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## ST JOSEPH: AN EFFECTIVE MODEL FOR PARENTING AND FAMILY CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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### **Abstract**

St Joseph is a silent epitome of cognitive and affective elements of hope and faith. Though most of the history hasn't recorded who he was or what he did in detail, his actions towards Mother Mary and Jesus are clear enough to conclude that he was good at being a partner and a parent. Reflecting on the psychological aspect of his actions using theories from C.R. Snyder's Hope theory and Brené Brown's books on parenting, the article brings forth the art of cultivating essential characteristics in the family through personal work from the life and example of St Joseph. Another vital aspect reflected from the life of St Joseph is the skill of crisis management. Effective partnership and parenting are crucial topics in the present day scenario as the number of divorce and separation cases are on the rise. By joining the Christian perspective of a family headed by St Joseph and the psychological perspective of the effective parenting models, the article reflects ways to develop goal orientation, demonstration, and practice in everyday family life.

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## **Introduction**

Human beings are drawn to light. A light on a night draws the eyes to the light, focusing on the source of light and the things that the light illuminates around it. It is also wondrous that we are drawn towards the light in a dark night, feeling that things will be much better there in the morning than in the darkness. The article begins with the metaphor of the light. It wants to bring the reader to the understanding that hope, faith, and love are like sources of light. That may be explained by spirituality and psychology. We'll dwell on the life of St Joseph as a physical embodiment of all these characteristics and understand what he can teach us about effective parenting and crisis management. For this purpose, theories from C.R. Snyder's Hope theory and the Brené Brown's books on parenting are in the centre of reflection.

C.R. Snyder was an American psychologist who specialised in positive psychology. His work mainly pertains to the human need for uniqueness, and the hope motive. Casandra Brené Brown is also an American research professor and author who is widely known for her research on shame, vulnerability, and leadership. Both are the authors have published great works in their area of expertise. Their respective work is relevant in the current context as it gives more depth to our understanding of the human nature. There is a need to conceptualize their findings into the present understanding of the nature of St Joseph so as to bring forth practical advices for parenting and family crisis management.

### **1. St Joseph – A Mystery Man**

Pope Francis had declared the year from December 8, 2020, to December 8, 2021, as the "Year of St Joseph." Widely known as an obedient, accepting, working Father, Pope Francis, in his letter, "*Patris Corde*," meaning "With a Father's Heart," described St Joseph as a father in the shadows. The Church has viewed this as an opportunity to encourage the faithful to become aware of our vulnerability and dependence on God.

Refreshing one's memory is significant about the history of the figure St Joseph. A lot about who Joseph was and what he did in his life is not mentioned in the Bible. However, there is a lot of literature on what it must have been for a man who was to become the

husband of Virgin Mary and the Father of Jesus Christ. There are a lot of speculation and confidence about the characteristics of Joseph that made him the man that God chose to become the earthly father to Jesus.

The life of St Joseph remains as a mystery. Not only in terms of his life and death, but the spirituality of the man remains nothing but something we need to guess upon. St Joseph “lived his life hidden in the Divine Light of the Sacred Mysteries” wrote Maria Baji who had an encounter with Jesus in 1736.<sup>1</sup> Baji continues to write that St Joseph was a living prayer of faith, trust, and dedication. When Schadt wrote “My brother, you are a mystery unto yourself,”<sup>2</sup> he goes beyond the questioning the meaning and purpose of the life of man starting with Adam. In the short yet powerful narrative about the life of Joseph, it is clear that he was a crucial piece in the Gods puzzle to bring salvation to His people. St Joseph is a model father, and his role leading to the birth and development of Jesus has put him in the spotlight this year. The spiritual and psychological analysis of his role as a father, husband, and role model is worth reflecting in the area of parenting and family crisis management.

### 1.1. “The Shadow of the Father”

With regards to the Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde*, by Pope Francis, ‘The Shadow of the Father’ is a work on St Joseph by the Polish author, Jan Dobraczynski, who depicts the life of St Joseph. The title refers to the assertion by the author that “Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father: he watched over him and protected him, never leaving him to go his own way.”<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis makes the conclusion that Joseph took the responsibility for the care of Jesus and he was a father through the self-gift born of his self-sacrifice. The book gives testimony to the values that never lose their importance: family, responsibility, patience, and true love.

