl. 140)<sup>41</sup> are strikingly alike even to their age, hair styles and the colours of their clothes: both wear gold robes over a blue undergarments. Similarly Duccio's images of St Peter in *Peter denying Christ* (pl. 141) and St Joseph in the *Presentation in the Temple* (pl. 67) from the Maestà Altarpiece in Siena exhibit resemblances in their mode of dress, hairstyle and age.<sup>42</sup>

From the end of the fifteenth century it became common practice to represent Joseph in one of two distinct interpretations, as an old man akin to conventional images of St Peter, or as a young, beautiful man with luxuriant brown hair. In Bartolomeo Vivarini's 1474 altarpiece known as *St Mark Enthroned with Saints John the Baptist, Jerome, Nicholas and Peter* (pl. 142) painted for the Franciscan church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice, the dynamic, elderly St Peter is engrossed in his book.<sup>43</sup> He steps forward leaning his weight onto his right foot

so that the folds of his robes pull against the outline of his powerfully built thigh and calf muscles. He strikingly resembles images of the forceful, yet elderly St Joseph as in Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo* (pl. 104).<sup>44</sup>

Jacopo Bassano's Joseph in the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 143) of 1545 exudes both vigour and dedication.<sup>45</sup> It demonstrates Joseph's divinity through the inclusion of an angel as his guide. The painting so excited Cardinal Federico Borromeo that he became determined to have the work, finally acquiring it in 1612.<sup>46</sup> The lively painting presents the beholder with the St Joseph/St Peter conflation. The picture shows Joseph as a hearty, old man with grey hair and beard walking along in a purposeful manner. He leads the donkey on which sits the Virgin with her highly mobile infant son in her arms. Joseph wears his customary tunic over which is draped a large gold coloured mantle; and symbolic of Joseph's power and energy it has been caught by the wind and billows out behind him as he resolutely strides forwards. His physicality and his manner of dress resembles those in traditional images of St Peter as observed in Masaccio's fresco of the *Tribute Money* in the Brancacci Chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence (pl. 144) dating from 1427.<sup>47</sup>

Veronese's 1562 painting of the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints* (pl. 145) portrays a strong looking St Joseph.<sup>48</sup> Standing physically above the other saints he is positioned at the Virgin's left shoulder; his right arm supports her left hand thus taking some of the weight of the child she carries in her arms. His position exaggerates his power and authority. He bends down towards her. In his right hand he bears his staff, symbol of his position. His evident strength and self-

assuredness, like that exhibited in Masaccio's fresco of *St Peter healing the sick with his shadow* (pl. 146)<sup>49</sup> in the Brancacci Chapel, is complemented by his wise countenance and the paternal nature of his pose.<sup>50</sup>

Tintoretto's 1579 painting of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 147) makes plain the conflation and elision of the images of St Joseph and St Peter, as shown more clearly in a detail from the aforementioned painting (pl. 148).<sup>51</sup> To the same degree as in Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Chapel, Padua, Masaccio's frescoes in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence and the Veronese painting, Joseph and Peter resemble one another not just physically but also in the colour and manner of their clothing. Comparing this work with another by Tintoretto, that of St Peter in *The Last Supper* (pl. 149) the likeness is remarkable and their devoted, caring and concerned expressions are identical.<sup>52</sup>

Caravaggio's St Peter in his 1601 painting of the *Martyrdom of St Peter* (pl. 150),<sup>53</sup> is strongly reminiscent of the image of St Joseph in Bassano's 1545 depiction of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 151).<sup>54</sup> In the Bassano painting Joseph is presented as a mature, balding yet substantial man with grey hair and a grey beard. He is shown in profile standing behind the Virgin. His arms are crossed as he leans his weight on the broken remnant of a stone column. Notably like St Peter he has a balding pate, his face is weather beaten and he displays a similar musculature particularly observable in the shoulders and upper arms. Both the artists represent saints Joseph and Peter as powerful and uncompromising men.

Combining the features of Saints Joseph and Peter developed still further until by the middle of the seventeenth century the French artist Georges de la Tour produced the painting *St Joseph the Carpenter* (pl. 152) in which the two saints are almost indistinguishable.<sup>55</sup> Joseph, shown as the humble artisan, is comparable to the accepted image of the elderly yet vigorous, St Peter, that of the almost bald-headed, white-haired, bearded man of a redoubtable countenance. Representative of the hardworking 'salt of the earth' type of man as described by Jesus in the *Beatitudes*<sup>56</sup> Joseph is depicted bending forwards in order to perform a carpentry task in his workshop. De la Tour has endowed Joseph with evident potency and dynamism. The muscles of his arms fill as he twists a large awl into a solid beam of wood. Joseph easily steadies the huge plank with his left foot. The young Jesus watches him. The inclusion of a bulky piece of wood similar to a crossbeam is a credible allusion to the cross of Christ's crucifixion. The image of Joseph working with large tools and materials carries the added implication of Joseph the Church builder. In this painting Joseph and Peter meld into one; Joseph the carpenter builds and sustains the Church while Peter the 'fisher of men' gathers together the disparate shoal. While St Peter builds the Church through evangelisation and the Virgin personifies Mother Church, it is Joseph the Father who supports, maintains and defends the Church day by day.

The distinction between the two roles - Joseph and Peter - rests on semantics. It was God who had revealed Joseph as being the ultimate protector of Mary and subsequently Jesus and therefore, through direct association with the Virgin, the spiritual basis of God's Church; whereas Christ chose Peter and pronounced him to be the rock on which he would build his Church. In terms of their position in



the Church Joseph and Peter superficially appear to fulfil the same function, but the difference between their two roles though subtle is real. Joseph is the constant, through his attribution of a rod or staff; and with its physical similarities to a bishops' crosier he may even be considered to be the first bishop of the Church.<sup>57</sup>

#### **4) Joseph as a cult figure**

Raphael's 1518 painting of the *Holy Family* (pl. 153) stresses Joseph's divinity and his cult reputation through the simple yet telling device of a sharply defined halo.<sup>58</sup> Only Joseph, Jesus and the Virgin have halos. Wearing a blue robe and gold mantle the thoughtful Joseph with his hand to his cheek, stands to one side, slightly behind the little group comprising of the Virgin, the baby Jesus, St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist. Joseph is a beautiful, calm figure as he watches over the children's activities.

Joseph's cult standing continued to develop with the encouragement of his growing number of advocates not least by Isodoro Isolano when in 1522 he published his treatise *Summa de donis Sancti Joseph*.<sup>59</sup> It was the first of its kind to be devoted exclusively to St Joseph and certainly seems to account for the increasing quantity of new confraternities named after him. Isolano was in agreement with Jean Gerson, when he stated that Joseph was sanctified in the womb.<sup>60</sup> He maintained in his treatise that 'God had chosen St Joseph as head and special patron of the Church Militant.'<sup>61</sup> Furthermore Isolano correctly prophesied the surge in the establishment of 'monasteries, churches and altars in his honour.'<sup>62</sup>

At the same time the Council of Trent was making pronouncements on the position to be taken concerning the Communion of Saints. In the twenty second session of the Council of Trent the mass was discussed and in chapter twenty four on *Masses in Honour of Saints* it was specified that sacrifice was not to be offered to the saints but to God 'alone who crowned them'.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore in the twenty fifth session *On the Invocation, Veneration, and the Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images* it was deemed that clerics should teach that the saints who 'reign with Christ' offer their prayers to God on the behalf of men; and added that images of Christ and saints 'because the honour shown them is referred to the prototypes which they represent' it was acceptable to venerate and worship before these images.<sup>64</sup> Despite these pronouncements the Council of Trent was silent in regards to the role of specific saints.<sup>65</sup> Yet as demonstrated the Church liturgy was changed in order to allow for the worship of saints including Joseph.<sup>66</sup> However the development of Joseph's standing was not only an Italian characteristic. In 1512 the Netherlandish artist Gerard David produced a triptych, the central panel of which included a Nativity scene with donors (pl. 154); and placed the Virgin and St Joseph in equality kneeling on either side of the manger.<sup>67</sup> Joseph's parity with the Virgin emphasises an intimate one to one affiliation with God and reflects the growing appeal in northern Europe of the *Devotio Moderna*.<sup>68</sup> This was a philosophical movement which was initiated by Gerard Groote and his community the Brethren of the Common Life in the late fourteenth century. Their ministry put emphasis on the development of one's personal relationship with God; that

Christ will come to you and impart to you his consolation, if you prepare for him a worthy dwelling within yourself. For all the glory and beauty wherein he takes delight is within you.<sup>69</sup>

To this end Groote promoted the study of the fundamental texts of Christianity. Groote's tenets were a prototype of the personal piety later advocated by Martin Luther, and thus Groote is considered a forerunner of the Reformation. His treatise, the *Following of Christ*, similar in style St Ignatius of Loyola's later *Spiritual Exercises*, is a layman's guide to living the spiritual life.<sup>70</sup>

David represented Joseph as a mature man rather than an elderly one in his *Nativity*. Joseph has brown as opposed to grey hair and no bald pate. As in representations of the younger Joseph, his beard is short and neatly trimmed. Thus David, though abiding by the convention of portraying Joseph as an older man, conferred upon him the physical beauty usually associated with his increasing cult status. Joseph is presented as an elegant as well as a prudent man; he wears stylish, warm clothes appropriate for a journey: a short, red tunic; a dark blue cloak with fur trim; dark blue hose and boots.<sup>71</sup> But equally the practicality of his clothes suggests forethought. His refined features and expensive clothes confirm him as a man of noble birth.

Joseph's significance in the 1523 *Nativity* (pl. 155)<sup>72</sup> by Lorenzo Lotto, refers back to the Lenten sermon of 1512 at Bergamo preached by Fra Girolamo Castro of Piacenza in which the preacher emphasised Joseph's spiritual role as an explanation for the Saint's increasing eminence.<sup>73</sup> Francesco Colalucci states that it was as a consequence of Fra Girolamo Castro's sermon in the Scuole di San Giuseppe that the church of San Gottardo came to be established.<sup>74</sup>

With his growing cult reputation images of both the more mature Joseph and the young, beautiful, idealised Joseph ran parallel. Lorenzo Lotto used both interpretations of Joseph in his paintings. In Lotto's *Nativity* of 1523, understood to have been commissioned by the Tassi family of Bergamo and perhaps in response to Fra Girolamo Castro's Lenten sermon, an elderly Joseph kneels humbly on the ground in equivalence with the Virgin. Beside the praying figure of the Virgin there is an example of Joseph's physical and spiritual function as *Nutritor Domini*. The small barrel for holding water and bag of food placed ready for their journey indicates Joseph's role as provider for their bodily needs; while the wooden mousetrap lying alongside the Virgin is indicative of Joseph's profession as carpenter and also his spiritual protection of Christ in his position as the deceiver of the devil. Carved into the device is Lotto's signature - L Lottus. As emphasis on salvation through redemption there is a crucifix affixed to the wall above Joseph's head.<sup>75</sup>

An elderly Joseph is the pivotal figure in Lotto's *Holy Family with St Catherine of Alexandria* (pl. 156) painted in 1534.<sup>76</sup> His increasing cult dimension is confirmed by the image of Joseph as intermediary. St Catherine, in a vision, reputedly experienced a mystical marriage with Christ.<sup>77</sup> The painting illustrates St Catherine's vision. While the Virgin leans away at the left side of the picture it is Joseph as intercessor and in his role as Christ's father placed in the middle of the picture between St Catherine and the Virgin, who lifts the thin veil to reveal the sleeping infant.

Joseph appears to be of a similar middle age to the two dark haired shepherds in Lotto's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 157)<sup>78</sup> of 1534.<sup>79</sup> Even though he is only partially visible Lotto has depicted him as a large, strong, handsome individual. Respectfully Joseph remains in the background. But as he leans close to watch divine light emanating from the infant falls on his left shoulder. The bright vermilion colouration of Joseph's clothing draws attention to his broad shoulder forming a protective shield for the Virgin and child. The same colour is picked up in the under garment worn by the Virgin. By using almost the same colour for the apparel of both figures Lotto creates a unified image of Joseph and Mary as they lean reverentially towards the baby. It is an image of the Holy Family within that of a representation of the Adoration.

In 1540 Moretto da Brescia created a singular image of Joseph for the inside face of the shutter of a triptych (pl. 158).<sup>80</sup> The painting shows Joseph three-quarters on to the viewer. The painting emphasises his middle-eastern heritage. He is dark-haired, dark-skinned and has a long black beard. He wears white turban. Individualising him in this manner stresses his extraordinariness and creates a sense of awe and otherworldliness concomitant with his developing iconic status.

### **Summary**

For many artists Joseph's 'divinity' is expressed by presenting him as a beautiful man in keeping with the Neo-platonist Ficino's beliefs that physical beauty denoted a beautiful soul. Raphael presented Joseph's 'divinity' not least by depicting him as beautiful young man but also through the abnormality of his

having six toes; a number that had long been associated with things mystical and perfect.

Emphasis on beauty meant that even the location of any particular scene in which the Holy Family were placed would be heavenly and otherworldly.

Joseph's pastoral role was ever more frequently emphasised as in his gesture of prayer in Bronzino's *Panciatichi Holy Family* (pl. 138) and in his gesture of benediction in El Greco's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (pl. 139). The notion of Joseph as foundation of Christ's Church on earth resulted in the similarity of the images of St Joseph and St Peter.

Joseph as a 'divine' cult figure is demonstrated by Raphael in the 1518 painting of the *Holy Family* (pl. 153) in which only Joseph, Mary and Jesus are given halos. It is of significance therefore that it is Joseph who lifts the veil that covers the sleeping infant Christ in order for St Catherine to view the child, rather than the Virgin who leans away, in Lotto's *Holy Family with St Catherine of Alexandria* (pl. 156). His action and the centrality of his position asserts to the acceptance of Joseph's role as an instrument of God.

## Chapter IX

### Epilogue

In December 1563 the Council of Trent concluded. The purpose of their Counter-Reformation stance had been to substantiate and reaffirm the doctrines of the Church and to respond to and defeat what was perceived as the heresies of Protestantism. Amongst the canons and decrees passed was that concerning the invocation and veneration of the saints; to be precise the continuing importance of the Communion of Saints.<sup>1</sup> The Council maintained the principle of suppliants praying to the saints in their capacity as intermediaries with God. But the Council made it explicit that the existence of thaumaturgic images, namely images that upon being prayed to supposedly bring about miracles, was implausible. The Council stated that such images which existed were anathema. Images were to be used as instruction and inspiration only and not to be perceived in themselves as objects of worship.<sup>2</sup>

However despite, or perhaps because of the position taken by the Council of Trent in fending off the Protestant dogma of *sola scriptura* (that the Bible is the only source of religious authority) and *sola fide* (justification and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone), ‘divine’ and mystical characteristics in art persisted. With the emphasis on personal spiritual renewal, as exemplified in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola written in the early 1520s and *the Life of St Teresa of Ávila by Herself* completed in the late 1570s, images became at the same time both more authentic in their replication of life and more romanticised and mystical in the power of their emotional content.

For example in 1628 Fra Francesco Maria Cappucino wrote to Cardinal Federigo Borromeo that the works of the sixteenth century artist Federico Barocci seemed as if they had ‘a touch of the divine about them.’<sup>3</sup> Barocci’s painting of the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (pl. 159) depicts an idealised landscape with the sun in the upper centre of the painting, symbolic of God the Father shining his glory down on Joseph, Mary and Jesus as they stop to rest. Joseph is shown in his role as *Nutritor Domini*, as carer and provider.<sup>4</sup> He smiles warmly as he executes his task. With his left hand he reaches up into a cherry tree while with his right hand he pulls at the branch that bears just one cherry towards Jesus. The child, equally smiling, stretches up to the fruit his father is offering. The cherry, symbolising sweetness of character and particularly in relation to Christ representing the Fruit of Paradise, is in this connotation a confirmation of Joseph’s divine role within the ambit of Christ’s role as saviour.<sup>5</sup> The picture is essentially a representation of Joseph and Jesus interacting as father and son. The Virgin takes no part in the operation, she has turned away to scoop up some water from a small pool.

*The Holy Family with the infant St John and a cat* (pl. 160) also by Barocci and executed in 1575, is a rapturous, idealised, and sentimental image.<sup>6</sup> There is softness to the features of the figures and an exquisiteness of colour, with an emphasis on the use of pastel shades as in the pale pink of Joseph’s robe and the skin colouration of the Virgin and the children. St John is shown teasing a cat with a goldfinch, while the infant Jesus watches. On the reverse of an engraving of the painting made by Cornelis Cort in 1577 there is an explanation of the scene. It states that St John’s teasing antic is an allegory of man’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden and that Christ’s turning away from his mother’s breast to



watch is indicative of his understanding and acceptance of crucifixion and his role as redeemer.<sup>7</sup> All the figures exhibit blissful expressions. Joseph supports himself on his powerful left arm; his hand, under the pressure exerted, is spread flat on the small, altar-like side table - an allusion to Christ's eventual sacrifice. Joseph protectively leans over the Virgin, Christ and St John. With his long luxuriant grey beard he resembles an Old Testament prophet. In his role as intermediary Joseph directs the viewer's attention towards the actions of the small children. Through his overarching position as he bends forwards into the painting he is portrayed as a figure of might and potency. Nevertheless his appearance is open, calm, and captivating, as he smiles at the young St John. Furthermore through the use of pale, ethereal colours they are all presented as being heavenly entities and not of this world; being both insubstantial and divine.

El Greco's painting of *St Joseph and the Christ Child* (pl. 161) for the Chapel of San José in the Cathedral of Toledo (where it still hangs) and which dates from sometime between 1597 and 1599 is a mystical image of Joseph.<sup>8</sup> El Greco portrays him as 'divine', beautiful, enigmatic and willowy with sharply chiselled features and black eyes. The painting having a low perspective, thus giving the impression that the viewer is beneath the figures of Joseph and Jesus impresses that these two people are worthy of our adoration. Tall, dark haired, and haunting, the slender, young Joseph clasps the startled child Jesus close to his side for security. With his mantle draped around his shoulders reminiscent of the cloak worn by the Virgin in depictions of the *Maria Misericordia* Joseph affords the child protection. Joseph's role as Christ's guardian is accentuated by setting them against a dark and stormy background. The spiritual content of the scene is

underpinned by the presence of two angels floating over head. One drops flower petals onto them, while another hovers above holding a laurel wreath.<sup>9</sup> El Greco additionally emphasises Joseph's steadfastness and his paternal role as protector and guardian of not only the child Jesus but also of God's Church by painting Joseph holding a shepherd's crook in his right hand. It works as a reminder to the viewer of Joseph's function as the head of the Church Militant. In the distance there crests the hills, as an extra cue to the spiritual nature of the picture, a city of spires and towers representative of the New Jerusalem though likely to be Toledo.

Christophorus Blancus's engraving from the turn of the seventeenth century for Jerónimo Gracián's *Summary of the Excellencies of St Joseph* written in 1597, of Joseph, Mary and Jesus as the earthly trinity, *The Conversation of Jesus, Mary and Joseph* (pl. 162), is indicative of the change in the visual perception of St Joseph. He is shown as an intermediary - he is pictured speaking directly to Jesus - as 'divine', as 'just' and as an inseparable part of the 'Holy Family'.<sup>10</sup> The translation of the Latin epigram, which accompanies the engraving and which reads: 'Joseph, the just man, attained the lofty heights of justice with the just Virgin by the just Child', confirms Joseph's eminence.<sup>11</sup> Five further engravings complete the set illustrating Jerónimo Gracián's *Summary*, all of which attest to Joseph's rise in importance. They comprise of the Betrothal; Joseph, Mary and Jesus in the Joseph's workshop; their return from exile in Egypt in which Joseph is shown carrying Christ piggyback style; an angel appearing to the sleeping Joseph in the family home at Nazareth and Joseph on his death bed. Gracián's *Summary*, which is divided into five books, discusses Joseph's qualities as based on Scriptural texts. Chorprenning is in no doubts that the function of the *Summary*

was to promote the cult devotion for St Joseph; and that it became widely read throughout Italy, Spain and Germany.<sup>12</sup>

Bartolomé Carducho's painting of the *Flight into Egypt* from 1600 (pl. 163) continues the trend for presenting Joseph as a young, dynamic, and powerful looking man. In this painting he has tanned skin and large working man's hands which emphasises his strength.<sup>13</sup> In sharp contrast to his artisan's appearance and as an intimation of his spirituality Joseph has a delicate almost translucent halo comparable to that of the Virgin's. Keeping pace with the sturdy looking donkey Joseph strides easily along between the viewer and the animal despite the large size of the bundle he carries beneath his short brown cloak that fills and billows out with the breeze as he moves. Ever watchful Joseph's whole attention is given over to the child and his mother; while it is left to the *cherubim* to pull down dates from a palm tree as they pass.

