

**Homily by Fr. Vincent C. Anyama,
Rector of Holy Trinity Seminary,
at the Blessing of the Statues of Joseph and Mary
at Holy Trinity Seminary - St. Joseph Oratory**

January 17, 2024

A word about the significance of naming this Chapel in honor of St. Joseph. A critical aspect of human formation here at HTS is fostering a healthy masculine identity. This involves knowledge of oneself as a man called to celibate spousal union and spiritual fatherhood. St. Joseph models such masculine identity for seminarians and priests in his radical embrace of a celestial vocation as chaste spouse of Mary, and foster father of Jesus.

The statue of St. Joseph we are about to bless is specially designed to capture a healthy masculine image for your own reflections and prayer.

A masculine quality expressed in this statue is seen first in the posture and eyes of Joseph, who is *standing with strength, not weakness*, and whose firm but inviting gaze on you, his children, expresses strength.

A second masculine quality expressed in this statue is St. Joseph as a father to the young Jesus. With his masculine expression of firmness and strength depicting him as a figure of security in the life of the young Jesus cradled in his left arm, the posture of Jesus also portrays a relationship of tenderness between him and his foster father. Jesus with open arms, yet with his left arm slightly

raised and the left leg raised, conveys a movement towards Joseph, which expresses a joyfulness, and a secure and tender connection with him.

Jesus' eyes turned slightly towards Joseph not only adds to this movement of affection towards Joseph, but it also allows him to look toward you, the seminarians, drawing you into this relationship of joyful, secure, and tender connection he had with St. Joseph. It is my hope that as you reflect on the blessings and wounds of your relationship with the male or father figures in your lives, that you can look to St. Joseph for inspiration and intercession.

Finally, the robes with some ornamentation and earthy blue lining match and complement the robes of the statue of Mary to highlight his chaste spousal vocation with our Blessed Mother. You are being formed to not suppress but to awaken the wildness of your masculine heart made to desire a spousal union in a way radically celestial, chaste, and virginal like St. Joseph's spousal union with Mary, who is the image of the Church.

Thank you for your courageous "Yes" to priestly formation, especially as pioneers of the propaedeutic stage at HTS.

St. Joseph, husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus, pray for us!

Our Lady of Grace, pray for us!