



May 1st is the Feast of St. Joseph and Pope Francis has declared this the Year of St. Joseph. Too often Joseph is pictured as a calm, quiet person but he had major concerns. First of all there was the pregnancy of Mary while they were betrothed but not yet married. To stay with her was a violation of the Jewish religion. So he has a spiritual problem. Should he go against his religion or should he show his love for Mary. He has a dream and he wades through his anxiety and marries Mary. Then he has to travel with his pregnant wife to Bethlehem, some 100 miles! Husbands want to care for and protect their wives especially when they are expecting a child. I would think that Joseph's anxiety level was a little high! Well, they made it but then there was nowhere for them to stay. Think of the embarrassment and worry Joseph must have had as he settled Mary into a stable where she delivered her son Jesus. What about the bugs, the stench, the unsanitary conditions that they faced. He had to have been anxious about the possibility that their child might succumb to the horrible conditions of a stable-cave. If that wasn't enough then he had to flee the wrath of Herod who wanted to kill their child. There they go Joseph, Mary, Jesus and a donkey crossing the border into Egypt. It's a desert which means scorching days and freezing nights. His concern was survival!. That's "high anxiety"! And then there was the return trip to Nazareth and they weren't in the First Class section! After arriving then came the anxiety of providing for his family when they were poor. He made it, they made it, you can make it through your anxieties. Look to Joseph during tense moments. Joseph, thank you for not giving in nor giving up.

Fr. Jack