Beauty, as the motivating factor in the cult devotion of St Joseph, became the predominant method of imparting his spiritual characteristics. Though Guido Reni portrays Joseph as an elderly man with thick waving white hair and beard in his 1635 painting of *St Joseph with the infant Christ in his arms* (pl. 164) he is still a beautiful, passionate figure who radiates love and gentleness.<sup>14</sup> Cradling the lively naked child in his arms Joseph is the ultimate father figure as he surrounds and encompasses Jesus in the golden folds of his robe. The colours the artist has used act to heighten the intensity of feeling. As the artist, theorist and censor for the Inquisition<sup>15</sup> Francisco Pacheco<sup>16</sup> had opined when he was producing polychromic sculptures, such as *Christ on the Cross*<sup>17</sup>

(pl. 165) dating from 1614, colour discloses ‘the passions and concerns of the soul’.<sup>18</sup>

The element of passion mixed with realism permeated much of the artwork of seventeenth century Spain. It is evident in the work of Spanish artist Francisco de Herrera the Elder; an artist who in his formative years had painted in such a realistic manner individualizing each figure in a scene, particularly so in the painting of *St Bonaventure entering the Franciscan Order* that he met with some rebuke from the Franciscans who had commissioned the work.<sup>19</sup> In his painting of *St Joseph and the Christ Child* (pl. 166) dating from 1645 the realism has been softened by the emotional charge.<sup>20</sup> The painting was for the monastery of San José in Seville. Its gentleness of both image and subject matter indicates the emergence of a new devotional atmosphere in the city.<sup>21</sup> It is a picture of a young father holding his son tenderly on his lap. His love and affection for the child seem authentic as a consequence of the pose. Joseph is shown leaning into the child so close that his cheek brushes the child’s curls as he enfolds him in his arms.

The Spanish were not alone in representing Joseph as a young idealised figure. Frenchman Nicolas Poussin painted the *Holy Family on the Steps* (pl. 167) in 1648.<sup>22</sup> Joseph is portrayed as an arresting figure through his sheer size. The large figure of Joseph is shown seated in the shadows, positioned sideways on to the other characters in the painting. The scene is of the Holy Family with St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist. They are resting on a flight of stone steps which is located in a classical setting, providing the whole with an otherworldly

aspect. Joseph's imposing dark bulk acts as a barrier against those who may wish to harm them approaching down the stairs. With a head of abundant brown curls and brown beard, Joseph's position, slightly behind that of the Virgin and Child, indicates his continuing attention to their safety. He is also portrayed as erudite and literate, being in the act of writing on a pad he rests against his raised left knee. The cloud behind him, illuminated by the sun, is suggestive of heaven. The sun's light catches the romping children and the Virgin's face. It illumines Joseph's unshod right foot signifying his humility and it falls on his rod, the symbol of God's approval and endorsement.

Joseph's intercessory function continued to be accentuated as demonstrated through his location within the picture. Most commonly he is placed between the viewer and the Christ child, holding Jesus either in his arms, at his side, or even sometimes leading him. Such scenes came to predominate in seventeenth century Spain. In a painting of the *Flight into Egypt* (pl. 168) by the Spanish artist Murillo and dating from the middle of the century a young dark-haired Joseph, with provisions strapped to his back walks beside the donkey.<sup>23</sup> As in the painting by Bartolomé Carducho, Murillo places Joseph in the intercessory position between the viewer and the donkey on which the Virgin and child sit. Joseph is shown turning towards the beast so that he can watch over the infant; and in so doing he directs the viewer's attention towards Christ. In another painting by Murillo known as *St Joseph leading the Christ Child* (pl. 169) and dating from about 1670 St Joseph and the Child Jesus are shown moving towards the viewer.<sup>24</sup> Joseph holds Jesus's left hand with his right hand, as if he is urging the child ahead to meet the viewer. While Jesus looks up at his father as though for guidance

Joseph, dressed in purple robes with gold coloured mantle and holding his attribute, the flowering almond rod in his left hand, looks down on him reassuringly. The child's head is illumined in an aura of light. To further heighten the holiness of the scene two cherubs float above them.

Like El Greco before him Murillo often represented Joseph as a beautiful young man. The image of the younger Joseph was to proliferate as exemplified in the 1665 painting by Murillo of *Joseph with the infant Christ* (pl. 170) where Joseph supports the Child Jesus as he stands on a stone plinth.<sup>25</sup> Though Christ leans in towards his adoptive father with his head on Joseph's shoulder, he gazes straight out at the beholder; Joseph, pensively, looks away. Significantly it is Christ not Joseph who has possession of Joseph's attribute - the blossoming rod - God's sign of Joseph's revelation. For his part Joseph supports Christ with a hand to the child's chest and his right hand around the child's back eventually coming to rest firmly on his right hip. In this supportive embrace this is another example of Joseph being displayed and presented to the viewer as the mainstay of Christ's Church on Earth. He is a bold but gentle-faced man, upright, tall; almost a columnar figure. Murillo presents him as the intermediary between man and God. Earth tones predominate within the painting. Unmistakably representative of this world - Joseph's robes are brown earth tones - he stands firm on the dark brown ground, his abundant hair is dark brown and shoulder length, his beard is also brown. He is set against an indistinct, dark, non-specific, timeless and unearthly background. His distant expression is enigmatic, contemplative and preternaturally wise. He is presented as a handsome and exotic young man. He exudes confidence and authority, demonstrated in the ease with which he supports

Christ. There is depth in the expression in his dark eyes that serves to demonstrate and emphasise the strength and intensity of his authority.

Murillo's painting of 1680 entitled the *Heavenly and Earthly Trinities* (pl. 171) shows Joseph kneeling holding the left hand of the Christ Child.<sup>26</sup> Significantly it is Joseph, dressed in a sombre grey/blue garment over which he wears a gold coloured robe, who looks out of the painting directly towards us. He engages the beholder directly, fixing us with his gaze, his uncompromising stance appears to require a response. He is also placed nearer the foreground of the painting than the other figures; which implies his mediatory role. The young Christ, standing below the God the Father and the Holy Spirit in the form of a white dove which hovers above his head, gazes heavenwards. The painting is believed to symbolise the finding of the Saviour in the Temple.<sup>27</sup> His parents return together to Jerusalem to seek for their son Jesus. The young Christ is presented standing on two offset stone slabs. Placed between the youthful depictions of both Mary and Joseph, Christ holds their hands, presenting them in equality as his earthly parents to his father in heaven.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century Joseph's role and importance was of such magnitude that Gregorio Lazzarini in his large scale painting for upper hall in the Scuola Grande dei Carmini in Venice of the *Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 172) depicted a centrally located Joseph, kneeling upon one knee and holding the infant Jesus in his lap.<sup>28</sup> The Virgin stands to one side, observing the scene. The ornately clad Magi are shown in obeisance before Jesus and Joseph. In this

instance Joseph is presented as an older man with white balding hair and long white beard; as a patriarchal figure.

Like Lazzarini's painting it is Joseph who holds Jesus in Tiepolo's *Nativity* (pl. 173) of 1732.<sup>29</sup> Though he is shown as being elderly Joseph is presented as a man of a powerful and undimmed physique. He cradles the infant Christ in his arms on a glowing white sheet. The Virgin, in rapturous prayer, has her back to them.

The early nineteenth century saw a revival of interest in Renaissance painting. The German movement the Nazarenes attempted to copy the style of Perugino and Raphael and earlier Renaissance painters. Correspondingly at times Joseph is shown in a more subservient posture and position. The 1813 painting by the Nazarene artist Johann Friedrich Overbeck of the *Adoration of the Kings* (pl. 174) is typical of a fifteenth century portrayal of Joseph.<sup>30</sup> He is shown as an old man in archetypal clothing of a gold mantle over a dark blue robe. He stands humbly behind the seated Virgin, clasping his hat to his chest as he watches one of the kings present his gift.

The choice of poses and the underlying emotional and symbolic thrust of the representations showed signs of broadening. Old style late Medieval and early Renaissance interpretations became concurrent with more modern imagery. The image of the father as a hard working artisan had relevance for the labourers of the industrial revolution. Thus in this manner Joseph the father figure, the unassuming, hard working man, providing and caring for his family yet part of the spiritual earthly trinity, was expressed in the nineteenth century by the Pre-



Raphaelite<sup>31</sup> artist Sir John Everett Millais in *Christ in the house of his parents*<sup>32</sup> painted between 1849 and 1850 (pl. 175).<sup>33</sup> The title of the painting alone is informative of Joseph's perceived position in the nineteenth century within the economy of salvation. Despite its staged appearance, the natural unflattering quality of the painting accentuates the physical connection between the three main figures of Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus. Joseph barefooted, dressed for work with his leather apron tied about his waist lays his hands gently on his son's shoulder in a gesture implying both blessing and loving concern, as the child lifts his hand to display a cut in his palm: the prescient signification of his crucifixion. The direct union between Joseph and Christ's crucifixion powerfully substantiates Joseph's 'divinity'.

Typical of the variety of images of St Joseph that had become commonplace Sir Edward Burne-Jones's monumental watercolour of the *Star of Bethlehem*<sup>34</sup> (pl. 176) painted in 1890 makes reference back to thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth century art in depicting Joseph as the humble man.<sup>35</sup> St Joseph, the Virgin and the Christ Child are positioned on the left side of the painting with the Magi and entourage approaching across the front of the picture from the right, as, for example, in paintings of the *Adoration of the Magi* by the fifteenth century painters Gentile da Fabriano (pl. 116), Lorenzo Monaco (pl. 115) and Benozzo Gozzoli (pl. 1). Standing in profile behind the seated figure of the Virgin Joseph carries a bundle of twigs under his right arm as if he has just been gathering them to make a fire. His head is bowed in respect; and though his thick grey beard masks the expression of his mouth, it is evident that he watches the Magi closely. This painting also represents the nineteenth century equivalent of the Renaissance

image of the *Nutritor Domini* indicating the durability of certain images of St Joseph.

Similarly and in part reminiscent of a much earlier manner of representation and indicative of the growing eclectic mix of styles and the broad appreciation of the power of the early Scripturally inspired images, Eric Gill's 1922 depiction of the *Nativity with the Adoration of the Magi* (pl. 177) demonstrates the ease with which varying styles of art could exist side by side in the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> A stone relief with all six figures - Joseph Mary, Jesus and the worshipping three Magi - plus the ox and ass are compounded into a small cramped landscape shaped panel. The relief is comparable in format to work produced by the Pisani in the thirteenth century. But the image of the long haired youthful Joseph supporting the semi-recumbent figure of the Virgin bare-breasted as she feeds the infant is, in its unselfconsciousness archetypical of the twentieth century. In an age of mass communication the reproduction of images from the past coexisting alongside and melding with modern imagery has become frequent and commonplace; as witnessed even today in the twenty first century on Christmas cards and Advent calendars.

### **Summary**

After the Council of Trent, in which the continuance of suppliants praying to saints as intermediaries with God was allowed, images of Joseph became sweeter and more idealised. Often they were non-narrative and comprised of Joseph with the Child Jesus in his arms or holding the child close to his side. Joseph's

intermediary function was stressed through location within a scene and his kindly beauty and devotion accentuated through beauty of image.

Over the next two centuries figures of the Holy Family came to display a deeper degree of physical realism; though the emotions they were intended to instil in the beholder were ones of rapture and joy. These were intentional devotional images.

By the nineteenth century as well as the romantic, idealised religious images there were others, first by the Nazarenes and later the Pre-Raphaelites, who staunchly eschewed such overt demonstrations of emotion by making reference back to the Renaissance and the more narrative themes from before Raphael. Hence Millais's Joseph (pl. 175) is a hardworking carpenter at his bench rather like Campin's Joseph (pl. 99); and in a huge watercolour painting by Burne-Jones in a composition reminiscent of the International Gothic style of the early fifteenth century Joseph (pl. 176) is shown as the conscientious, respectful and caring man who has just been gathering wood with which to make a fire.



## **Conclusion**

The result of this examination demonstrates that the image of St Joseph progresses through a number of significant transformations of pose, demeanour, dress, location and even psychology throughout history. The changes are influenced and determined by the subject matter of each representation in which the Saint is included and its underlying purpose. Reasons for the changes are found to be multifarious and not solely in response to any religious or theological perspective or in order to be consistent with the Scriptural or Apocryphal literature detailing Joseph's life and role within the economy of salvation. It is shown that often the image of St Joseph is utilised to suggest various attitudes and opinions that reflected the contemporary cultural climate in which the work was executed.

The greater variety in St Joseph's manner and mien tends to be observed in those scenes described in the Scriptures of the Nativity, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt. Whereas, scenes based on stories taken from the Apocryphal texts or other pious writings, mostly were concerned with developing more insight into Joseph's character as in the cases of the images of the Betrothal of the Virgin, or Joseph as Nutritor Domini.

In addition, the examination establishes that Joseph being accorded a Saint's Day by the Church in 1479 corresponds with the emerging emphasis on the role of the father figure within society. This was a development taken up by Joseph's advocates and those wishing to associate themselves with the image of the father figure through St Joseph. To this end it is my considered belief on studying the

evidence, that the inclusion of Cosimo de' Medici's features upon those of the image of St Joseph in the fresco of the *Adoration of the Magi* in Cosimo's own cell within the Convent of San Marco in Florence was an intentional act of self-aggrandisement on Cosimo's part. Such an act reveals the importance the image of St Joseph as father figure conveyed to both the laity and the Church.

In conjunction with images of St Joseph as father figure it is observed that from the middle of the fifteenth century, and particularly after the Council of Trent, that St Joseph became an integral part of representations of the Holy Family. This change is also demonstrated to coincide with the beginning of Joseph's gradual elevation to cult status. Furthermore as the veneration of St Joseph increased, devotional images of Joseph accompanied with the child Jesus alone began to appear. With the exception of representations of the Betrothal of the Virgin a wide variety of images remain current, including those that allude to, and draw inspiration from, previous styles of presentation.

Though there has been a resurgence of interest in St Joseph in the last two decades, there has been no comprehensive overview of the iconography of St Joseph. All these recent writers deal with exclusive aspects and topics concerning the Saint or his image in terms of art and/or cultural history such Joseph Chorprenning's book on Jerónimo Gracián and Carolyn C Wilson's 1999 book, both examined in this text. *Creating the Cult of St Joseph: Art and Gender in the Spanish Empire*, a 2007 work by Dr Wilson, investigates the detailed effect on custom and society of the cult of St Joseph in Spain and Mexico. A seminar

delivered by Dr Wilson in Kalisz in Poland during 2010 considers a particular triptych attributed to Jan Gossaert and its effect on the Hapsburg Empire.

Therefore in terms of scholastic research this investigation finds that hitherto there has been an absence of comprehensive literature examining the circumstances and the nature of the transformations of the image of St Joseph throughout history. The thesis corrects this omission and brings to light the vast fund of information and detail surrounding and concerning the subject which impacts directly on social and cultural history in general, and in particular on the canon of Christian art.





## NOTES

### Preface

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<sup>1</sup> Cell 39, Convent of San Marco, Florence, Italy. Painted by Benozzo Gozzoli assistant to Fra Angelico who painted the majority of the frescoes in the dormitories at the Convent.

<sup>2</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; The Gospel of St Matthew*, Ch. I, vv. 1 – 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* v. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 20 – 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 2 vv. 1 – 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* vv 13 & 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 19 – 23.

<sup>8</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; The Gospel of St Luke*, Ch.1, v. 27.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 2, v. 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 5 -7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 16 – 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 23 – 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 41 – 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 3, vv. 23 – 38.

<sup>15</sup> Montague Rhodes James (trans.), *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1924. pp. 38 -49.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* pp 49 - 65.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 70 - 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 79 & 80.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 84 – 86.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 80 - 82.

<sup>21</sup> Louis Salembier: 'The Western Schism', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Ole J Benedictow: *The Black Death 1346 – 1353: The Complete History*, The Boydell Press, Suffolk, UK, 2004. Map 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 306.

<sup>24</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli: *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy*, Lightning Source UK Ltd, Milton Keynes, 2010. P. 112 During the 1340s Florence losses its dependent states of Arezzo, Castiglione, Pistoia, Volterra, Colle and San Gimignano. However Arezzo returns to Florentine rule. P.p. 161 – 167 Machiavelli records that Florence is at war with the Duke of Milan during the

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last years of the fourteenth century and also take Pisa at this time. P.49. The Genoese besiege Venice during 1381.

<sup>25</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*, Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 2001, pp. 10 – 12. She makes reference to Joseph Braun and his use of Seitz's work.

<sup>26</sup> Cynthia Hahn: 'Narrative on the Golden Altar of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan: Presentation and Reception', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. 53, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, DC, 1999. P. 168, n. 4. She writes: 'Joseph Braun is the best source for a survey of altars and their ornamentation.'

<sup>27</sup> Francis L Filas: *Joseph: the Man closest to Jesus*, St Paul Editions, Boston, 1962, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Triptych. Oil on wood. The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.

<sup>29</sup> Volume XXVII, pp. 182 – 187.

<sup>30</sup> Meyer Schapiro: 'Muscipula Diaboli', The Symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece', *Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art*, George Braziller Inc., New York, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* n 3, p.16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> Lorne Campbell in his article 'Robert Campin, the Master of Flémalle and the Master of Mérode', *Burlington Magazine*, CXVI, 1974, pp. 634 – 646, writes that works previously attributed to Campin on the basis of stylistic similarities are now thought to have been produced by Campin's workshop which at the time included the artists Rogier van der Weyden and Jacquelotte Daret. For this reason Campbell refers to the work as being by the Master of Mérode.

<sup>35</sup> Erwin Panofsky: *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964, pp. 154 – 158. Panofsky outlines three hypotheses as to the identification of the Master of Flémalle; first that he was a follower of Rogier van der Weyden, secondly that he was in Panofsky's own words a 'disciple' of Rogier or even his master and was called Robert Campin; and thirdly that he was the young Rogier van der Weyden. Panofsky explains his reasoning behind his assumption that the Master of Flémalle is Robert Campin was not least from a careful study of dates and the commencement of Campin's tutelage of two young artists Rogier van der Weyden and Jacquelotte Daret but also through a confusion of names and nature of apprenticeships.

<sup>36</sup> Theodore Rousseau: 'The Mérode Altarpiece', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 16, no.4. December 1957, pp. 117 – 129.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 117.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* pp.118 – 129.

<sup>39</sup> Erwin Panofsky: *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964, p. 164.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Ilsley Minott: 'The Theme of the Mérode Altarpiece', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 15, no. 3, September 1969, pp.267 – 271.

<sup>41</sup> Jacques Duchesne-Guilliemin: 'On the Cityscape of the Mérode Altarpiece', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, June, 1975, p. 129.

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<sup>42</sup> Marilyn A Lavin: 'The Mystic Winepress in the Mérode Altarpiece', *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, New York, 1977, pp. 297 – 301.