Pope Francis described St Joseph as a beloved father, a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, and a father in the shadows.

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<sup>1</sup>Maria Cecilia Baji, *The Life of Saint Joseph*, One Hundred One Foundation, 1996, 2.

<sup>2</sup>Devin Schadt, *The Meaning and Mystery of Man – A Biblical Study of Adam, St Joseph and Jesus Christ*, North Carolina: TAN Books, 2021, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Francis, “*Patris Corde* (With a Father’s Heart),” 2020, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap\\_20201208\\_patris-corde.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html)

The introduction to Joseph in the Bible starts with the information that he was engaged to Mary. He was a Jewish man of Nazareth. His first appearance in the Gospel of Matthew contains the genealogy of Jesus, starting from King David through various names to finally Joseph to show that God fulfilled his promise to King David (2 Sam 7:12-16).

## **1.2. Joining with Mother Mary – A Husband and a Father**

Upon hearing the news that Mary was pregnant, Joseph decided to leave her quietly as he was an ardent follower of the rules and practices in those times (Mt 1:18-19). In order not to cause a scene, Joseph decides to leave Mary quietly. An angel of God appears to him and directs him to marry Mary as the good news is an act of the Holy Spirit and that Mary will bear a son to save His people from their sins (Mt 1:20-21). He undertook the responsibilities of looking after the young mother, and did all that the angel had instructed him to do (Mt 1:24-25).

As Joseph was a law-abiding man, they had to embark on an arduous journey to Bethlehem when Caesar Augustus proclaimed that every native should be registered. This also brings the lineage of Joseph into the focus- since he was a descendant of King David, he was to take part in the census (Lk 2:1-7). Mary, who was pregnant, was pictured to have travelled on the donkey, while Joseph walked next to Mary to Bethlehem. Upon arrival at Bethlehem, Mary had come to the end of her term, and it was left to Joseph to search for a place to give birth in a country that was not familiar to them. In vain, Joseph was left to take his wife to a manger and when the baby boy was born, he was named Jesus, just like how the Angels had instructed him to (Mt 1:25). Though historical facts are not clear about the nature of the locations that the young parents were in after the birth of Jesus, it is clear that the Wise Men visited them, traditionally called Magi, bearing gifts- gold, frankincense and myrrh. Joseph is not mentioned in these places, but it can be imagined that he would have welcomed the Wise Men who travelled far to visit their Lord and King upon hearing the news from God's Angels.

Their story does not end with the birth of Jesus. Instead, it is the beginning of yet another gruelling journey for the new parents. An angel warns Joseph again about the dangers that the young mother and child are facing. They were to flee the threats of King Herod. An Angel appears to Joseph again in a dream and instructs him to escape with the child and mother to Egypt till he is told to (Mt 2:13-14). After

the escape of the young family, there ensues a series of wicked actions by King Herod to kill all the boys two years and under in Bethlehem. It was after the death of King Herod that the Lord appeared to Joseph in Egypt and they returned to Israel (Mt 2:19-20). Joseph had to make a few decisions upon hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in the place of his father Herod, and so being afraid he withdrew to the district of Galilee and lived in the town Nazareth (Mt 2:22-23).

Through all their hardships, the model Holy Family sustained their spirituality and devotion to the living God. They were able to bring up Jesus and become earthly guides which may have enabled Jesus to grow in 'wisdom and stature' (Lk 2:52). "Who we are and how we engage with the world are much stronger predictors of how our children will do than what we know about parenting."<sup>4</sup> 'Honour your father and mother' (Eph 6:2) is a commandment often used as a moral drill to correct misbehaving children. Usually, the virtue of respect that the commandment holds is overshadowed by the notion that children who do not follow the parents' instructions would not be in favour with God. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6). There are implications of enabling certain characteristics in the child from a younger age which can last for a lifetime.

