

## Death of St. Joseph. Jesus and Mary in Capharnaum

As the time drew near for Jesus to begin His mission of teaching, I saw Him ever more solitary and meditative; and toward the same time, the thirtieth year of Jesus, Joseph began to decline. I saw Jesus and Mary often with him. Mary sometimes sat on the ground by his couch, or upon a low, round three legged stool, which served also for a table. I seldom saw them eating; but when they did, or brought some refreshment to Joseph's bedside, it consisted of three, white, rather long, four-cornered pieces, about two fingers in breadth, that lay side by side on a little plate, and I saw also some little fruits in a dish. They gave him something to drink out of a mug.



When Joseph was dying, Mary sat at the head of his bed, holding him in her arms. Jesus stood just below her near Joseph's breast. The whole room was brilliant with light and full of angels. After his death, his hands were crossed on his breast, he was wrapped from head to foot in a white winding sheet, laid in a narrow casket, and placed in a very beautiful tomb, the gift of a good man. Only a few men followed the coffin with Jesus and Mary; but I saw it accompanied by angels and environed with light. Joseph's remains were afterward removed by the Christians to Bethlehem, and interred. I think I can still see him lying there incorrupt.

Joseph had of necessity to die before the Lord, for he could not have endured His Crucifixion; he was too gentle, too loving. He had already suffered much from the persecution Jesus had had to support from the malice of the Jews from His twentieth to His thirtieth year; for they could not bear the sight of Him. Their jealousy often made them exclaim that the carpenter's Son thought He knew everything better than others, that He was frequently at variance with the teachings of the Pharisees, and that He always had around Him a crowd of young followers.

Mary never ceased to suffer from these persecutions. Such pains always seem to me sharper than those of martyrdom. Unspeakable was the love with which Jesus in His youth bore the jealous persecution of the Jews.

After Joseph's death, Jesus and Mary removed to a little village of only a few houses between Capharnaum and Bethsaida. A man named Levi, who was very much attached to the Holy Family, had given Jesus a house there in which to dwell. It stood alone surrounded by a ditch of standing water. A couple of Levi's people also were in the house in the capacity of servants, and Levi himself supplied all necessaries from Capharnaum. It was to this little place that Peter's father retired when he gave over to him the fishery at Bethsaida.

Jesus had already many followers among the young people of Nazareth, but they were not faithful to Him. He walked with them in the country around the lake and went up to Jerusalem with them for the feasts. The Lazarus family in Bethania were already acquainted with the Holy Family. The Pharisees of Nazareth were against Jesus; they called Him a vagrant. Levi gave Him that house that He might, without fear of disturbance, live in it and gather His followers around Him.

There was on the lake around Capharnaum, a region of extraordinarily fertile and charming valleys. There were several harvests during the year, and uncommonly beautiful leaves, blossoms, and fruits—all at the same time. Many distinguished Jews had gardens and castles there, Herod among the number. The Jews of Jesus' time were no longer like their fathers; through commerce and their intercourse with heathens, they had become very corrupt. One never saw the women in public nor at work in the fields, excepting the very poorest gleaning some ears of corn. They were to be seen only on pilgrimages to Jerusalem and other holy places. Husbandry and all kinds of traffic were carried on mostly through slaves. I have seen all the cities of Galilee. Where now scarcely three villages are in existence, there were then almost a hundred and an innumerable crowd of people.

Mary Cleophas, who with her third husband, the father of Simeon of Jerusalem, dwelt in Anne's house near Nazareth, afterward removed with her boy Simeon to Mary's in Nazareth. The rest of her family and her servants remained at Anne's.

When Jesus, a short time after, went from Capharnaum by way of Nazareth to the region of Hebron, He was accompanied by Mary as far as Nazareth, where she awaited His return. She was always so solicitous about Him. There came also to comfort the Holy Family on the death of St. Joseph and to see Jesus again, Joses Barsabas, the son of Mary Cleophas by her second marriage with Sabas, and the three sons of her first marriage with Alpheus: Simon, James the Less, and Thaddeus, all three of whom already carried on business away from home. They had had no close communication with Jesus since His childhood. They knew in general of Simeon's and Anne's prophecies

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**on the occasion of His Presentation in the Temple, but they attached no importance to them. They preferred to follow John the Baptist, who soon after passed through these parts.**