<sup>43</sup> Cynthia Hahn: 'Joseph will perfect, Mary enlighten and Jesus save thee; the Holy Family as marriage model in the Mérode Triptych', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 68. Part I, pp. 54 – 66.

<sup>44</sup> Also known as the Grabow Altar. Dated around 1380. Tempera on panel. Kunsthalle Museum, Hamburg, Germany.

<sup>45</sup> Sheila Schwartz: 'St Joseph in Meister Bertram's Petri-Altar', *Gesta: International Center of Medieval Art*, Vol. XXIV/2, The Cloisters, Tryon Park, New York, 1985, pp. 147 – 156.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* she is referring to St Bernard's *De laudibus virginis Mariae, Jesus*, Joseph Seitz's *Die Verehrung des heiligen Joseph in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 1908 and F L Filas's *Joseph: The Man closest to Jesus*, 1962.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph F Chorpenning: *Just Man, Husband of Mary, Guardian of Christ: An Anthology of Readings from Jerónimo Gracián's Summary of the Excellencies of St Joseph (1597)*, St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph F Chorpenning: *Christophorus Blancus' Engravings to Jerónimo Gracián's Summary of the Excellencies of St Joseph*, St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 1995.

<sup>49</sup> Painted sometime between 1519 and 1526. Oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Texas, USA.

<sup>50</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art.*, p. xx.

<sup>51</sup> Brian Patrick McGuire: *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2005, p. xi.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 238.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 234.

<sup>54</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: 'Some Further Evidence of St Joseph's Cult in Renaissance Italy and Related St Joseph Altarpieces', *Die Bedeutung des hl. Josef in der Heilsgeschichte. Akten des IX. Internationalen Symposiums über den hl. Josef*, Kisslegg, Vol. 2, 2006, pp. 903 – 933.

<sup>55</sup> Oil on panel. 1504. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen, France.

<sup>56</sup> Oil on panel. 1504. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, Italy.

<sup>57</sup> Douay-Rheims Bible the New Testament was published in 1582 and the Old Testament in 1610.

## Chapter I

### The Written Sources

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<sup>1</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Matthew* Ch. 1, v. 1 'Liber generationis Iesus Christi filii David filii Abraham...'

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 16 '...genuit Ioseph virum Mariae de qua natus est Iesus qui vocatur Christus.'

<sup>3</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St Luke*: Ch. 3, v. 3. 'Et ipsa Iesus erat incipiens quasi annorum triginta ut putabatur filius Ioseph qui fuit Heli.' 'And Jesus himself was being about the age of thirty years: being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli.'

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 2: vv. 4 and 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 22 – 33.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 41 – 50.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph T Lienhard: *St Joseph in Early Christianity: Devotion and Theology. A Study and an Anthology of Patristic Texts*, Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 1999, p.7.

<sup>8</sup> G Reid: 'Apocrypha', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1907, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>9</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Galatians* 1: vv. 18 & 19. St Paul refers to seeing Peter in Jerusalem and remaining with him for fifteen days, 'Deinde post annos tres veni Hierosolyma videre Petrum et mansi apud eum diebus quindecim. Alium autem apostolorum vidi neminem nisi Iacobum fratrem Domini.' 'Then, after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter: and I tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.'

<sup>10</sup> *Protoevangelium of James*: Ch. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Infant Gospel of Thomas*. Also known as *Evangelium Thomae Israelitae*. The earliest two accounts are the *Protoevangelium of James* and the *Evangelium of Thomas*. Where the former commences its account with details of Mary's conception and birth and finishes with the story of the Magi, the latter continues the story of Jesus from the age of five until he is twelve. See note 14.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph T Lienhard: *St Joseph in Early Christianity: Devotion and Theology. A Study and an Anthology of Patristic Texts*, Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 1999, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> *Infant Gospel of Thomas*. Ch. 37: 'Now Joseph was a carpenter, and used to make nothing else of wood but ox-yokes, and ploughs, and implements of husbandry, and wooden beds. And it came to pass that certain young man ordered him to make for him a couch six cubits long. And Joseph commanded his servant to cut the wood with an iron saw, according to the measure which he had sent. But he did not keep to the prescribed measure, but made one piece of wood shorter than the other. And Joseph was in perplexity, and began to consider what he was to do about this. And Jesus saw him in this state of cogitation, seeing that it was a matter of impossibility to him, He addresses him with words of comfort, saying: Come, let us take hold of the ends of the pieces of wood, and let us put them together, end to end, and let us fit them exactly to each other, and draw to us, for we shall be able to make them equal. Then Joseph did what he was bid, for he knew that He could whatever He wished. And Joseph took hold of the ends of the pieces of wood, and brought them together against the wall next to himself, and Jesus took hold of the other ends of the pieces of wood, and drew the shorter piece to Him, and made it of the same length as the

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longer one. And He said to Joseph: Go and work, and do what thou hast promised to do. And Joseph did what he had promised.'

<sup>15</sup> *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*: Ch. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *The History of Joseph the Carpenter: Anti-Nicene Fathers*: Vol. 8, Ch. 1, (trans.) Alexander Walker, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A Cleveland Coxe, Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, New York, 1886. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/) (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 4. 'And they wrote down the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. And the lot fell upon the pious old man, righteous Joseph.' Ch. 15 'The whole age of my father, therefore, that righteous old man, was one hundred and eleven years.'

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 29.

<sup>21</sup> *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour*: Ch. 38.

<sup>22</sup>: *Ibid.* Ch. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Origen: *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*: 6, 4, (trans.) Joseph T Lienhard, Catholic University Press of America, 1996. 'Immediately a silent thought would have occurred to the devil: 'How can this woman, who has not slept with a man, be pregnant? This conception must be divine. It must be something more sublime than human nature.' But the Saviour had so arranged his plan that the devil did not know he had taken on a body. When he was conceived, he escaped the devil's notice.'

<sup>24</sup> Helvidius's attack on the virginity of Mary is only known through St. Jerome's response entitled *Sanctae Mariae Virginitate Perpetua: The Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary*.

<sup>25</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St Matthew* Ch.1: v. 18. '...cum esset desponsata mater eius Maria Ioseph antequam convenirent inventa est in utero habens de Spirito Sancto.'

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* v. 25. 'Et non cognoscebat eam donec peperit filium suum primogenitum.'

<sup>27</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St John*, Ch. 2: v. 12. 'Post hoc descendit Capharnaum ipse et mater eius et fraters eius et discipuli...'

<sup>28</sup> St Jerome: *The Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary: St. Jerome Against Helvidius*. Ch. 17. [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/) (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010), 'They are brethren by nature, you say. But Scripture does not say so; it calls them neither sons of Mary, nor sons of Joseph.'

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 19.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 6. 'Joseph was only putatively, not really, the husband of Mary'.

<sup>31</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: I Corinthians*, Ch. 7, v. 34. 'Et mulier innupta et virgo cogitate quae Domini sunt ut sit sancta et corpore et spiritu quae autem nupta est cogitate quae sunt mundi quomodo placeat viro.' 'And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married thinketh on things of the world: how she may please her husband.'

<sup>32</sup> St Ambrose: 'De institutione virginis et sanctae Mariae virginitate perpetua and De institutione Virginis', Book I, (trans.) H de Romestin, E de Romestin and HTF Duckworth; (eds.) Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post – Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 10, Christian

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Literature Publishing Company, Buffalo, New York, 1896, [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/) (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. VII, 35.

<sup>34</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Wisdom of Solomon*, Ch. 3: v. 13. 'For blessed is the barren woman who is undefiled, who has not entered into a sinful union; she will have fruit when God examines souls.'

<sup>35</sup> St Ambrose: 'De institutione virginis et sanctae Mariae virginitate perpetua and De institutione Virginis', Book I.

<sup>36</sup> St Augustine: *On the Harmony of the Gospels*, 2, 3, 5: 'Thus, too, we can understand how Luke, in the genealogy contained in his gospel, has named a father for Joseph, not in the person of the father by whom he was begotten, but in that of the father by whom he was adopted, tracing the list of the progenitors upwards until David is reached.'

<sup>37</sup> St Augustine: *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, Book XIV, Ch. 26, Penguin Books, London and New York, 1984, p.591.

<sup>38</sup> St Augustine: *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, 1, 10. *Internet Medieval Source Book*. 'It is certainly not fecundity only, the fruit of which consists of offspring, nor chastity only, whose bond is fidelity, but also a certain sacramental bond in marriage which is recommended to believers in wedlock. Accordingly it is en-joined by the apostle: 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church. Of this bond the substance undoubtedly is this, that the man and the woman who are joined together in matrimony should remain inseparable as long as they live...'

<sup>39</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St Matthew* Ch. 19: v. 12, and *Gospel of St Luke*: Ch. 20: vv. 34 - 36. Eusebius of Caesarea (*Church History* Book VI Ch. 8) maintained that on reading these verses Origen castrated himself. Eusebius comments that it was: '...a deed done by him which evidenced an immature and youthful mind ... For he took the words (of *St Matthew* 19: v. 12) ... in too literal and extreme sense.' The *Wisdom of Solomon* also advances the same concept in Ch.3:14 'Blessed also is the eunuch whose hands have done no lawless deed, and who has not devised wicked things against the Lord; for special favour will be shown him for his faithfulness, and a place of great delight in the temple of the Lord.'

<sup>40</sup> Johannes Quasten: *Patrology Vol. IV*, Christian Classics Inc., Maryland, 1986, p. 432.

<sup>41</sup> St Augustine: 'Marriage does not Cancel a Mutual Vow of Continence; There was True Wedlock Between Mary and Joseph; In What Way Joseph was the Father of Christ', Book 1, Ch. 12 (XI), *On Marriage and Concupiscence*; [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/) (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010), 'That the virgin wife was rather a holier and more wonderful joy to her husband because of her very pregnancy without man, with disparity as to the child that was born, without disparity in the faith they cherished. And because of this conjugal fidelity they are both deservedly called 'parents' of Christ (not only she as his mother, but he as his father, as being her husband)...'

<sup>42</sup> Johannes Quasten: *Patrology, Vol I*, Christian Classics Inc, Maryland, 1984. Origen makes reference to the *Protoevangelium of James* in which it states that the 'brethren of the Lord' were the sons of Joseph by a previous wife. p. 118.

<sup>43</sup> Origen: *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*. 20: 4 and 5.

<sup>44</sup> St Ephrem; *Sermon 148*. c.f. Francis Filas: *Joseph: The Man Closest to Jesus*. Ch. 11, p. 173.

<sup>45</sup> St John Chrysostom: *The Gospel of St Matthew*, Homily 4, 6- 13. *Saint Chrysostom's Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Peter Schaff, Kessinger Publishing, USA, 1888, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 4, 7, p. 23.

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Migne: 'Super Missus est Homiliae', *Patrologia Latina*, accessed online at [www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu)

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p.44. 'He was subject to them, namely, to Mary and Joseph. God became subject to man! God before Whom the angels prostrate, Whose commands are carried out by the Powers and Principalities, that God, I say, was subject to Mary, and not Mary alone, but to Joseph as well, for Mary's sake!'

<sup>50</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux: *Honey in the Mouth*, (ed.) Frank Yuse, Apostle Publishing, Marshall, USA, 1995. 'St Joseph, Spouse of Mary, 'The father of God''. p. 110.

<sup>51</sup> Most of which are included in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.

<sup>52</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux: *Honey in the Mouth*, p. x.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34. St Bernard writes: 'As the infancy of the Saviour clearly designates the virtue of humility, in the same way is continence represented by the Virgin, and justice by St Joseph, whom the evangelist calls 'a just man.'" *Sermon IV for Christmas Day*.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>56</sup> Francis L Filas; *Joseph; The Man closest to Jesus*, St Paul Editions, Boston, 1962, c.f., p. 496.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* c.f., p. 496.

<sup>58</sup> St Bonaventure: *Commentary on the Gospel of St Luke*, Chapter XVII 'To whom the fruit of the womb of the Blessed Mary belongs, and to whom it is due.'

<sup>59</sup> St Thomas Aquinas; *Summa Theologica, Question 29, The Espousals of the Mother of God*, (trans.) by Fathers of the Dominican Province, Online edition by Kevin Knight, New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia Online.

<sup>60</sup> Marguerite Tjader Harris: *Birgitta of Sweden*, Paulist Press, New York and Mahwah, USA, 1990, p.9. Harris refers to S Bridget's visions influencing artists throughout Europe and Scandinavia in respect of the Nativity 'Gentile da Fabriano, Fra Angelico, Lorenzo Monaco, and later by such men as Filippino Lippi, and Lorenzo di Credi'; the Passion the 'German master Matthias Grünewald... in his colossal altarpiece of the crucifixion' and that 'Michelangelo made a number of studies for a large scene of the passion...' which show 'a strong Christ figure stretched out on a Y-shaped cross, such as Birgitta had described'; and the *Pietà*.

<sup>61</sup> Editorial introduction to *Revelations of St Bridget on the Life and Passion of Our Lord and the Life of His Blessed Mother*, 'The Nativity'; Tan Books, Rockford, Illinois, 1984, pp. vii - ix.

<sup>62</sup> Leon Battista Alberti: (trans.) Renée Neu Watkins: *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, The University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, South Carolina, 1969, p. 103. 'In this respect, however, it is not only true friendship that surpasses infatuation, so does that other affection, the love of family.'

<sup>63</sup> Along with Raymond of Capua he founded convents of strict observance in Venice and Fiesole. His writings much influenced Fra Angelico.

<sup>64</sup> Giovanni Dominici: (trans.) Arthur Basil Coté: *On the Education of Children*, Dissertation, Catholic University of America, Washington DC, 1927, p. 34.

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<sup>65</sup> Giovanni Dominici: (trans.) Arthur Basil Coté: *On the Education of Children*, Dissertation, Catholic University of America, Washington DC, 1927, p. 33.

<sup>66</sup> Brian Patrick McGuire: *Jean Gerson and the last Medieval Reformation*, University of Pennsylvania State, University Park, PA, 2005, pp. 236 – 239.

<sup>67</sup> David Herlihy: *Women, Family and Society in Medieval Europe*, Berghahn Books, Providence, Rhode Island, USA, 1995, pp. 171 - 173.

<sup>68</sup> Dorothy Catherine Brown: *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 233.

<sup>69</sup> St Antoninus: *Summa Moralis Theologica*, III, III, par. V; Peter Francis Howard: *Beyond the Written Word: Preaching and Theology in the Florence of Archbishop Antoninus*, Leo S Olschke Editore, Città di Castello, Italy, 1995, pp. 206 & 207. 'Debet ergo dominus esse prudens in providendo populo et civitati necessaria pro tempore non solum praesenti, sed future, in obviando periculis, in dispensandis necessariis et officiis.'

<sup>70</sup> Born 1380 and died 1444. He condemned the excesses of luxuries. Preached regularly to the gathered crowds in the Campo in Siena and was canonised by Pope Nicholas V in 1450.

<sup>71</sup> Franciscan friar; his extreme view of ecclesiastical poverty helped to shape the ideology of the Spiritual Franciscans.

<sup>72</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*, S Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 2001, pp. 8 – 12 and n.47 in which Wilson quotes from Isolano's *Summa*, Part 3, Ch. 8. 'For the honour of his name God has chosen St Joseph as the head and special patron of the kingdom of the Church Militant.'

<sup>73</sup> Carter Lindberg: *The European Reformations*: Blackwell Publishing, Massachusetts, Oxford and Victoria, Ch. 14, p. 338. Hadrian (Adrian) attempted to halt the spread of Protestantism, stop the warring Princes and reform the Curia, but he died only twelve months after ascending to the Papacy.

<sup>74</sup> *The Life of St Teresa by Herself*: (trans.) J M Cohen, Penguin Books, London, 1957, Ch. 35, p. 258.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 33, p. 246.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 6, p.45.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 32 & 33, pp. 233 - 248.



## Chapter II

### The Visual Tradition

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<sup>1</sup> Fourth century CE. Fresco. Catacombs of the Jordani, Rome, Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Mid-third century CE. Fresco. Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome, Italy.

<sup>3</sup> First quarter fourth century CE. Fresco. Coemetrinum Maius, Rome, Italy.

<sup>4</sup> Late Period BCE. Bronze. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> The only reference to the Magi is in the *Gospel of St Matthew* Ch 2 v. 1 in which it does not specify number and calls them 'wise men from the East'.

<sup>6</sup> It must be noted that the magi are only referred to in Ch. 2, v. 1 of the *Gospel of St Matthew* as 'wise men'. Their number is never specified.

<sup>7</sup> Francis L. Filas: *Joseph: the Man Closest to Jesus*, St Paul's Edition, Boston, Massachusetts, 1962, p. 476.

<sup>8</sup> First half third century CE. Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome Italy.

<sup>9</sup> Gertrud Schiller: *Iconography of Christian Art*, Vol I, p. 13. Schiller stipulates that the figure is Balaam expressing his Messianic prophecy of the Star of Jacob as recorded in *Numbers* Ch, 24 v. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Balaam is mentioned in *Numbers* Chs. 22 - 24 and 26, *Deuteronomy* Ch. 23, *Joshua* Chs. 13 & 24, *Nehemiah* Ch. 13, *Micheas* Ch. 6, *II Peter* Ch. 2 and *Jude* Ch. 11, *Revelation* Ch. 2, *The Arabic Gospel of Youth* and the *Qur'an*. Balaam has a number of interpretations, as a prophet, an evil-doer, one of the Magi, etc.

<sup>11</sup> K. Löffler: 'Syncretism', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>12</sup> David J Goldberg and John D Rayner; *The Jewish People: their History and their Religion*, Penguin Books, London, 1989, pp. 79 – 81.

<sup>13</sup> Johannes Quasten: *Patrology* Vol I, Christian Classics Inc., Westminster, Maryland, 1984, p. 24. The five Greek letters IXΘΥΣ that make up the word fish are the first five letters of the words 'Jesus Christ God's Son'. It is also associated with baptism.

<sup>14</sup> George Ferguson: *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*; Oxford University Press, London, 1961, p. 150. The Chi-Rho symbol is composed of the first letter Greek letters spelling the word Christ. Chi is an 'X' and Rho a 'P'. The one is superimposed upon the other to form of a cross. The symbol can also be read as in Latin 'pax' which is translated as 'peace'.

<sup>15</sup> Roman Emperor Galerius Maximus 305 - 311. He softened his attitude towards Christians in the last year of his reign.

<sup>16</sup> H. Leclercq: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol, XI, Symbol of the First Ecumenical Council 325 CE: Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1911, Online Edition 2003. 'We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father, through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven and cometh to judge the living and the dead.'

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<sup>17</sup> Suetonius: *The Twelve Caesars*, (trans.) Robert Graves, Penguin Classics, Middlesex, England, 1981, pp. 114 - 116. Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus was referred to by Suetonius as Appius Claudius Pulcher.

<sup>18</sup> 330-335CE. Marble relief. Museo Nazionale, Rome, Italy.

<sup>19</sup> Late 4th century CE. Marble. Originally from Alyscamps Necropolis near Arles. Arles Musée Lapidaire d'Art Chretien, France.

<sup>20</sup> Mid fourth century CE. Fresco. Catacomb Via Latina, Rome, Italy.

<sup>21</sup> The mosaic design on the apsidal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome 438CE comprises on the left side from the top *Annunciation to the Virgin* and the *Angel's First Visitation to Joseph*; immediately below this is *The Adoration of the Magi*; in the next register down is *The Children of Bethlehem being Audited prior to Slaughter*; and on the bottom register there is an image of the walled city of Jerusalem with six lambs outside the gates. On the right-hand side from the top there are depictions of *The Presentation of Christ* and the *Angel's Second Visitation to Joseph*. Immediately below these is the representation believed to be the *Holy Family being welcomed by Aphrodisius in Hermopolis*,

<sup>22</sup> Title 'Theotokos' granted to the Virgin by the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE.

