

Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary
Installation of Pope Francis
Bishop Jaime Soto
3/19/13

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, speaking of Abraham, said “He believed, hoping against hope.” To hope against hope was possible because of Abraham’s faith in the promises made to him, that he would be the father of many nations even though both he and Sarah were advanced in age. His faith in God gave him the confidence to defy the reasonable bounds of hope. His hope was rooted not in what was possible but in what was promised. St. Paul then called his listeners to have this faith, the faith of Abraham, a faith that hopes against hope.

With this same faith, Joseph, in the gospel today, was told, “Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.” Mary was already with child. She carried the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. Putting aside all fear, hoping against hope, Joseph embraced into his home and his life Mary and the child, to whom he would give the name Jesus.

As Pope Francis begins his Petrine ministry, the Word of God today calls us back to the faith of Abraham, a faith that hopes against hope and acts confidently upon that hope. Like Joseph we bring Mary and her son, Jesus, in our hearts.

This morning, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, spoke of St. Joseph as a model of service, an example of charity offered with tenderness. This can be difficult to imagine in this hard, polemic, often adversarial climate where belief and hope are dismissed as hopelessly naïve and out-of-touch. Service, a tender and reverential charity, brings to the heart the God who promised to come to those who welcome him. This is the hope against hope, a hope that is hospitable. It is hope with which we say, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.” With this same hope, with this same holy hospitality may we seek to welcome and serve one another as we would welcome and serve Christ.