<sup>23</sup> Fifth century CE. Mosaic. Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, Italy.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *The Book of Saints*, compiled by the Benedictine Monks of St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, 1921, p. 27. In the *Martyrology of the Saints of France* Aphrodisius who was from Languedoc, welcomed and housed the Holy Family in Hermopolis during the flight into Egypt.

<sup>28</sup> Georges Goyau: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol X, 'Montpellier', New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>29</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Luke*, Ch. 2, vv. 41 – 43; 'And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch. And when he was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem.'

<sup>30</sup> Fifth century CE. Ivory relief. The Werden Casket. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> 545 CE. Ivory relief. Throne of Archbishop Maximian. Museo Arcivescovile, Ravenna, Italy.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> K. Weitzmann: 'Loca Sancta in the Representational Arts of Palestine', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28, (1971), pp. 31 – 55. Loca Sancta (sanctified location) is box or container of some kind intended to hold relics collected on a pilgrimage to a holy site. These may be inanimate objects such as part of the True Cross or they may be a saint's remains.

<sup>35</sup> Sixth century CE. Tempera on wooden reliquary box. Vatican Museums, Rome, Italy.

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<sup>36</sup> The sides and lid are decorated with scenes of the Life of Christ. This particular box is believed to have contained relics collected in the Holy Land. It is housed in the Vatican Museum, Rome, Italy.

<sup>37</sup> Robin Cormack: *Byzantine Art*: Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2000, pp. 1 - 37.

<sup>38</sup> Seventh century CE. Bronze medallion from the Minden Grave. Rhinelandes Museum, Trier, Germany.

<sup>39</sup> The use of this kind of Frankish bronze disk, known as a bracteate, was important in Frankish society as it was used as a form of currency.

<sup>40</sup> Tenth century CE. Fresco. Coptic. Church of the Holy Virgin, Monastery of the Syrians, Wadi Natrum, Syria.

<sup>41</sup> The monastery near Alexandria, dates back to c. 700 CE.

<sup>42</sup> J P Hirsch: 'Egbert: Archbishop of Trier', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1909, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>43</sup> By the Gregory Master. Late tenth century CE. Manuscript illumination. Inks on vellum. Trier Stadtbibliothek, Trier, Germany.

<sup>44</sup> Ann Wharton Epstein, Annabel Jane Wharton, Paul M Schwartzbaum: *Tokali Kilise: tenth century metropolitan art in Byzantine Cappadocia*, Dumbarton Oaks, Maryland, USA, 1986, p. 42.

<sup>45</sup> Vatican Library, Rome, Italy.

<sup>46</sup> Tenth century CE. Menologian of Basil II. Manuscript illumination. Inks on vellum. Vatican Library, Rome, Italy.

<sup>47</sup> Eleventh century. Ivory relief. Salerno Cathedral, Diocesan Museum, Salerno, Italy.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux; (ed.) Frank Yuse: *Honey in the Mouth*, 'Sermons I on the Glories of the Virgin Mother', p. 12. 'Surely that soul must be highly pleasing to God in which humility commends virginity, and virginity adorns humility. But with what degree of reverence shall we not judge her to be worthy of whose humility fruitfulness glorifies, and whose virginity is consecrated by motherhood?'

<sup>50</sup> Peter Abélard, (trans.) Henry Adams Bellows: *Historia Calamitatum*, BiblioBazaar, Charleston, South Carolina, 2007, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> *A History of My Misfortunes*.

<sup>52</sup> Twelfth century. Mosaic. Palatine Chapel, Palermo, Sicily.

<sup>53</sup> Twelfth century. Stained glass. Abbey Church of St-Denis, Paris, France.

<sup>54</sup> Erwin Panofsky, (ed.) Gerda Panofsky-Soergel,: *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St-Denis and Its Art and Treasures*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979, p.205. Much of the window was destroyed in the thirteenth century, though the *Annunciation*, *Nativity* and the *Angel visiting St Joseph* are the originals.

<sup>55</sup> Much of the window now is made up of nineteenth century glass though twelfth century glass can still be found. Of those pieces pertinent to this study some of the original glass for the *Flight into Egypt* can be found at the Raymond Pitcairn Collection, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, USA, and

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some at the Parish Church at Wilton, Wiltshire, UK along with part of the *Adoration of the Magi*. *The Presentation in the Temple* can be found at the Parish Church at Wilton in Wiltshire, UK, and also in the Parish Church in Twycross, Leicestershire, UK.

<sup>56</sup> Erwin Panofsky: *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St-Denis*, 'Introduction', p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* Abbot Suger: 'De Administratione: Of the Church's Decoration', p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> Twelfth century. Stained glass. Abbey Church of St-Denis, Paris, France.

<sup>59</sup> A. Vermeersch: 'Usury', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, the Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>60</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of Matthew*, Ch. 1: v. 24; Ch.2: v. 13; Ch. 2: vv. 19 – 21.

<sup>61</sup> Twelfth century. Stained Glass. Abbey Church of St- Denis, Paris, France.

<sup>62</sup> George Ferguson: *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, 1961, pp. 151 & 152. White has always been associated with purity and holiness. For example Christ's garment in the transfiguration is described as being 'as white as light' (*Gospel of St Matthew* Ch.17, v. 2), Christ wears white after his Resurrection. Blue is the colour of cloudless skies and heaven. Therefore it is associated with truth. It is the colour most associated with the Virgin.

<sup>63</sup> St Augustine: *Confessions*, Book X 'Memory', (trans.) Henry Chadwick, Oxford University Press, 1991, p.183.

<sup>64</sup> Umberto Eco: *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986, p13.

<sup>65</sup> There were eight Crusades. 1<sup>st</sup> Crusade 1095-1101, 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade 1145-1147, 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusade 1188-1192, 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade 1204, 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade 1217, 6<sup>th</sup> Crusade 1228-1229 and again in 1239, 7<sup>th</sup> Crusade 1249-1252, 8<sup>th</sup> Crusade 1270, L Bréhier, 'Crusades', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1908, reprinted New Advent, 2010, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>66</sup> David J Goldberg and John D Rayner: *The Jewish people their history and their religion*, Penguin Books, London, 1989, p.102.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Julius: *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 109.

<sup>68</sup> Israel Abrahams: *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, reprinted from the 1911 edition by Elibron Classics, USA, 2005, p. 225.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p. 236 – 244.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

<sup>72</sup> First half twelfth century. Stone capital. Cathedral of St Lazare, Autun, France.

<sup>73</sup> Attributed to Gislebertus.

<sup>74</sup> Israel Abrahams: *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*. He discusses the custom for Jewish men to cover their heads. He writes that 'it is not easy to explain how the medieval Jews came to intensify and stereotype the custom of covering their heads, not only in worship, but when engaged in secular employments.' p.278.

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<sup>75</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Luke*; Ch. 2 v. 41. 'And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch.' 'Et ibant parentes eius per omnes annos Hierusalem in die sollemni paschae.'

<sup>76</sup> Twelfth century. Stone capital. Cathedral of St Lazare, Autun, France.

<sup>77</sup> David J Goldberg and John D Rayner: *The Jewish people their history and their religion*, p.102.

<sup>78</sup> Israel Abrahams: *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 404 & 405.

<sup>79</sup> Late twelfth century. Tempera, gold, silver and ink on parchment. John Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California, USA.

<sup>80</sup> Elizabeth C Teviotdale: *The Stammheim Missal*, Getty Museum Studies of Art, Los Angeles, California, USA, p. 68.

<sup>81</sup> Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 68. *Medieval Source Book*, [www.fordham.edu/halsall/](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/) (accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Twelfth century. Tempera on wood. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain.

<sup>84</sup> Stone relief in a spandrel in the Lady Chapel, Worcester Cathedral, England.

<sup>85</sup> Thirteenth century. Stone.

<sup>86</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Gospel of St Matthew*, Ch. 1, v.20.

<sup>87</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Gospel of St Luke*, Ch. 2, v. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*, St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 2001, pp. 6 & 7. The Servites adopted a feast day in 1324 and the Franciscans in 1399 and Pope Sixtus IV included his feast day into the Roman calendar in 1479.

<sup>89</sup> David J Goldberg and John D Rayner: *The Jewish People: their History and their Religion*, pp. 99 - 106. Jewish communities had spread through Western Europe encouraged by kings and nobles due to their propensity for trade. However in 1095 Pope Urban II pronounced against usury. In 1198 Pope Innocent III encouraged the establishment of two orders; the Franciscans and the Dominicans, the latter of whom were antagonistic towards the Jews.

<sup>90</sup> John White: *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250 – 1400*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, pp. 73 - 92. White writes that this window of prosperity was short lived and began to dissipate with the death of Emperor Frederick II in 1250. Hence any feelings of victory and prosperity were already waning.

<sup>91</sup> G H and E R Crichton: *Nicola Pisano and the Revival of Sculpture in Italy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.

<sup>95</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Gospel of St Luke*, Ch. 2: v 24. 'And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' Note that though

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Joseph is recorded as being present at the event, the gospel does not speak specifically of Joseph carrying the two birds, only that it was customary from the time of Moses to present a newborn child to the Lord and two turtledoves or young pigeons as a sacrificial offering.

<sup>96</sup> Tempera on panel, Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

<sup>97</sup> There appears to be no definitive proof of authorship at present.

<sup>98</sup> Tempera on panel. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

## Chapter III

### The Humble Man

<sup>1</sup> James Hall: *Hall's Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, John Murray, London, 1996, p. 324. The Madonna of Humility is a depiction of the Virgin seated on the ground quite often she will have bare feet. p. 126 Bare feet was an accepted symbol of humility and poverty both in art and life. Christ is described as washing the disciples' feet in the *Gospel of St John*, ch.13, vv. 4 – 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> 'Chivalry'. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1908, Online Edition 2003. The Crusades introduced the notion of the chivalric code or knight. As a knight crusader he would be taken under the protection of the Church and have conferred on him special temporal and spiritual privileges.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to this period there were two main classifications of citizens the *maiores* and the *minores* with the occasional use of the term *mediocres* for those in between.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald H Fritze and William Baxter Robinson: *Historical Dictionary of Late Medieval England, 1272 - 1485*, Greenwood Press, UK, 2002, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> W. Turner: 'Raymond Lully'. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1911, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>7</sup> *The Romance of the Rose* was written between 1225 and 1278. In the first and earlier section of the work by Guillaume the author describes the progress of courtly love. In this respect the Lover's intended is as much an unattainable goal as Dante's pursuit of Beatrice.

<sup>8</sup> Macrobius: *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, Ch. III, (trans. & notes) William Harris Stahl, Columbia University Press, New York, 1990, pp. 86 - 92. Written approximately 400CE Macrobius states that: 'All dreams may be classified under five main types: the enigmatic dream, as in Greek *oneiros*, in Latin *somnium*; second, the prophetic dream, in Greek *horama*, in Latin *visio*; third, the oracular dream, in Greek *chrematismos*, in Latin *oraculum*; fourth, the nightmare, in Greek *eypnion*, in Latin *insomnium*; and last, the apparition, in Greek *phantasma*, which Cicero, when he has occasion to use the word, calls *visum*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 87, n. 1. Stahl writes that 'The elaborate classification and description of dreams forming this chapter (Ch. III) was one of the most popular sections of the *Commentary* and caused the author to be regarded as one of the leading authorities on dreams during the Middle Ages.'

<sup>10</sup> Marina Warner: *Alone of All her Sex*, Vintage, UK, 2000, pp. 104 - 106. She writes that the proclamation of the Council of Ephesus in 431 that she was the *Theotokos* meant she was also the *Regina Caeli*. Warner further points out that her assumption to heaven confirms this title. By the time the mosaics were being created for the apse in Santa Maria Maggiore she was being presented as an empress or queen, crowned and seated on a throne.

<sup>11</sup> Her activities cause me to wet my cheeks; (i.e. cry)

<sup>12</sup> (Eds) Richard Beadle and Pamela M King, 'The Pewterers' and Founders' Play: Joseph's trouble about Mary', *York Mystery Plays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp48 – 50.

<sup>13</sup> (Ed.) Vincent F Hopper, *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., New York, 1970, pp. 203 – 245.

<sup>14</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: the Gospel of St Luke*; Ch. 2 vv. 36 & 37 refer to Anna as a widow and a prophetess who has lived in the temple for a number of years.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: the Gospel of St Luke*; Ch. 2, vv. 28 - 30. 'He also took him into his arms and blessed God and said, Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord according to thy word in peace; Because my eyes have seen thy salvation.'

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 23 & 24.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Braun; 'Maniple', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol IX, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1910, Online Edition, 2003. The maniple symbolises the cares and sorrows of earthly life to be borne with patience. It was first worn and used at Rome in the sixth century.

<sup>18</sup> James Stubblebine: *Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes*, Preface: W W Norton & Company, New York and London, 1969, p. xi. 'Documents on the Arena Chapel are few in number and refer only obliquely to the decoration of the interior.'

<sup>19</sup> M Ott: 'Blessed Jacopo de Voragine', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1910, Online Edition 2003. Voragine was a Dominican and the Archbishop of Genoa. He was born in approximately 1230 and died sometime in the late 1290s. The *Legenda Sanctorum* was also known as the *Legenda Aurea* (*Golden Legend*) because it was considered so good that it was worth its weight in gold.

<sup>20</sup> Tempera on wood. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Originally intended for the high altar in the Badia in Florence.

<sup>21</sup> Giorgio Bonsanti: *The Basilica of St Francis of Assisi: Glory and Destruction*, Harry N Abrams, Inc., New York, USA, 1997, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> James Stubblebine: *Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes*, pp. 105 & 107 Dating of the frescoes is difficult. The Papal Bull granting indulgences to those visiting the chapel is dated as March 1<sup>st</sup> 1304, whereas the request for the tapestries for the consecration of the Chapel are dated in the Deliberations of the Council of Venice as being 16<sup>th</sup> March 1305.

<sup>23</sup> Dante Alighieri: *Purgatorio. Divine Commedia*, Lines 93 and 94, Canto XI: 'Credette Cimabue, nella pittura, Tener lo campo ed ora ha Giotto il grido.'

<sup>24</sup> The debate continues as to Giotto's authorship of the St Francis cycle in the church of San Francesco at Assisi. Berenson believed that Giotto was responsible for the works but many art historians subsequently have voiced doubts or openly disputed their authorship. These include Hayden B J Maginnis, Rosalind B Brooke, and John White.

<sup>25</sup> James Stubblebine: *Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes*, p. 72. Stubblebine rejects this claim that 'despite resemblances inevitable between contemporary works, the Assisi frescoes reflect a fundamentally different approach from Giotto's in countless points of style and psychological outlook.'

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105; 'Papal Bull Granting Indulgences for Visitors to the Arena Chapel - March 1st 1304'. '... Accordingly, we beseech and through God exhort the universal community of the faithful, urging the remission of your sins, insofar as you do visit, in the spirit of humility, the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Charity in the Paduan Arena, imploring God forgiveness of sins...'

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Aquinas: 'On Usury' *Summa Theologica*, 1269 C.f. *Summa Theologica*, (trans) Fathers of the English Dominican Province, R T Washburne, London, 1918, pp. 330-340. 'To take usury for money lent is unjust in itself, because this is to sell what does not exist ...A lender may without sin enter agreement with the borrower for compensation for the loss he incurs of something he ought to have, for this is not to sell the use of money but to avoid a loss.'

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Vermeersch, 'Usury', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol XV, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Online Edition 2003.



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<sup>29</sup> Dante Alighieri, *Inferno, Divine Comedia*, Canto XVII, lines 64 - 75. The crest described is that of Reginaldo Scrovegni.

‘E un, che d’unascrofa azzura et grossa  
segnato avea lo sua sacchetto bianco,  
mi disse: ‘Che fai tu in questa fossa?  
Or te ne va; e perche se’ vivo anco,  
Sappi che l mio vicin Vitaliano’  
Sedera qui dal mio sinistro fianco.  
Con questi fiorentin son padovano:  
Spesse fiate m’intronan li orecchi,  
Gridando: ‘Vegna il cavalier sovrano,  
Che rechera la tasca coi tre becchi!’  
Qui distorse la bocca e di fuor trasse  
La lingua come bua che l naso lecchi.

<sup>30</sup> Laura Jacobus: *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture and Experience*, David Brown Book Company, Connecticut, USA, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Robert H Rough: ‘Enrico Scrovegni, the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*, and the Arena Chapel’, *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 62, no. 1, 1980, p. 24. Giovanni da Nono: *Liber de Generacione Aliquorum Civium Urbis Padue*.

<sup>32</sup> See note 29.

<sup>33</sup> Robert H Rough: ‘Enrico Scrovegni, the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*, and the Arena Chapel’, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Harrison: *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280 - 1400*. Yale University Press, 1995, p.90.

<sup>35</sup> Laura Jacobus; ‘Giotto’s Annunciation and the Arena Chapel, Padua’, *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 81, 1999, pp.93 - 108. Jacobus stresses the relationship of the Chapel to that of the Virgin and the feast of the Annunciation.

<sup>36</sup> *Anti-Nicene Fathers* Vol. 8; ‘Protoevangelium of James’: (trans) Alexander Walker; (eds) Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A Cleveland Coxe, Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, New York, USA, 1888. Revised and edited Kevin Knight, New Advent, [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/) (accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010). It documents the difficulties surrounding the conception of the Virgin. ‘In the records of the twelve tribes of Israel was Joachim, a man rich exceedingly; and he brought his offerings double, saying: There shall be of my superabundance to all people, and there shall be the offering of my forgiveness to the Lord for a propitiation for me. For the great day of the Lord was at hand, and the sons of Israel were bringing offerings. And there stood over him Rubim, saying: It is not meet for you first to bring your offerings, because you have not made seed of Israel. And Joachim was exceedingly grieved, and went away to the registers of the twelve tribes of the people, saying: I shall see the registers of the twelve tribes of Israel, as whether I alone have not made seed in Israel. And he called to mind the patriarch Abraham, that in the last day God gave him a son Isaac. And Joachim was exceedingly grieved, and did not come into the presence of his wife; but he retired to the desert, and there pitched his tent, and fasted forty days and forty nights, saying in himself: I will not go down either for food or for drink until the Lord my God shall look upon me, and prayer shall be my food and drink.’

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 4, ‘And behold, Joachim came with his flocks; and Anna stood by the gate, and saw Joachim coming, and she ran and hung upon his neck, saying Now I know that the Lord my God has blessed me exceedingly; for behold the widow no longer a widow, and I the childless shall conceive.’

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<sup>38</sup> Jacobus da Voragine: *The Golden Legend*, 131 'Nativity of our Blessed Lady'. [www.fordham.edu/halsall/](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/) (accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* '...and whereas the others brought forth their rods he hid his. And when nothing appeared according to the voice of God, the bishop ordained for to ask counsel again of our Lord. And he answered that, he only that should espouse the virgin had not brought forth his rod. And Joseph by commandment of the bishop brought forth his rod, and anon it flowered, and a dove descended from heaven thereupon, so that it was clearly the advice of every man that he should have the virgin.'

<sup>40</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Numbers* Ch. 17 v. 18

<sup>41</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Genesis* Ch. 41 vv. 29 & 30

<sup>42</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St Matthew* Ch. 2 vv. 13 - 23

<sup>43</sup> Leon Battista Alberti: *On Painting*, (trans.) John R Spencer, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1966, p.77.

<sup>44</sup> See earlier references in this chapter to Boethius's *Philosophy of Consolation*, Macrobius's *Commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio*, and the *Roman de la Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun.

<sup>45</sup> Bernard McGinn: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism - 1200-1350*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1998, Introduction, pp. 1-30. McGinn writes that monasticism and scholasticism reached their height in 1200, then personal piety began to flourish as consistent with increasing levels of literacy among the laity and the upturn in the economic climate in the West. Individual devotion and relationship with God, and mystical visions such as those experienced by Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena, became evermore recorded and related, often in both Latin and the vernacular.

<sup>46</sup> *The Craftsman's Handbook 'Il Libro dell'Arte'* Cennino d'Andrea Cennini (trans.) Daniel V Thompson, Jr., Dover Publications Inc., New York, USA, 1960, pp. 36 - 39. Cennini Cennini in his book takes three pages in describing the intricacies of making ultramarine blue from lapis lazuli. His opening comment is 'Ultramarine blue is a colour illustrious, beautiful, and most perfect, beyond all other colours'.

<sup>47</sup> Lapis Lazuli was highly prized because its price. Difficult to prepare it was more expensive than gold. It only comes from a particular form of limestone that is mined in the Kokcha river valley in Afghanistan.

<sup>48</sup> George Ferguson: *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, Oxford University Press, 1961, p.33. The ivy symbolises death, immortality, fidelity and eternal life due to its evergreen quality and its tenacity.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Alpatoff: 'The Parallelism of Giotto's Paduan Frescoes', reprinted in James Stubblebine: *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, 1969, p.163.

<sup>50</sup> The Marriage at Cana is only related in St John's Gospel Ch 2. At this point Christ has not commenced his ministry but already has four disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip and Nathaniel.

<sup>51</sup> Fresco. All Saints Parish Church, Croughton, South Northamptonshire, England. Part of *Life of the Virgin*. Fresco includes *Massacre of the Innocents*.

<sup>52</sup> Tempera on wood. 1311. Double-sided altarpiece. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter II.

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<sup>54</sup> The inclusion of the ox and the ass in representations of the Nativity is in accordance with the *Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew* Chapter 14 in which reference is made to the passage in *Isaiah* Chapter 1 v. 3 in which it is written 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood.'

<sup>55</sup> Tempera on wood. 1311. Double-sided altarpiece. Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy.

<sup>56</sup> (Ed.) Diana Norman: *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280 – 1400*. Vol. 1 'Interpretative Essays'; Diana Norman, Ch. 3, 'Duccio: the recovery of a reputation', Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1995, p. 57. 'There were, at that period, undoubtedly Byzantine painters working within central Italy with whose work Duccio was probably acquainted...Byzantine artefacts were being imported into Italy at that time..Similar patterns occurred in respect of northern Gothic art. Siena and Florence were both centres of international banking and commerce...'.

<sup>57</sup> Part of the predella of the *Maestà*. Tempera on panel. Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy.

<sup>58</sup> St Andrews Parish Church, built 1200.

<sup>59</sup> Fresco transferred to canvas. Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, Italy.

<sup>60</sup> Helen A Dickinson: *German Masters of Art*, Frederick A Stokes Company, New York, USA, 2009, pp. 41 – 51.

<sup>61</sup> Tempera on wood. 1383. Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany.

<sup>62</sup> Tempera on wood. 1383. Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany.

## Chapter IV

### Waiting on God: Joseph's Contemplative Dedication

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard McGinn: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism – 1200-1350*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1998, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard McGinn: *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins in the Fifth Century*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1991 p. xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard McGinn: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism – 1200 – 1350*, pp. 1 – 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Waley: *The Italian City-Republics*, Longman, London and New York, 1995, p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 80 & 81.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Oakley: *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1996, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 28 & 29.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 23 – 26. The city of Anagni, south east of Rome had long been associated with the Papacy. During the thirteenth century four popes had had been elected from the Conti family in the city. Pope Boniface VIII another citizen of Anagni was elected in 1300 but his election was opposed by four French cardinals. The situation deteriorated when Boniface came into conflict with the French king Philip IV. Boniface issued a Bull proclaiming himself supreme over the king. In 1303 the King ordered men to attack the Pope's residence in Anagni. This action is known as the Outrage of Anagni. The Pope was held prisoner for three days before the townsfolk of Anagni released him.

<sup>10</sup> G Goyau and G Mollat, 'Avignon', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1907, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard McGinn: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism: 1200 – 1350*, pp. 65 & 66.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 74 & 75.

<sup>13</sup> L Oliger, 'Pierre Jean Olivi', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1911, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Francis Oakley: *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 109 - 115.

<sup>15</sup> Taddeo Gaddi is thought to have lived from 1300 to approximately 1366.

<sup>16</sup> Tempera on panel. Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Monastery of Pedralbes, Barcelona, Spain. It is a small panel, 35.5 cm by 37.5 cm, leading to the supposition that it was part of a small altar intended for private use.

<sup>17</sup> John Henderson: *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1997, pp. 279 & 280. The Bardi bank crashed in 1343 and the Peruzzi bank in 1346; this led to a major economic down turn in Florence. The commune declared itself bankrupt in 1345. The cost of silver throughout Europe rose causing widespread unemployment.

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<sup>18</sup> Malcolm K Hughes & Henry F Diaz: *The Medieval Warm Period*, 'Was there a Medieval Warm Period, and if so, Where and When', Kluwer Academic Publishers, Mass., USA, 1994, p. 111. The Medieval Warm Period (Little Climate Optimum) was not a global phenomenon but did affect areas of Europe including those around the Mediterranean and Scandinavia. It occurred from approx. 1000 to 1250 and may explain the degree of population growth.

<sup>19</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio: *The Decameron*, Penguin Books, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London, 1995, pp. 107. Giovanni Boccaccio: *Decameron*, Einaudi, Torino, 1980, pp. 24 - 26 '...li quail con l'aiuto de' detti becchini, senza faticarsi un troppo o solenne, un qualunque sepoltura disoccupata trovano più tosto il mettevano... Né erano per ciò questi da alcuna lacrima o lume o compagnia onorati, anzi era la cosa pervenuta a tanto, che non altramenti si curava degli uomini che morivano, che ora si curerebbe di capre...'

<sup>20</sup> Stephani, Marchione di Coppo: *Cronaca fiorentina, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. 30, 'Rubric 643: Concerning a mortality in the city of Florence in which many died.' (ed.) Niccolò Rodolico, Città di Castello: 1903 - 1913. 'Those in the town fled to the villages. Physicians could not be found because they had died like the others. And those who could be found wanted vast sums in hand before they entered the house. And when they did enter, they checked the pulse with face turned away. They inspected the urine from a distance and with something odoriferous under their nose. Child abandoned the father, husband the wife, wife the husband, one brother the other, one sister the other. In all the city there was nothing to do but to carry the dead to burial.'

<sup>21</sup> John Henderson: *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1997, p. 50. Flagellants had begun to appear in Italy in the town of Perugia after an outbreak of plague in 1259. The act of flagellation was performed as an act of penance. Many flagellants were responding to the apocalyptic prophecies of Joachim of Fiore who on studying the *Book of Revelation* believed that the third age - that of the Spirit - was coming upon them.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51. The *Bianchi* originated in Piedmont when a peasant had a vision of the Virgin Mary saying that the Schism and the many minor wars afflicting Italy had angered Christ. In order to dispel Christ's wrath they must dress in white like other flagellants but wear on their heads a red cross. In such dress they should process, beating themselves about their shoulders.

<sup>23</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio: *The Decameron*, Penguin Classics, London, UK, 1972, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Ole J Benedictow: *The Black Death 1346 - 1353: The Complete History*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, UK, 2004, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Millard Meiss: *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1978, pp. 70 - 73.

<sup>26</sup> 1354-57. Tempera on wood. Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy.

<sup>27</sup> Millard Meiss: *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*, p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 165.

<sup>29</sup> (Ed.) Diana Norman: *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280 - 1400*, Vol. II, Yale University Press and the Open University, London, 1995, p. 136.

<sup>30</sup> David Herlihy: *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997, pp. 69 - 71.

<sup>31</sup> The Great Schism of 1378-1417 came about when the cardinals in France refused to accept the election of Urban VI; instead they named Clement VII as pope. This resulted in Clement and his papacy withdrawing to Avignon while Urban remained with his court in Rome.

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<sup>32</sup> Janet Hope, MA Diss., 2001, p.13. Both Catherine of Siena and her confessor Raymond of Capua sought to expunge heresy within the Church. The Dominicans were given authority by the Papacy to seek out and eliminate heresy.

<sup>33</sup> John Henderson; *Piety and Charity in the Late Medieval Period*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1997, pp.303 & 304. Henderson points out that the main reasons behind the commune feeding the poor was to prevent social unrest. In this instance it was caused by the *arte minori* briefly seizing power from the commune.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Oman: *The Great Revolt of 1381*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, London, 1906. pp. 5 & 6. Disputes between landowners and labourers occurred after the Black Death in 1348 and the institution of the Statutes of Labourers in 1351. With too few people to adequately work the land much of it fell fallow. This land was turned to sheep farming by the landowners resulting in lower yields of food. The Statute also allowed landowners to pay the labourers as little as they wished.

<sup>35</sup> Augustinus Lehmkuhl: 'Sacrament of Marriage', *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1910, Online Edition 2003. Pope Innocent IV included matrimony amongst the sacraments of the Church in 1208.

<sup>36</sup> *The Protoevangelium of James* and the *Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew* refer to the Betrothal.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter III, n. 24, *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, the 'Protoevangelium of James' Ch. 9. *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 8 (trans.) Alexander Walker, (eds.) Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A Cleveland Coxe, Christian Literature Publishing Co. Buffalo, New York, USA, 1888. Revised & edited Kevin Knight, New Advent, [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/) (accessed 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010). 'Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew' Ch. 8: 'Joseph began bashfully to address them, saying: I am an old man, and have children: why do you hand over to me this infant, who is younger than my grandsons?'

<sup>38</sup> (Ed.) Diana Norman: *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280 - 1400*, Vol. II, Yale University Press and the Open University, London, 1995, pp. 170 - 179.

<sup>39</sup> *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, 'Protoevangelium of James': Ch. 9. 'And Joseph, throwing away his axe, went out to meet them; and when they had assembled, they went away to the high priest, taking with them their rods. And he, taking the rods of all of them, entered into the temple, and prayed and having ended his prayer, he took the rods and came out, and gave them to them: but there was no sign in them, and Joseph took his rod last; and, behold, a dove came out of the rod, and flew upon Joseph's head. And the priest said to Joseph, You have been chosen by lot to take into your keeping the virgin of the Lord.'

<sup>40</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Numbers*, Ch. 17: vv. 5 - 8. 'Whomsoever of these I shall choose, his rod shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, wherewith they murmur of against you. And Moses spoke to the children of Israel: and all the princes gave him rods, one for every tribe: and there were twelve rods besides the rod of Aaron. And when Moses had laid them up before the Lord in the tabernacle of the testimony: He returned the following day and found the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi, was budded: and that the buds swelling it hid bloomed blossoms which spreading the leaves, were formed into almonds.'

<sup>41</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Genesis*, Ch. 43: vv. 10 and 11.

<sup>42</sup> A situation where all the heads in a painting or sculpture are arranged so that they appear to be all level.

<sup>43</sup> James Stubblebine: *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, W W Norton and Company, New York and London, 1995, pp. 92 & 93.

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<sup>44</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Songs of Solomon, Song of Songs*, Ch. 4, v. 12. 'Hortus conclusus soro mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus.' 'My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up.'

<sup>45</sup> The placing of the ring on the right hand ring finger is repeated in most Betrothal depictions.

<sup>46</sup> Tempera on panel. The Royal Collection, England. The polyptych is thought to have been originally intended for the high altar of the Duomo in Florence.

<sup>47</sup> The San Pancrazio Altarpiece is in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>48</sup> The sacraments of the Church include baptism, confession, marriage, confirmation, eucharist, extreme unction and ordination.

<sup>49</sup> Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Florence, Italy.

<sup>50</sup> Central panel (National Gallery, London) of a triptych including the *Presentation of the Virgin* (Uffizi, Florence) and the *Coronation of the Virgin* (Metropolitan Museum of New York). Believed to have been painted for the Santa Maria Nuova in Florence. Egg tempera on wood.

<sup>51</sup> Tempera on panel. 1400 - 1425. National Gallery, London, England.

<sup>52</sup> William Hood: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, p. 77.

<sup>53</sup> Predella of an annunciation now known as the *Cortona Altarpiece*. Tempera on wood. Museo Diocesano, Cortona. Pope-Hennessy states that the altarpiece is the same one that was in the Gesù in Cortona. It was originally painted for the church of Sant' Alessandro in Brescia but was thought to be destroyed. He is of the opinion that it was transferred to Cortona when the church in Brescia ran out of funds. *Fra Angelico*, John Pope-Hennessy, Scala, 1981, p.15.

<sup>54</sup> Francis William Kent: 'Neighbourhood, Patronage and the Ancestors', *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori and Rucellai*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1977, p. 252.

<sup>55</sup> William Hood: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, pp. 39 and 252. Piero di Cosimo de' Medici was the son of Cosimo de' Medici. Piero was a major patron in Florence including at the church of Santissima Annunziata and re-roofing the oratory at San Marco.

<sup>56</sup> In the upper chamber of the Oratory of San Bernardino adjoining the church of San Francesco in Siena.

<sup>57</sup> Tempera on canvas.

<sup>58</sup> (Ed.) Bergh Birger: *St Bridget of Sweden: Revelaciones Book VII: 'The Pilgrimage Book'*, 21; Vitterhek Historie Akademien, Uppsala; Almquist & Wiksells; Kungl, Stockholm, 1967.

<sup>59</sup> Francesca Maria Steele: *St Bridget of Sweden*, Bibliofile, LaVergne, Tennessee, USA, 2010. Naples and Sicily were ruled over by Joanna I during the mid fourteenth century. St Bridget visited her court as did Petrarch and Boccaccio. Pp. xxiv & xxv.

<sup>60</sup> (Ed.) Marguerite Tjader Harris: *Birgitta of Sweden: Life and Selected Revelations*, Paulist Press, New York and Mahwah, USA, 1990, pp. 9 & 10.

<sup>61</sup> St Bernardino: *Sermon 1 de S. Joseph*, [www.catholictreasury.info/](http://www.catholictreasury.info/) (accessed 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Tempera on wood. Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, Italy.

<sup>63</sup> Manuscript illumination. Tempera on vellum. Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter III and *The Vulgate Bible*, Ch. 41, v. 18, and Ch. IV notes 37 and 38.

<sup>65</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Exodus*: Ch. 28 vv. 1 & 4. 'And these shall be the vestments that they shall make: A rational and an ephod, a tunic and a strait linen garment, a mitre and a girdle. They shall make the holy vestments for thy brother Aaron and his sons, that they may do the office of priesthood unto me.'

<sup>66</sup> (eds.) Catherine Soanes, Angus Stevenson: *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>67</sup> *The Nativity* folio 44. Musée Condé, Chantilly, France. Tempera on vellum.

<sup>68</sup> Also known as the Master of Flémalle.

<sup>69</sup> 1420s. Oil on wood. Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, France.

<sup>70</sup> (Ed.) Birger Bergh: St Bridget of Sweden: *Revelaciones Book VII: 'The Pilgrimage Book'*, Ch 21; Vitterhek Historie Akademien, Uppsala; Almqvist & Wiksells; Kungl, Stockholm, 1967.

<sup>71</sup> Oil on wood. Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, France.

<sup>72</sup> Tempera on poplar panel. Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA.

<sup>73</sup> Tempera and gold on panel. Pinacoteca Civica, Forlì, Italy.

<sup>74</sup> Painted approximately in 1450 *The Madonna of the Shadows* is a large sacra conversazione incorporating a number of Dominican saints. The Virgin in Majesty with Sts Mark the Evangelist, Cosmas, Damian and Dominic on one side of her and Sts John the Evangelist, Thomas Aquinas, Lawrence and Peter Martyr on her left hand side. The fresco is situated on the first floor east side in the corridor of the Clerics in the Cells of the Dominican Convent of San Marco in Florence. Christ is depicted standing facing front on the Virgin's lap with his hand raised in blessing.

<sup>75</sup> Oil on wood. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, Germany.

<sup>76</sup> Erwin Panofsky: *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 1964, p. 277.

<sup>77</sup> Late 1440s. Oil on wood. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, USA.

<sup>78</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Isaiah*; Ch. V. 3. 'Cognovit bos possessorum suum et asinus praesepe domini.'

<sup>79</sup> (Ed.) Bergh Birger: St Bridget of Sweden: *Revelaciones Book VII: 'The Pilgrimage Book'*, Ch. 21.

<sup>80</sup> Tempera on wood. Museo di San Marco, Florence, Italy.

<sup>81</sup> William Hood: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, Yale University Press, 1993. He attributes this fresco to Pope-Hennessy's Master of Cell 2, p. 318, n. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Oil on wood. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.



## Chapter V

### Joseph as Paradigm of Fatherhood

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<sup>1</sup> Tempera on poplar. The Cloisters Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Provenance according to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, USA.

<sup>3</sup> (Ed.) Frank Yuse: *Honey in the Mouth: Meditations from St Bernard*, Apostle Publishing, Marshall, WA, 1995, p. 110. In 'Sermon II on the Glories of the Virgin Mother' Bernard of Clairvaux wrote this of Joseph. 'He was, I say, the good and faithful servant, whom the Lord appointed to be the consolation of His Mother, the support of His Humanity, and His one most faithful assistant on earth in the execution of His mighty purpose...'

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 110, 'What and how great was the dignity of Joseph...he merited to be honoured by God, so that he was called and considered the father of God.' Also p. 152. '...St Joseph, by espousing to himself Mary and by closely observing her conduct during the time of engagement, became a most trustworthy witness of her virtue.'

<sup>5</sup> Tempera on poplar. Staatliches Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, Germany.

<sup>6</sup> George Holmes: *The Florentine Enlightenment 1400 – 1450*, Pegasus, New York, 1969, pp. 139 – 145. Holmes suggests that when in *Della Famiglia* Alberti writes of the 'famiglia' he is using it in its broadest connotations and is not referring to one's immediate family but the commune of Florence in general; hence the importance of the responsibilities on those in the paternal role.

<sup>7</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1991, p. 299. Trexler quotes Gene Bruckner. Though Trexler suggests that a discreet ceremony for an official or ambassador probably would not have caused too many diplomatic problems.

<sup>8</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli: *History of Florence and the Affairs of Italy*, Lightning Source UK Ltd, Milton Keynes, 2010, pp.267 – 269. In one example Machiavelli recounts how the friendship between Neri di Gino Capponi an influential member of the Signori (the governing council of Florence) and a powerful soldier Baldaccio d'Anghiari, destabilised the government and led to other members of the Signori conspiring together and having Baldaccio murdered.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel R Lesnick: 'Civic Preaching in the Early Renaissance: Giovanni Dominici's Florentine Sermons', *Christianity and the Renaissance: Images and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, (eds.), Syracuse University Press, New York, USA, 1990, pp. 216 - 221.

<sup>10</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, p. 367.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 368 & 369.

<sup>12</sup> John Henderson: *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, Chicago University Press, Chicago and London, 1994, pp. 71 – 73.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 370.

<sup>14</sup> Konrad Eisenbichler: *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411 – 1785*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1998, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, p. 371.

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<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Dominici: *On the Education of Children*, (trans.) Arthur Basil Coté, Catholic University of America, 1927, p. 52. Written by Dominici between 1405 and 1407. Comprising five chapters - with regard to God, to parents, to themselves, to the state and to adversity - for Bartolomea degli Alberti, daughter of Tommaso degli Albizzi, the wealthy and influential enemy of Cosimo de' Medici.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Part Four, Ch. 2, 2, 'Virtue, the True Riches', p. 52.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p.26.

<sup>19</sup> Francis L Filas: *The Man nearest to Christ: Nature and Historic Development of the Devotion to St Joseph*, Dennis Dobson Ltd., London, 1944, p. 145.

<sup>20</sup> D Catherine Brown: *Pastor and laity in the theology of Jean Gerson*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London, New York, 1987, p. 232.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 233.

<sup>22</sup> Francis L Filas: *The Man nearest to Christ: Nature and Historic Development of the Devotion to St Joseph*, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> D Catherine Brown: *Pastor and laity in the theology of Jean Gerson*, p. 234. He also held that though the marriage between Joseph and Mary was of a non-sexual nature, it was a true marriage as it was a sacramental. He argued that the marriage consent was in giving oneself over to one's spouse, not the act of sexual intercourse.

<sup>24</sup> [www.vatican.va/](http://www.vatican.va/) (accessed 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010).

<sup>25</sup> *Le prediche volgari (Firenze 1424)* (ed.) Ciro Cannarozzi, Pistoia. 1934, pp.278 & 279. 'El piu allegro vecchio che fusse mai nel mondo...E gli sciocchi dipinturi el dipingono vecchio maninconoso e colla mano alla gota, come s'elli avessi dolore o maninconia.'

<sup>26</sup> Lawrence S Cunningham: *St Francis of Assisi*, Twayne Publishers Inc., Woodbridge, Connecticut, USA, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> See note above.

<sup>28</sup> Frances Yates: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, Routledge Classics, London and New York, 1979, pp. 57 – 70. Galen a Greek physician and philosopher born in Pergamum in 129 CE. His philosophy was that the temperament of all men could be classified into the four humours: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic. A melancholic individual would be sad, poor, and unsuccessful; of dark complexion because of all the black bile.

<sup>29</sup> Marsilio Ficino: *Three Books on Life*: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Arizona, 2002, p. 18. Ficino was a Platonist and a priest who had also studied medicine in Florence in the mid fifteenth century. *De Vita Triplici* along with all volumes of his *Platonic Theology* are considered to be his major works. *De Vita Triplici* attempts to analyse and understand the condition of the intellect.

<sup>30</sup> Carol Falvo Heffernan: *The Melancholy Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare and Early Medicine*, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1995, pp. 7&8. Falvo Heffernan in making reference to *Saturn and Melancholy* by Klibansky, Saxl and Panofsky, states that being a melancholic only produces prodigious talent if it is already present; as with the imbibing of wine. Though Falvo Heffernan points out that paradoxically it is often melancholy which leads to the ingesting of alcohol in the first instance.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

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<sup>33</sup> See the Preface note. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Oil on wood. The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.

<sup>35</sup> See Preface.

<sup>36</sup> St Augustine: 'Sermons 263'; (trans. & ed.) Henry Bettenson, , *The Later Christian Fathers: A Selection from the writings of the Fathers from St Cyril of Jerusalem to St Leo the Great*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 222. 'The devil jumped for joy when Christ died; and by the very death of Christ the devil was overcome: he took, as it were, the bait in the mousetrap. He rejoiced at the death, thinking himself death's commander. But that which caused his joy dangled the bait before him. The Lord's cross was the devil's mousetrap: the bait which caught him was the death of the Lord.'

<sup>37</sup> Migne: 'De Ascensione Domini', *Patrologia Latina*, XXXVII Col. 1210. St Augustine, 'Sermon CCLXIII': '*Muscipula Diaboli, crux domini*'.

<sup>38</sup> Meyer Schapiro: *Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art: Selected Papers*, George Braziller Inc., 1979, pp. 6 - 12. Schapiro quotes St Augustine and Jean Gerson in substantiating the link between Joseph and his role as deceiver of the devil and that the devil is vanquished through Christ's crucifixion. Also the piece of wood Joseph is working is understood to be part of a bait box.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Hsley Minott: 'The Theme of the Mérode Altarpiece', *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 51, no. 3, September 1969, pp. 267 - 271.

<sup>41</sup> Erwin Panofsky: *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 1964, p. 164. Panofsky offers this explanation on the grounds of what he calls 'Vermeer's Milkmaid'. In Panofsky's opinion the fact that Joseph is presented as a carpenter indicates a fundamental shift away from the usual International Gothic interpretation of Joseph's role.

<sup>42</sup> Louis Marin and Catherine Porter: *On Representation*, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> Marilyn A Lavin: 'The Mystic Winepress in the Mérode Altarpiece', *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, New York University Press, New York, 1977, p. 298.

<sup>44</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Ephesians 6:12. Ecclesia militans* or Church militant. These are the Christians living on earth who battle against sin and the devil,

<sup>45</sup> 1402 – 1472. Humanist, architect, mathematician, artist and philosopher. He was a notary for the pope.

<sup>46</sup> Leon Battista Alberti: *I Libri della Famiglia*; (trans.) Renée Neu Watkins, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, South Carolina, USA, 1969, p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> The term *virtù* encompassed all the virtues plus including the wider implications of good for society and nationhood as a whole. The four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude; while the three theological virtues are faith, hope and charity.

<sup>48</sup> Leon Battista Albert: *I Libri della Famiglia*, p. 42.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 34 & 35.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 38 & 39.

<sup>52</sup> Manuscript illumination, Vatican Library Collection, Rome, Italy.

<sup>53</sup> The three great patriarchs of the Septuagint are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However the patriarchs were originally the leaders of the twelve tribes of Judah. A Fortescue: 'Patriarch and Patriarchate', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1911, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>54</sup> Oil on wood. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

<sup>55</sup> The orange was often used to substitute for an apple - the fruit of the Fall - if in combination the Christ Child as in this painting.

<sup>56</sup> T M Sparks; 'St Antoninus of Florence on St Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie* 19, 1971, p.433.

<sup>57</sup> Roberta J M Olson: *The Florentine Tondo*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 91. Olson is of the opinion that Antoninus's reference to Joseph in *Summa Theologica Moralis* as a 'noble soul, nobler of birth' influenced the manner in which Joseph came to be painted.

<sup>58</sup> Arthur McMahon: 'St Antoninus', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1907, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>59</sup> Renaissance Neo-Platonism was the re-emergence and emphasis on the study of the classics particularly the Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. The chief proponent was Marsilio Ficino.

<sup>60</sup> Merchant and banker, statesman, philanthropist. 1389 – 1464.

<sup>61</sup> William Hood: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Fresco. Painted sometime between 1438 and 1452. Convent of San Marco, Florence, Italy.

<sup>63</sup> Tempera and oil on wood. 1482 – 85. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, USA. Attribution is not definitive, sometimes being attributed to the School of Botticelli.

<sup>64</sup>(Ed.) Bergh Birger: St Bridget of Sweden, *Revelaciones Book VII*, 'The Pilgrimage Book', 21; Vitterhek Historie Akademien, Uppsala; Almquist and Wiksells; Kungl, Stockholm, 1967.

<sup>65</sup> Oil on panel. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>66</sup> Mirella Levi d'Ancona 'The *Doni Tondo* by Michelangelo: An Iconographic Study' *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 50, no. 1, 1968, pp.43 - 50.

<sup>67</sup> Savonarola ( 1452 – 1498) was a powerful Dominican preacher who for a time was at the Convent of San Marco in Florence. For more details appertaining to Savonarola see Chapter VII.

<sup>68</sup> Oil on panel. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, USA.

<sup>69</sup> 1510. Oil on panel. Staatliche Museum, Gemaldergalerie, Berlin, Germany.

<sup>70</sup> 1515 - 1526. Pen and brown ink on paper. British Museum, London, England.

<sup>71</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*, St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 2001, p. 58. 'La imazine della Madonna e quella del patriarcha S. Ioseph cum ei Bambino in mezzo.'

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<sup>72</sup> Oil on canvas. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

## Chapter VI

### The Emergence of the Cult of St Joseph

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<sup>1</sup> 1409. Tempera and ink on vellum. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. USA.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Burckhardt: *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, Phaidon Press, London, 1995, p. 91. 'The fifteenth century is, above all, that of the many-sided men... The Florentine merchant and statesman were often learned in both the classical languages.... The humanist, on his side, was compelled to the most varied attainments.'

<sup>3</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Cornell University Press, 1991, p.19.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p.27.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p.30.

<sup>6</sup> Denys Hays and John Law: *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, Longman, New York and London, 1989, pp. 253 – 259.

<sup>7</sup> Gene Brucker: *Renaissance Florence*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1969, 158 – 160. He attributes the Medicean ability to scupper their rivals to their great wealth, the ability to muster the 'popular' vote and what Brucker calls Cosimo's 'manipulation of the electoral system':

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 256.

<sup>9</sup> The theory that the general council of the Church has greater power than the Pope alone.

<sup>10</sup> John Henderson: *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, Ch.9, p. 361.

<sup>11</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, pp. 377 - 387. Trexler discusses the breakdown of Florentine commune in terms of the accepted exclusions from society at the beginning of the fifteenth century; those being women, children including boys and youths, and those referred to as 'plebs'.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* In St Bernardino's Lenten lectures of 1424 at Santa Croce he inveighed against amongst other sins sinful women and blasphemy; but on one day alone he condemned sodomy on three separate occasions. p. 381.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 378.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy M Sparks: 'St Antoninus of Florence on Saint Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, 19, p. 441, Sparks quotes Antoninus who is in agreement with 'Sts Ignatius, Jerome and Ambrose that Jesus was born of an espoused Mother so that the devil might be deceived. God willed that the Virgin Mary have a husband for the protection of the Child lest the devil be particularly vehement against Him.'

<sup>15</sup> Larry M Toschi: 'St Joseph in Liturgy', [www.osjoseph.org/](http://www.osjoseph.org/) (accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010). The earliest liturgy to be published was in 1597 by Jerónimo Gracián though it had been approved by St Antoninus.

<sup>16</sup> F Mersman: 'Litany', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1910. Online Edition 2003.

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<sup>17</sup> *Litany of Saint Joseph*

Lord, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, hear us.  
    Christ, graciously hear us.  
God, the Father of Heaven,  
    Have mercy on us.  
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,  
    Have mercy on us.  
God the Holy Ghost,  
    Have mercy on us.  
Holy Trinity, one God,  
    Have mercy on us.  
Holy Mary,  
    Pray for us.  
Holy Joseph,  
    Pray for us.

Noble Son of the House of David,  
    Pray for us.  
Light of the Patriarchs,  
    Pray for us.  
Husband of the Mother of God,  
    Pray for us.  
Chaste Guardian of the Virgin,  
    Pray for us.  
Foster-father of the Son of God,  
    Pray for us.  
Sedulous Defender of Christ,  
    Pray for us.  
Head of the Holy Family,  
    Pray for us.  
Joseph most just,  
    Pray for us.  
Joseph most chaste,  
    Pray for us.  
Joseph most prudent,  
    Pray for us.  
Joseph most valiant,  
    Pray for us.  
Joseph most obedient,  
    Pray for us.  
Joseph most faithful,  
    Pray for us.  
Mirror of patience,  
    Pray for us.  
Lover of poverty,  
    Pray for us.  
Model of all who labour,  
    Pray for us.  
Glory of family life,  
    Pray for us.  
Protector of Virgins,  
    Pray for us.  
Pillar of families,  
    Pray for us.

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Consolation of the afflicted,  
Pray for us.  
Hope of the sick,  
Pray for us.  
Patron of the dying,  
Pray for us.  
Terror of the demons,  
Pray for us.  
Protector of the holy Church,  
Pray for us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy on us.

He made him master of his house,  
and ruler of all his possessions.

O God, You were pleased to choose Saint Joseph as the husband of Mary and the guardian of your Son. Grant that, as we venerate him as our protector on earth, we may deserve to have him as our intercessor in heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.  
[www.catholic-forum.com/saints/litany16.htm](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/litany16.htm) (accessed 1st June 2010).

<sup>18</sup> St Antoninus's authorisation was not sanctioned until March 18<sup>th</sup> 1909.

<sup>19</sup> *Enchiridion of Indulgences*, Authorised English Edition: 'Joseph most just, Joseph most chaste, Joseph most prudent, Joseph most strong, Joseph most obedient, Joseph most faithful, Mirror of patience, Lover of poverty, Model of artisans, Glory of home life, Guardian of virgins, Pillar of families, Solace of the wretched, Hope of the sick, Patron of the dying, Terror of demons, Protector of the Church, pray for us.'

<sup>20</sup> Alphonse Van Hove: 'Johannes Gratian', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, 1909, Online Edition 2003. 12<sup>th</sup> Century canon lawyer believed to have been born in Northern Italy. Reputedly became a Camaldolensian monk. His great work was the *Concordia discordantium canonum* also known as the *Decretum*. It became the standard text book for students of canon law, hence St Antoninus's acquaintance with the work and its authorship.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy M Sparks: 'St Antoninus of Florence on Saint Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, 19, p. 441. Quoting Gratian from 27, part 2, *Juxta*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 441.

<sup>23</sup> C Baur: 'St John Chrysostom', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1910, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 441 & 442. 'Tertia ratio est ut ei (Mariae) a Joseph ministerium exhiberetur in occurrentibus, quae expediebant, ut eam associando, quum accessit in Bethleem, ubi peperit, et cum ea ad templum in Purificatione proficisceretur, in Aegyptum pergeret inde rediens in Nazareth. In his enim, quae necessaria reant ad sustentationem eorum et parvuli, ipse procurabat de labore manuum suarum. Nam secundum Chrysostomum Carpentarius erat, in hoc omnes laborare docens pro sustentatione sui et suorum.'

<sup>25</sup> David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber: *Tuscans and their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985, p. 87. After fourteenth century incidents of pestilence fertile young women had to seek husbands amongst an



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older population. So at time of first marriage in Florence by 1427 a male would be 30.3 years and a female 17.6 years.

<sup>26</sup> Timothy M Sparks: 'St Antoninus of Florence on Saint Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, 19, p. 444.

<sup>27</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Gospel of St Luke*, Ch. 1, v. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Timothy M Sparks: 'St Antoninus of Florence on Saint Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, 19, p. 447. 'Since nature does nothing in vain, neither abounding in what is superfluous nor lacking in what is necessary according to the Philosopher, much more is this to be said of grace and of Sacred Scripture since this is dictated by the Holy Spirit. Why then does Luke say: 'To a Virgin espoused to a man *whose name was Joseph*'? 'Whose name was Joseph' seems superfluous: it would be sufficient to say 'espoused to Joseph'. Antoninus answers the question through reference to St Albert the Great who states that Luke wished 'to designate it in order that the event might be described more fully and orderly. That the whole matter might be more probably believed to be foreordained, just as the place - Nazareth - is indicated so the person is honoured by name.'

<sup>29</sup> St Antoninus: *Summa Theologica Moralis*, Part 3, Title 8: 'On the Condition of Merchants and Craftsmen', Chapter 4, Section 11.

<sup>30</sup> The Nativity is only described in *St Luke's Gospel* Ch.2 vv. 1 -16, the verse quoted being 16.

<sup>31</sup> Diane Cole Ahl: *Benozzo Gozzoli*; Yale University Press, New York and London, 1996, pp. 6 – 13.

<sup>32</sup> William Hood: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, p.42.

<sup>33</sup> Predella from *Cortona Altarpiece*, 1433-34. Tempera on wood, Museo Diocesano, Cortona, Italy.

<sup>34</sup> Timothy M Sparks: 'St Antoninus of Florence on Saint Joseph', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, 19, p. 435.

<sup>35</sup> This panel is one of a series of scenes on the Annunziata Silver Chest that is now housed in the Museo di San Marco, Florence, Italy. John Pope-Hennessy *Fra Angelico*, Scala, Firenze, 1981, p. 73. Pope-Hennessy is of the opinion that the panels were commissioned by Piero de' Medici as doors to a cupboard that held precious metal offerings to the Annunciate Virgin. The Confraternity of the Purification was founded in the Church of Santa Maria dei Servi and as it is also known as the Annunziata this is suggestive of there being some specific connection with the Confraternity in the 1440s and with its earlier incarnation.

<sup>36</sup> Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

<sup>37</sup> *Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew*, Ch. 20.

<sup>38</sup> Tempera on wood. The Jules Bache Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA. One of the three remaining predella tondi for the Roverella Altarpiece Tura painted for the wealthy and powerful Ferrarese court. Originally it was commissioned for the church of San Giorgio fuori le Mura in Ferrara. The polyptych is believed to have consisted of the *Madonna with Child enthroned* (in the National Gallery, London) Niccolo Roverella plus two saints on one wing and St George on the other. A lunette image of the *Pietà* and four further roundels are understood to have completed the scheme.

<sup>39</sup> Gene Brucker: *Renaissance Florence*, p. 93.

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<sup>40</sup> P Lejay: 'Vespasiano da Bisticci', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Online Edition 2003. His dates are 1421 – 1498. He was an historian and a librarian and advised Cosimo de' Medici when he wished to establish the Laurentian Library in Florence.

<sup>41</sup> Gene Brucker: *Renaissance Florence*, p. 108.

<sup>42</sup> Rab Hatfield: 'Compagnia de' Magi', *Journal of the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes*, Vol 33, 1970, p.136.

<sup>43</sup> Gertrud Schiller: *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol I, Lund Humphries, London, 1971, p.96.

<sup>44</sup> Franco Cardini: *The Chapel of the Magi in Palazzo Medici*, Mandragora, Firenze, 2001, pp. 21 – 24.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> Rab Hatfield: 'Compagnia de' Magi', p. 135.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> Now the Via Cavour.

<sup>49</sup> Rab Hatfield: 'Compagnia de' Magi', pp. 109 & 115.

<sup>50</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: the Gospel of St Matthew*; Ch. 14, vv. 6 – 8, & 10.

<sup>51</sup> Franco Cardini: *The Chapel of the Magi in Palazzo Medici*, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Ch. 12, pp. 423 & 424.

<sup>53</sup> Rab Hatfield: *Botticelli's Uffizi 'Adoration'*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1976, pp. 68 – 100. Hatfield discusses the various identifications commencing with those made by Vasari in the first edition of *Lives* published in 1550 and the second edition published in 1568.

<sup>54</sup> Franco Cardini: *The Chapel of the Magi in Palazzo Medici*, p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> George Holmes: *The Florentine Enlightenment: 1400 - 1450*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, England. 1969, Ch. 6, p. 173.

<sup>56</sup> (Ed.) Nicholas Terpestra, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, Lorenzo Polizzotto: 'The Medici and the Youth Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin 1434 - 1506'; p.99.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 102 & 103.

<sup>58</sup> It depicts Christ consigning John the Evangelist to the Virgin.

<sup>59</sup> Tempera on wood. 1422. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>60</sup> Tempera on panel. 1423. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>61</sup> A Gothic style of painting and sculpture stressing elegance and common in European art around 1400. In Italy Gentile da Fabriano exemplifies this style.

<sup>62</sup> George Ferguson: *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*; Oxford University Press, London, Oxford and New York, 1989, p.152 & 153.

<sup>63</sup> Samuel H Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, USA.

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<sup>64</sup> Posthumous portrait painted in 1516 probably based on the medallion portrait. Oil on canvas. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>65</sup> 1438 - 1440. Tempera on wood. Museo di San Marco, Florence, Italy.

<sup>66</sup> William Hood: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, pp. 46 & 47. The altarpiece was for a Medici family chapel dedicated to both of Cosimo's patron saints, the twin doctors Cosmas and Damian.

<sup>67</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Gospel of St Mark*, Ch. 15, v. 43, *Gospel of St Luke*, Ch. 23, vv. 50 – 52, *Gospel of St John*, Ch. 19, v. 38.

<sup>68</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; Gospel of St Matthew*, Ch. 27: vv. 59 & 60.

<sup>69</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: 'Some Further Evidence of St Joseph's Cult in Renaissance Italy and Related St Joseph Altarpieces', *Die Bedeutung des hl. Joseph in Heilsgeschichte, Akten des IX. Internationalen Symposium über den hl. Josef*, Kisslegg, 2006, v. 2, p. 903.

<sup>70</sup> *Flight into Egypt*, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin'. Oil on pine panel, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Germany.

<sup>71</sup> 1500. Oil on panel. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, USA.

<sup>72</sup> 1509. Oil on panel. John Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California, USA.

<sup>73</sup> Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Ch. 11, p. 389. The 'Giovani' (young men and youths) were 'threatening and destructive. They had 'absolutely no religious identity in society' The government 'instituted an investment fund in 1425 for youth, in part to encourage marriage.' It was not successful.

<sup>74</sup> David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber: *Tuscans and their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427*, Ch. 3, p. 69.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 5, p. 148. 'Children and women are more vulnerable to plague... as they are full of corruptible humours and live without order or measure.'

<sup>76</sup> Franco Cardini: *The Chapel of the Magi in Palazzo Medici*, p. 19.

<sup>77</sup> Konrad Eisenbichler: *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411 - 1785*; University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1998, p. 17. The first confraternity of its kind to be instituted within the city of Florence was the *Compagnia dell'Arcangelo Raffaello* in 1411.

<sup>78</sup> (Ed.) Nicolas Terpestra: *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, Lorenzo Polizzotto: 'The Medici and the Youth Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin, 1434 - 1506'; p. 106. Polizzotto writes that a new postulant would wear a white surplice with a girdle around his waist (emblematic of the Virgin's girdle) as a symbol of chastity.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108; Stress was placed on both virginity and chastity and boys of different age groups kept apart in order to quell corruption and prevent homosexuality.

<sup>80</sup> (Ed.) Nicholas Terpestra: *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, Christopher F Black, 'Confraternity Studies', p. 17.

<sup>81</sup> (Ed.) Nicholas Terpestra: *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, Jennifer Fisk Rondeau: 'Homosociality and Civic (Dis)Order in late Medieval Italian Confraternities'; pp. 37 & 38.

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<sup>82</sup>Richard C Trexler: *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Ch. 11, p. 372.

<sup>83</sup> 1490. Oil on panel. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>84</sup>Tempera on wood. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons, France.

<sup>85</sup> 1507. Also known as the *Canigiani Holy Family*. Oil on wood. Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

<sup>86</sup>J C Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1999, p. 40.

## Chapter VII

### St Joseph: Intermediary between the Secular and the Spiritual Worlds

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<sup>1</sup> John Jeffries Martin: *Venice's Hidden Heretics in a Renaissance City*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 2004, pp. 16, 112 & 113. Martin indicates that following on from Joachim of Fiore's twelfth century writings on millenarianism – that the first age was that of the father or patriarchs, the second of the son or the priests, but the third was of the Holy Spirit and by this he meant monks rather than priests, implying that they were more spiritual demonstrates that. Savonarola was taking his lead from Joachim and also preached that the millennium and second coming were at hand.

<sup>2</sup> The term refers to the faithful followers of the Church on earth

<sup>3</sup> Vitrified terracotta relief. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Deimling: *Sandro Botticelli, 1444/45 - 1510*; Taschen, Germany, p. 21 & 22. Deimling states that the painting was commissioned by Guasparre di Zanobi del Lama a banker who wished to ingratiate himself with the Medici who were members of the Arte di Cambio (Guild of Money Changers). He was reliant on them for the continuation of his fluctuating business. The Adoration was an apt subject as Caspar his patron saint is one of the three magi. Though it is understood to have been intended for the del Lama chapel in Santa Maria Novella, a chapel of this name is not extant and this does not compute with Vasari who states that the painting was placed between two doors in the principal façade of the church.

<sup>5</sup> Tempera on panel. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>6</sup> Rab Hatfield: *Botticelli's Uffizi 'Adoration': a Pictorial Content*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1976, pp. 3 & 11. Hatfield is of the opinion that the painting remained in this location for approximately a century.

<sup>7</sup> Giorgio Vasari, 1511 – 1574, was an artist, architect, historian and biographer.

<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, Vol. I, (trans.) Gaston du C de Vere, Everyman's Library, Alfred A Knopf, New York, London, Toronto, 1996, pp. 537 & 538.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 537.

<sup>10</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori*. Volume III, Sansoni Editore, Firenze, 1966, p.515. Vasari names Cosimo, Lorenzo, Giuliano and Giovanni to be included in the retinue. '...la queste re è il proprio ritratto di Cosimo Vecchio de' Medici, di quanti a' di nostri se ne ritruovano il più vivo e più naturale. I secondo, che è Giuliano de' Medici padre di papa Clemente VII... Il terzo, inginocchiato egli ancora, pare che adrandolo gli renda grazie e lo confessi il vero Messia: è Giovanni figliuolo di Cosimo.' 'The figure of this King is an actual portrait of the elder Cosimo de' Medici, the most lifelike and most natural that is to be found of him in our day. The second, who is Giuliano de' Medici, father of Pope Clement VII ... the third, also on his knees, appears to be adoring Him and giving Him thanks, while confessing that He is the true Messiah; this is Giovanni, son of Cosimo.'

<sup>11</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, p. 537.

<sup>12</sup> Alison Brown: *The Medici in Florence: The exercise and language of power*. Leo S Olschki Editore, Firenze and the University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 1992, pp. 74 & 100. Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici nephew to Cosimo de' Medici and reared by him, commissioned Botticelli to paint the *Primavera*, *Pallas and the Centaur*, and a frieze depicting Bacchus.

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<sup>13</sup> (eds.).Stefano Ugo Baldassarri and Arielle Saiber: *Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History and Art*; Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2000, p. liv & p. lx. Cosimo de' Medici died on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1464, whereas Savonarola did not start to deliver his powerful reforming sermons until June 1490 in the convent of San Marco commencing with those concerning the Book of Revelation.

<sup>14</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: 'Some Further Evidence of St Joseph's Cult Renaissance Italy and Related St Joseph Altarpieces', *Die Bedeutung des hl. Josef in der Heilsgeschichte. Akten des IX Internationalen Symposiums über den hl. Josef*, Kisslegg, Germany, 2006, v. 2, pp. 903 – 933.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Healy Thompson: *The Life and Glories of St Joseph*; Tan Books, Rockford, 1980, pp. 480 & 481.

<sup>16</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*, St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 2001. p12. Wilson quotes from Isodoro in a translation by Filas p. 505 - 506 *Joseph: The Man closest to Jesus*. 'The Holy Spirit will not rest from inciting in the hearts of the faithful until the entire kingdom of the Church Militant will heap new honors on the godly Joseph and will erect monasteries, churches, and altars in his honor.' 'Iamque in partibus occidentis Spiritus Sanctus seminavit in mentibus populorum ut singulans sancto Joseph exhibeant honores. Qua veneratione multa amoveri mala a fide catholica, et pluribus affici bonis fideles non ambigimus, meritis ac precibus santissimi Joseph. Benedictite igitur, o populi, sancto Joseph, ut benedictionibus repleamini.'

<sup>17</sup> A French Franciscan born around 1248 and died in 1298. He was a controversial figure writing if his interpretation of the Apocalypse and also his understanding of Franciscan *usus pauper* or poverty.

<sup>18</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*, p.5. Peter John Olivi maintained that as Joseph was the spouse of the Church he therefore represented both God the Father and Christ.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 8 & 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> *The Vulgate Bible; the Apocalypse of St John the Apostle*, Chs. 1 - 22.

<sup>22</sup> Pasquale Villari: *Life and Times of Savonarola*, T Fisher Unwin, London, 1888, p. 90. Villari states that none of these sermons and lectures on the Apocalypse has survived.

<sup>23</sup> Lauro Martines: *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2006, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Pasquale Villari: *Life and Times of Savonarola*, p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* n. 2, p. 117.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 110 – 116.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 124.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* see note, p. 127.

<sup>29</sup> Lauro Martines: *Fire in the City*, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> Pasquale Villari: *Life and Times of Savonarola*, pp. 128 and 129.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 151. According to Villari, Savonarola frequently alluded to this prediction in his sermons.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* pp.129 – 154.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p.154.

<sup>34</sup> Marcia B Hall: 'Savonarola's Preaching and the Patronage of Art', *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, (eds.) Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, Syracuse University Press, New York, 1990, pp. 493 - 522. Hall states that Savonarola did not adopt the epideic style of rhetoric as the humanists did; thus his manner of lecturing tended to be confrontational in tone.

<sup>35</sup> Pasquale Villari: *Life and Times of Savonarola*, p. 150.

<sup>36</sup> Marcia B Hall: 'Savonarola's Preaching and the Patronage of Art', pp. 506 & 518.

<sup>37</sup> Pasquale Villari: *Life and Times of Savonarola*, p. 470.

<sup>38</sup> Alison Brown: *The Medici in Florence*, p. 264. From *Prediche sopra Ruth et Michea*, ed. Romano I, p. 436 26<sup>th</sup> June 1496: 'Io sono frate, e non vidi mai arme, e, se mi fussi lecito, ti monsterrerai punti, che tu non hai da dubitare tanto... Io vorrei così potere (dico potere, cioè che me fusse lecito) questa mattina metternii uno cappuccino, e ancora uno lucco: io to monsterrerai punti e rationi che tu non ai bisogno di avere tanta paura.'

<sup>39</sup> Lorenzo Polizzotto: *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence 1494 – 1545*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Ronald M Steinberg: *Fra Girolamo Savonarola: Florentine Art and Renaissance Historiography*, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 1976, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> George Holmes: *The Florentine Enlightenment 1400 – 1450*, Pegasus, New York, 1969, p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Guicciardini: 'Storia Fiorentina', *Opere inedite*, Vol. III, p. 179.

<sup>43</sup> (eds.) Berkeley William Randolph and Henry Scott Holland: *Spiritual and Ascetic Letters of Savonarola (1907)* Kessinger Publishing, L Verne, USA, 2009, p. 48.

<sup>44</sup> Marcia B Hall: 'Savonarola's Preaching and the Patronage of Art', p. 516. Quoting from Mario Ferrara, *Prediche*, 386, from the sermon preached on the Friday after the third Sunday of Lent, 1496, in the series on Amos and Zachariah.

<sup>45</sup> Tempera on panel, 1490. Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia, Italy. The painting appears to have been cropped as the border of the work cuts through part of Joseph's arm and correspondingly part of Mary's arm; also there are no shepherds visible.

<sup>46</sup> A *mandorla* is an almond shaped disc in this context implying holiness and divinity.

<sup>47</sup> Oil on wood. Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard Berenson: *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, The Phaidon Press, UK, 1956, pp. 119 - 126.

<sup>49</sup> Oil on wood. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen, France. Now sometimes attributed to Lo Spagna. Pinturicchio originally was commissioned to paint the *Sposalizio* for a chapel in the cathedral at Perugia. Perugino was commissioned to complete the work.

<sup>50</sup> Oil on panel. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, Italy.

<sup>51</sup> Vasari: *Le Vite; Edizioni Giuntina Vol III* pp.611 & 612. It is unclear as to whether Raphael was a pupil in the strict sense or simply an assistant. 'Fece Pietro molto maestri di quella maniera,

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cy uno fra gl'altri che fu veramente eccellentissimo, il quale datosi tutto agl'onorati studi della pittura passo di gran lingua il maestro; e questo fu il miraculoso Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, il quale molti anni lavoro con Pietro in compagnia di Giovanni de' Santi sua padre.'

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter III for a discussion of this phenomenon.

<sup>53</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Le Vite; Edizioni Giuntina Vol III*, pp. 591 & 592.

<sup>54</sup> Sheryl E Reiss: 'Raphael and his patrons', *Cambridge Companion to Raphael*, (ed.) Marcia B Hall, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England, 2005, p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> (Ed.) James Hankins: *Marsilio Ficino: Platonic Theology*. Vol I, Books I – IV, The I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 2001, pp. vii – xvii. Marsilio Ficino was influenced by the mysticism of third century philosopher Plotinus the founder of the Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato; and by the Neoplatonism of the fifth century philosopher Proclus. Ficino was instrumental in the revival of Platonic wisdom in Florence during the second half of the fifteenth century.

<sup>56</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Le Vite; Edizioni Giuntina Vol III*, p. 585.

<sup>57</sup> Konrad Oberhuber: *Raphael: The Paintings*, Prestel, Munich, London, New York, 1999, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter III for a discussion on St Augustine insistence that the marriage between Mary and Joseph was a true marriage in accordance with Roman Law.

<sup>59</sup> Heinrich Wölfflin: *The Art of the Italian Renaissance*: William Heinemann, London, 1903, p.82. suggests that the construction is intended to silhouette the characters against the symmetrically paved floor.

<sup>60</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, Vol I, Everyman's Library, New York and London, 1996, p. 712.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Kubovy: *The Psychology of Perspective in Renaissance Art*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup> David Watkin: *A History of Architecture*, Laurence King, London, 2005, pp. 211 – 215.

<sup>63</sup> Lisbeth Castelnuevo-Tedesco: 'Romanesque Sculpture in North American Collections. XIII. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part II: Italy' *Gesta International Center of Medieval Art*, Vol XXIV/2, 1985, pp. 162 & 163.

<sup>64</sup> Leone Battista Alberti: *The Ten Books of Architecture*, The 1755 Leoni Edition, Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1986, p.1. Alberti commences his work by saying that initial basis for his remarks on architecture are those collected from the 'Ancients' which in turn they had garnered empirically. In Alberti's opinion the 'Ancients' had left a number of excellent examples of good art that had the ability of adding pleasure and expediency to one's life. A true architect was one who taking advantage of all his acquired skills could create a pleasing and apposite work.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* Book V, Ch. V: p. 89. Alberti was of the strong conviction that the correct place for the principal temple in a city would be at its heart; but at the same time it should be placed centrally in a square or piazza large enough to make it seem withdrawn.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* Book I, Chapter I, 'Of Designs; their Values and Rules', p. 1. He writes that 'the whole Force and Rule of Design, consists in a right and exact adapting and joining together the Lines and Angles which compose and form the Face of the Building. It is the Property and Business of the Design to appoint to the Edifice and all its parts their proper Places, determinate Number, just Proportion and beautiful Order; so that the whole Form of the Structure be proportionable.' Book I, Chapter I, 'Of Designs; their Value and Rules.'



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<sup>67</sup> Plato: *Laws*, (trans.) Benjamin Jowett, Prometheus Books, New York, 2000, pp. 111 – 113. Government is dispensed by an Assembly composed solely of citizens (i.e. men) who have served or are serving in the military. And a Council consisting of 90 people drawn from each of the four propertied classes. Men must be over thirty and women over forty. They serve for a twelve month period before being replaced. The judicial system is regulated by 37 Guardians of the Law who must be over fifty but not more than seventy. The Athenian specifies that their primary function is as guardians of the law, whereas their secondary function is to maintain a register of property. (*Laws*, 755). Wealth accrued that exceeds statutory levels has to be forfeited to the state. The Athenian then describes the constitution of the city, that it should be placed in the centre of the country and divided into twelve, and that each division should be equal in what they provide for the citizens dwelling there. In this manner no division is greater or lesser in resources than another. (*Laws*, 744 – 745).

<sup>68</sup> Anthony Grafton: *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*, Allan Lane, Penguin Press, London, 2001: In writing *De re aedificatoria* Alberti made reference to a number of Greek texts including Plato's *Laws*. George of Trebizond had translated the work in 1450. P.278.

<sup>69</sup> Leone Battista Alberti: *The Ten Books of Architecture*, Book V. Chapter VI, p.89 in which Alberti describes the necessity for building the appropriate dwellings according to an individual's station in life; and that these dwellings should be grouped together in their appropriate neighbourhood.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 89. 'A Hill gives it an Air of Dignity, but it is more secure from Earthquakes in a Plain. In a Word, the Temple is to be placed where it may appear with most Majesty and Reverence: For which Reason it should lie entirely out of the Way of all Filth and Indecency, to the Intent that Fathers, Matrons and Virgins, who come to offer up their Prayers, may not be shocked and offended, or perverted from their intended Devotions.'

<sup>71</sup> Rudolf Wittkower: *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*: Alec Tiranti, London, 1971, p. 35.

<sup>72</sup> St Augustine: *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. (trans.) Henry Bettenson, Penguin Classics, London and New York, 1972. In Book XX, Chapter 17, p. 928, entitled 'The unending glory of the Church after the end', Joseph refers to *Revelation* 20, 2-5 in which it is written that the 'new Jerusalem' will come down out of Heaven from God, 'ready made, like a new bride'. Augustine writes that 'through the judgement of God, which will be the last judgement, administered by his Son Jesus Christ, the splendour of that City will be made apparent, by God's gift. So great will be that splendour, and so new, that no traces of age will remain, since even our bodies will pass from their old corruption and mortality into incorruption and immortality.

<sup>73</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Revelation of St John the Divine*: Ch. 21, vv.1 - 3. 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.'

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 21, v. 2.

<sup>75</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Matthew*: Ch 1, vv., 1 - 16 and *The Gospel of St Luke*: Ch.3, vv. 23 - 38.

<sup>76</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Mark*, Ch. 16, v. 19: 'And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God.'

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<sup>77</sup> These are Simon Peter, James son of Zebedee, John brother of James, Andrew brother of Simon Peter, Philip, Bartholomew/Nathaneal, James son of Alphaus, Matthew, Thomas, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

<sup>78</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Genesis*: Ch. 2, vv. 1 - 3. 'So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.'

<sup>79</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Revelation of St John the Divine*; Ch. 1, v. 4 'John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is. And which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne...'

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* vv. 19 & 20. 'Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.' 'Seven also equates with the seven Spirits of God, the seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lamb of God referred to in Ch. 5, v. 6; also of the seventh seal (Ch. 8, v. 1) and the dragon with seven heads and seven crowns, Ch. 12, v. 3, etc.

<sup>81</sup> That is in the tonic sol-fa in any scale and in a combination of five tones and two semitones.

<sup>82</sup> At this era the accepted wisdom was that the universe was not heliocentric, but had the earth at its centre. Hence the sun became one of the seven planets along with the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. It was not until 1542 when Copernicus published his work *De Revolutionibus* propounding the theory of a solar system that gradually, and with a good deal of unwillingness, it came to be recognized that the sun was at the centre of the system of planets.

<sup>83</sup> Frances Yates: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*; Routledge Classics, London and New York, 2002, p. 30. Pico wrote his 72 Cabalist Conclusions as a transliteration of the Spanish Cabala. In his Mathematical Conclusions he spotlights that in the Hebrew language there exists a value system between letters and numbers that the many names of God and the angels can be expressed as a number. This concept would be further explored by Johannes Reuchlin in *De arte cabalistica* written in 1517.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* pp.12 – 26. In 1486 Pico della Mirandola introduced his 900 theses to the Church at Rome. Within this collection were his writings on the Christian *Cabala* with its bases in Ramon Lull's *Dignities of God*, which are *Bonitas* (Goodness), *Magnitudo* (Greatness), *Eternitas* (Eternity), *Potestas* (Power), *Sapientia* (Wisdom), *Voluntas* (Will), *Virtus* (Virtue or Strength), *Veritas* (Truth), and *Gloria* (Glory) corresponding to the nine letters taken from the Latin alphabet (BCDEFGHIK - A being the inexpressible absolute), and the Spanish/ Jewish *Cabala* grounded on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the doctrine of the ten Sephiroth derived from the nameless 'en-soph' and otherwise comprising of the names *Gloria*, *Sapientia*, *Veritas*, *Bonitas*, *Potestas*, *Virtus*, *Eternitas*, *Splendor*, and *Fundamentum*. Pico saw *Cabala* as the entrance into a deeper understanding of Christianity by deciphering the mysteries and wisdom of the Scriptures. He believed that Jesus is undeniably the name of the Messiah; in other words proof that Jesus was the Messiah as prophesised in the book of Isaiah.

<sup>85</sup> Frances A Yates: *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991, p. 93. Yates goes on to explain that by using this method it is possible to obtain the sum of the heavenly hosts, which computes as 301,655,172!

<sup>86</sup> Abbot Joachim of Fiore, a twelfth century theological mystic, wrote the *Book of Figures* in which he condensed history into an order of numbers.

<sup>87</sup> Frances A Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, pp.258 - 260. Yates states that Bruno's interpretation of the *Cabala* was not that of Pico's who he despised 'Picus Mirandulanus

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and all the philosophy of the Jesuits.' He believed the Hebrews formulated their wisdom from the ancient Egyptians.

<sup>88</sup> Marsilio Ficino: *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino, Vol. 1: Fellowship of the School of Economic Science*, London, 1975. Introduction. Though the intention to establish a Platonic academy in Florence had been put forward by Cosimo as early as 1439 it was not until 1462 that he gave Ficino the villa in Careggi for the purpose.

<sup>89</sup> *The Christian Religion*. Marsilio Ficino commenced this work in 1473.

<sup>90</sup> Issued in Rome in 1486.

<sup>91</sup> In *Theaetetus* Plato discusses the Protagoras homo-mensura doctrine: 'Of all things the measure is man, of the things that are, how they are, and of the things that are not, how they are not.'

<sup>92</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St Matthew*; Ch. 5, v. 13 'You are the salt of the earth...' 'Vos estis sal terrae...' From Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*, in reference to the multitude listening to him.

<sup>93</sup> Marsilio Ficino: *Opera Omnia*: first published in Basle, 1576, pp 22 & 23.

<sup>94</sup> Tempera on panel. Santa Maria del Carmelo detta dei Carmini, Venice, Italy.

<sup>95</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, p. 91.

<sup>96</sup> Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London, England.

<sup>97</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: Gospel of St Matthew*; Ch. 18, v. 3 'I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' 'Dico vobis nisi converse fueritis et efficiamini sicut parvuli non intrabitis in regnum caelorum.'

<sup>98</sup> Oil on canvas. Also known as *La Madonna della Scodella* executed for the chapel of St Joseph in the church of San Sepolcro, Parma. Now in Galleria Nazionale, Parma, Italy.

## Chapter VIII

### Touched by God: Joseph's 'Divinity'

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<sup>1</sup> Oil on wood. Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Wolzogen and Fanny Elizabeth Bunnett: *Raphael Santi: His Life and Works*, Bibliofile, La Vergne, Tennessee, USA, 2010, pp. 164 - 168. They suggest that this painting and a number of Raphael's late works show the hand of Giulio Romano in some of the detailing.

<sup>3</sup> Oil on panel. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

<sup>4</sup> Konrad Oberhuber: *Raphael: The Paintings*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, London, New York, 1999, pp. 241 - 247.

<sup>5</sup> Henri Pouillon. 'La Beauté, propriété transcendente chez scholastiques', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, XXI 1946, pp. 263 - 329.

<sup>6</sup> Umberto Eco: *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Marsilio Ficino: *Meditations on the Soul, Selected Letters of Marsilio Ficino*: 'A picture of a beautiful body and a beautiful mind,' (trans.) Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, Inner Traditions International, Rochester, Vermont, USA, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 'A man is not harmoniously formed who does not delight in harmony', '...God rejoices in harmony to such an extent that he seems to have created the world especially for this reason.' p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Pico's 'Oratio' was meant as a preface to his 900 theses, which were intended to instigate debate when he had hoped to deliver them in Rome before Pope Innocent VIII as supreme adjudicator. Pico's objective was to bring concord to the various nations, religions and disputing factions in society as a whole.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Yates: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, Routledge Classics, London and New York, 1979, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Marsilio Ficino: *Meditations on the Soul, Selected Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, 'The lawful end of love is union', p. 173.

<sup>12</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Matthew*, Ch. 16, v. 18. 'And I say to thee: Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Mimouni, Francis B Mimouni and Marc Mimouni; *British Medical Journal*, December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2000. They describe this physical anomaly in the Raphael painting of Joseph in *The Betrothal of the Virgin* as being that of postaxial polydactyly type A, and that it is a rare phenomenon in white races.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Daniel Mimouni of the Rabin Medical Center, Petah, Tiqva, Israel, Francis B Mimouni of the Lis Maternity Hospital, Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, Tel Aviv, Israel and Marc Mimouni of the Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel, Tel Aviv, report that there are instances of the condition in 1 in 630 - 1 in 3300 live births.

<sup>15</sup> Max Heindel 1865 - 1919. A Danish Rosicrucian.

<sup>16</sup> Giorgio Vasari: *Le Vite*; Giuntina Edition, Vol. 4, p.156. Vasari is at pains to describe Raphael as outstandingly gifted. 'aonde si può dire sicuramente che colore che sono possessori di tante rare doti quante si videro in Raffaello da Urbino, sian non uomini semplicemente, ma, se è così lecito

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dire, dèi mortali; e che coloroche nei ricodo della fama lasciano quaggiù fra noi mediante l'opere loro onorato nome, possono anco sperare d'avere a godere in cielo condegno guidardone alle fatiche e morto loro.'

<sup>17</sup> Frances A Yates: *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*: The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1991, pp. 131 - 134. Cornelius Agrippa writing in 1510 (though not published until 1533) *De occulta philosophia* said there were three worlds – the elemental, the celestial and the intellectual. Each world was influenced by the one above. Magicians believed they could draw themselves upwards through the different worlds by manipulating to their advantage the lower ones. Thus the elemental world of animals, plants, metals, stones, etc., can be raised up through studying the virtues of medicine and natural philosophy. Studying the virtues of the celestial world - astrology and mathematics - raise one to that of the intellectual world. Agrippa named Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato amongst those magicians who had experienced all three worlds.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p.87.

<sup>19</sup> Marsilio Ficino: *Meditations on the Soul, Selected Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> When integers are added together the resultant single number is believed to exhibit value and meaning. The number is then translated back into words.

<sup>22</sup> St Augustine: *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*: (trans.) Henry Bettenson, Penguin Classics, Middlesex, 1972. On the significance of numbers in the *City of God* see Book XI, 30 & 31, Book XV, 20, Book XVII, 4, Book XX, 5 & 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* St Augustine continues 'Hence the theory of number is not to be lightly regarded, since it is quite clear, in many passages of the Holy Scriptures, how highly it is to be valued. It was not for nothing that it was said in praise of God, 'You have ordered all things in measure, number and weight.' Book XI, 30 'The perfection of the number six', p. 465.

<sup>24</sup> Tempera and oil on wood. Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal.

<sup>25</sup> Tempera on panel. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano Castagnola, Switzerland.

<sup>26</sup> Baldassarre Castiglione: *Il Libro del Cortegiano*: Gruppo Ugo Mursia Editore S. p. A.; Milano, 1972, p. 331. 'Ma parlando della bellezza che noi intendemo, che è quella solamente che appar nei corpi e massimamente nei volti umani e move questo ardente desiderio che noi chiamiamo amore, diremo che è in influxo della bontà divina, il quale, benché si spanda sopra tutte le cose create come il lume del sole...' 'But I shall be speaking of a beauty that I now have in mind, which is that only seen in the body and especially in the human face and which prompts this ardent desire which we call love, we shall say that it is an influx of divine goodness, that like the sun it is shed over everything...'

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* '... dico che da Dio nasce la bellezza ed è come circulo, di cui la bontà è il centro; e però come non po essere circulo senza centro, non po esser bellezza senza bontà..' p. 335. 'I say that beauty is born of God and it is like a circle, of which the goodness is in the centre; and so like it is not possible to have a circle without a centre, neither is it possible to have beauty without goodness.'

<sup>28</sup> St Augustine: *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, Book XXII, 24, p. 1073.

<sup>29</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux: *Selected Works*; (trans.) G R Evans, 'Sermon 74. III.10'. Paulist Press, New York, Mahwah, 1987, p. 257.

<sup>30</sup> Marcia B Hall: 'Savonarola's Preaching and the Patronage of Art'; (eds.) Timothy Verdon and John Henderson: *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the*

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*Quattrocento*, Syracuse University Press, New York, 1990; p. 499. She quotes here directly from a sermon preached by Savonarola on the Friday after the third Sunday of Lent, 1491. 'Tanto sono belle le creature, quanto più partecipando e sono più appresso all' bellezza di Dio.'

<sup>31</sup> St Teresa of Ávila: *The Life of St Teresa of Ávila by herself*; (trans. and introduction) J M Cohen, Penguin Books, London, 1957, p. 47. 'I took as my lord and advocate the glorious St Joseph, commending myself earnestly to him...'

<sup>32</sup> Joseph F Chorpenning, OSFS: *Just Man, Husband of Mary, Guardian of Christ: An Anthology of Readings from Jerónimo Gracián's Excellencies of St Joseph (1597)*, St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, USA, 1995. Gracián writes that Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon were handsome and that this equated with their noble descent and perfect souls. p. 111.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 133. Gracián continues that if a man owned an estate and a new fountain of water should appear or he should find treasure on his land then they would belong to him. In the same way Jesus as the new fountain of water or the treasure would belong to Joseph despite the fact that he had not begat Jesus. Gracián makes reference to the *Gospel of St John*, Ch. 4 v. 14 and to the *Gospel of St Matthew* Ch. 13 v. 46, as well as to the *Song of Songs* 4 v. 12 & 15 to validate his assertion.

<sup>34</sup> Oil on wood. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

<sup>35</sup> The Panciatichi were bankers from Pistoia who for a period were on good terms with the Medici in Florence. The Medici were patrons of Bronzino.

<sup>36</sup> Oil on canvas. Private Collection.

<sup>37</sup> Francis L Filas: *Joseph: the Man closest to Jesus*, St Paul Editions, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, 1962, p. 476. See Chapter II.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas J Shahan: *Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. III, 'Early Roman Christian Cemeteries', Robert Appleton Company 1908; Online Edition, K Knight, 2003. The first episcopal seat used by St Peter was believed to be here. In reference to the baptisms and the first seat of the Church it was written here 'ad nymphas ubi Petrus baptizaverat, sedes ubi prius sedit Sanctus Petrus'. In the same catacombs there is a fresco depicting Christ giving to St Peter the Christian law. The inscription on this fresco reads 'Dominus legen dat' meaning the Lord gives the law.

<sup>39</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Matthew*: Ch. 16, v. 19: 'And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven...'

<sup>40</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations*; St Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, 2001, p.30. She remarks that Schwartz had noted this similarity in a carved wood panel of St Peter in the altarpiece in the cathedral in Hamburg and painted representations of Joseph. Wilson suggests that this is in accordance with Peter John Olivi's understanding of the typology of Joseph as a type for God the Father, for Christ and for St Peter.

<sup>41</sup> Early fourteenth century. Fresco. Arena Chapel, Padua, Italy.

<sup>42</sup> Both Duccio panels are taken from the Maestà. 1311. Tempera on panel. Museo dell' opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy.

<sup>43</sup> Oil on panel. Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice, Italy.

<sup>44</sup> *Churches of Venice*: (trans.) David Graham, Venezia dal museo alla città; Marsilio Editori s.p.a., 2002, pp. 46-54.

<sup>45</sup> Oil on canvas. Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California, USA.

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<sup>46</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, p.88. Cardinal Borromeo's praises were recorded in the Cardinal's *Museum* of 1625.

<sup>47</sup> 1427. Fresco. Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence, Italy

<sup>48</sup> Oil on canvas. Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy.

<sup>49</sup> 1427. Fresco. Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence, Italy.

<sup>50</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Matthew*: Ch. 4, vv 18 & 19: 'And Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers) And he saith to them: Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.' '

<sup>51</sup> Oil on canvas. Scuola di San Rocco, Venice, Italy

<sup>52</sup> Oil on canvas. Scuola di San Rocco, Venice, Italy.

<sup>53</sup> Oil on canvas. Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, Italy.

<sup>54</sup> 1545. Oil on canvas. Royal Collection, Windsor, England.

<sup>55</sup> 1640. Oil on canvas. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

<sup>56</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Matthew*, Ch. 5, v. 13. 'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing anymore but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.'

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, Hans Urs von Balthasar: *Mary: The Church at the Source*: Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2005, p88. Ratzinger refers to the Fathers of the Church taking up the notion of Joseph with his flowering rod being the archetype of the Christian bishop.

<sup>58</sup> Oil on canvas. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

<sup>59</sup> Carolyn C Wilson: *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, p. 75. She indicates that Isodoro saw Joseph as being the head and protector of the Church Militant and that further he begged Pope Hadrian VI to extend Joseph's feast to incorporate the protection of Italy from numerous ills including invasion and corruption in the Church.

<sup>60</sup> Francis L Filas: *Joseph: the Man closest to Jesus*, p. 408.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* p. 435.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 506.

<sup>63</sup> *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*: (trans.) H J Schroeder, Tan Books and Publishers. Inc., Rockford, Illinois, USA, 1978, p. 146.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 215 & 216.

<sup>65</sup> Martin Chemnitz: (trans.) Fred Cramer, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part I*, Concordia Publishing House, St Louis, Missouri, USA, 1971, p.301. He suggests that the legends of the saints has become despised 'by both the learned and the common people' due to its 'palpable shamelessness'.

<sup>66</sup> Francis L Filas: *Joseph: the Man closest to Jesus*, p. 507.

<sup>67</sup> 1512. Oil on canvas. The Jules Bache Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.

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<sup>68</sup> A movement established by Gerard Groote in the late fourteenth century. Groote's major work on the *Devotio Moderna* was the *Following of Christ*, initially promoted in the fifteenth century in an edited version by Thomas à Kempis. The precept is that one should experience a more personal relationship with God through living a life in imitation of Christ.

<sup>69</sup> Gerard Groote, (trans.) Joseph Malaise, S J ; *Following of Christ* , Tan Books and Publishers Inc., Rockford, Illinois, USA, 1988, Part One, 'Of Interior Conversation', Book Two, Ch. I, vv. 5 & 6, p. 78.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* Book One, Ch. I, vv. 2 & 3, p. 13. The book opens with a chapter entitled 'Of the necessity of following Christ', and continues '...we are admonished to follow Christ and His way of life, if we wish to be enlightened and delivered from blindness. Let, therefore, our chief endeavour and our highest interest be to train ourselves in the life of Christ.'

<sup>71</sup> *The Nativity with Donors and Saints Jerome and Leonard*. Oil on canvas transferred from wood. The Jules Bache Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Commissioning is unknown, the donors are represented as Saints Anthony and Catherine.

<sup>72</sup> Oil on panel. Samuel H Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, USA.

<sup>73</sup> David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, Mauro Lucca: *Lorenzo Lotto; Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, National Gallery of Washington, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1997, p. 131.

<sup>74</sup> Francesco Colalucci: 'Muscipula Diaboli? Una pseudo-trappola per topi nell'Adorazione di Lorenzo Lotto a Washington.2 *Artibus et Historiae* II, no. 21 (1990), pp 71 - 88.

<sup>75</sup> David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, Mauro Lucca: *Lorenzo Lotto; Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, p. 131. The metaphorical quality of the painting - with cherubs and crucifix add weight to the possibility that rather than a plane or a few pieces of wood as has been suggested, its identification as the mousetrap, bait for the devil, seems credible.

<sup>76</sup> Oil on canvas. Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo, Italy.

<sup>77</sup> L Cluget: 'St Catherine of Alexandria'. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1908, Online Edition 2003.

<sup>78</sup> 1534. Oil on wood. National Gallery, London, England.

<sup>79</sup> Due to the similarity between the shepherds it is possible that they are portraits of the donors. It is uncertain as to the identification of the patron.

<sup>80</sup> The central panel is believed to be of the Virgin. Oil on wood. National Gallery, London, England.



## Chapter IX

### Epilogue

<sup>1</sup> J Soller: 'The Communion of Saints', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, The Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1908, Online Edition 2003. The Communion of Saints (*communio sanctorum*) is comprised of the Church Militant, those who honour and worship God on Earth, the Church Penitent, those who are undergoing purification in Purgatory, and the Church Triumphant, those who are already in heaven. This is in reference to a saying of St Paul in *1 Corinthians* 1 v. 2. 'To the church of God that is in Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that invoke the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place of theirs and ours.'

<sup>2</sup> *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, (trans.) H J Schroeder, Tan Books and Publishes Inc., 1978, pp. 215 & 216. '...the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God and of the other saints are to be placed and retained especially in the churches, and that due honour and veneration is to be given them; not, however, that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them by reason of which they are to be venerated... but because the honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which they represent ...'

<sup>3</sup> *A Touch of the Divine: Drawings by Federico Barocci in British Collections*. Introduction and Editor: David Scrase; The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, London, 2006, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Oil on canvas. 1570. Pinacoteca, Vatican, Rome.

<sup>5</sup> George Ferguson: *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, Oxford University Press, London, Oxford and New York, 1961, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Oil on canvas. 1575. National Gallery, London, England.

<sup>7</sup> *A Touch of the Divine: Drawings by Federico Barocci in British Collections*; Introduction and Editor David Scrase; The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, London, 2006p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> Oil on canvas.

<sup>9</sup> George Ferguson: *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, Oxford University Press, London and New York, 1961, p. 33. The laurel expresses eternity and chastity because it is evergreen. From ancient times a wreath of laurel would be presented to a victor in contests or battles. A laurel wreath being held over the young Christ's head is symbolic of his victory over evil.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph F Chorpenning: *Christophorus Blancus' engravings for Jerónimo Gracián's Summary of the Excellencies of St Joseph (1597)*, Saint Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, 1996, plate 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5. Chorpenning refers to an article in *Cahiers de Joséphologie* 25(1977) pp. 295 - 322 by José Antonio Carasco, OC:D, entitled '*Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios y su Summario de las excelencias del glorioso S. Joseph, esposo de la Virgen Maria o Josefina*'.

<sup>13</sup> Oil on canvas. The Hermitage, St Petersburg, Russia.

<sup>14</sup> Oil on canvas. The Hermitage, St Petersburg, Russia.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger: *Art in Theory 1648 - 1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell Publishes Ltd, London, 2000, p. 30.

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<sup>16</sup> Xavier Bray: *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600 – 1700*, National Gallery Company, London, 2009, p.197. Pacheco painted many of the realistic sculptures of religious figures that were produced in Seville during the seventeenth century. He was also a teacher and had taught Velázquez.

<sup>17</sup> The Instituto Gómez-Moreno de la Fundación Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada, Spain.

<sup>18</sup> Xavier Bray: *The Sacred Made Real*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Brown: *Painting in Spain 1500 - 1700*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1991, p. 132.

<sup>20</sup> Oil on canvas. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary.

<sup>21</sup> Jonathan Brown: *Painting in Spain 1500 - 1700*, p. 201

<sup>22</sup> Oil on canvas. Leonard C Hanna Jnr. Fund, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, USA.

<sup>23</sup> *Flight into Egypt*, 1645. Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Art, Budapest, Hungary.

<sup>24</sup> Oil on Canvas. The Hermitage, St Petersburg, Russia.

<sup>25</sup> Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Art, Seville Spain.

<sup>26</sup> Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London, England.

<sup>27</sup> *The Vulgate Bible: The Gospel of St Luke*, Ch 2 vv 44 – 51. 'And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey and sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart.'

<sup>28</sup> Oil on canvas. 1704.

<sup>29</sup> Oil on canvas. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Italy.

<sup>30</sup> Oil on panel. Kunsthalle Museum, Hamburg, Germany.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Wood: *The Pre-Raphaelites*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1981, Part I, p. 10. Their admiration for early Renaissance art is said to have been engendered through the writings of artist and art critic John Ruskin; and recent engravings of the frescoes in the Campo Santo in Pisa.

<sup>32</sup> Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London, England.

<sup>33</sup> Jeremy Maas; *Victorian Painters*, Barrie and Jenkins, London, 1970, p. 125. W M Rossetti wrote that the aims of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were '1, To have genuine idea to express; 2, to study Nature attentively; 3, to sympathize with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parading and learned by rote; and 4, and most indispensable of all, to produce thoroughly good pictures and statues.'

<sup>34</sup> Watercolour, gouache, oil and tempera on paper overlaid on canvas. 1880s. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England.

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<sup>35</sup> Commissioned by Corporation of the City of Birmingham for its new Museum and Art Gallery. The painting remains in the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

<sup>36</sup> Portland stone with added colour. Private collection; the Bridgeman Art Gallery, London, England.



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