## **2. Parenting and Partnership**

Parenting starts with partnership between two married individuals who are ready to commit to a combined goal and work towards achieving them. A successful parenting partnership requires making decisions together, sharing child-care responsibilities, striving to meet the needs of the child, valuing the other person, recognizing and appreciating efforts, sticking together and committing to finding ways to grow individually and in tandem in response to the ever-changing family developmental stage.<sup>5</sup> The article is based around the core concepts of hope and faith. The ability of the partners to develop and portray characteristics of hope and faith to sustain the relationship and the development of their child is important.

### **2.1. Characteristics of Effective Partnership and Parenting**

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<sup>4</sup>Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way we Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*, UK: Penguin, 2012, 277.

<sup>5</sup>Kyle Pruett and Marsha Kline Pruett, *Partnership Parenting: How Men and Women Parent Differently – Why it Helps Your Kids and can Strengthen Your Marriage*, UK: Hachette, 2009, 24.

A profoundly transformative process, parenting requires a lot of resources. Effective parents strive to meet a wide range of areas in the child's development, including but not limited to the biological, cognitive, emotional, social and personal need of the child. Research in the psychological nature of child rearing and development shows that parents require skills and capacities to guide children and scaffold children's activities, respond to their individual needs, and set boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

From a psychological point of view, there is a need for the parents to develop skills that require them to provide a nurturing environment for their child. One of the essential aspects of this is ensuring that the parents have taught them certain aspects of effective living. In *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Brown defined ten guideposts for wholehearted living that points to wholehearted work to cultivate and what they work to let go of.<sup>7</sup> The ten guideposts talk about how people can cultivate a range of skills and attitude that can provide for them liberation from mundane problems that hinder growth in life. The following are the ten guideposts:<sup>8</sup>

1. Cultivating authenticity: letting go of what people think
2. Cultivating self-compassion: letting go of perfectionism
3. Cultivating a resilient spirit: letting go of numbing and powerlessness
4. Cultivating gratitude and joy: letting go of scarcity and fear of the dark
5. Cultivating intuition and trusting faith: letting go of the need for certainty
6. Cultivating creativity: letting go of comparison
7. Cultivating play and rest: letting go of exhaustion as a status symbol and productivity as self-worth
8. Cultivating calm and stillness: letting go of anxiety as a lifestyle

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<sup>6</sup>Volmert, Andrew, et al, "Perceptions of Parenting: Mapping the Gaps between Expert and Public Understandings of Effective Parenting in Australia," A FrameWorks Research Report, Australia: Frame Works Institute, 2019, 15, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2016-06/apo-nid65077.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup>Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 10.

<sup>8</sup>The author tried to connect the qualities with St Joseph with the ten points from Brown's book. It is assumed that St Joseph, being the unique and capable father that he was to Jesus, must have been able to cultivate a lot of qualities in his life that made him who he was. The author invites the readers to reflect on the points and decide how they can be incorporated into their life.

9. Cultivating meaningful work: letting go of self-doubt and “supposed to”
10. Cultivating laughter, song, and dance: letting go of being cool and “Always in control”

Upon understanding the ten guideposts, the first thoughts are that the individual is encouraged to cultivate aspects of authenticity, self-compassion, resilient spirit, gratitude, joy, intuition, trusting faith, creativity, play and rest, calm and stillness, meaningful work, laughter, song and dance. This is achieved by letting go for a series of things like what other people think, perfectionism, powerlessness, scarcity and fear of dark, need for certainty, comparison, status symbol and productivity as self-worth, anxiety as a lifestyle, self-doubt and being cool and being in control.

The characteristic of effectiveness hence begins with personal work and modifications so that the individual together with a partner will be able to create sustainable goals and achieve them systematically. There is no doubt that the nature and personalities of Joseph and Mary as individuals draws a picture of influential individuals who were willing to listen and obey God. They were also law-abiding individuals,<sup>9</sup> disciplined, and showed distinctive aspects of responsible citizens.

### ***2.1.1. Effective Partnership***

Couples who succeed in marriage model a form of shared commitment to ‘the quality of their relationship and to the effectiveness of their partnership in fulfilling their life’s goals.’<sup>10</sup> Listening is an essential element of effective partnership. It is multidimensional construct that consists of complex affective, behavioural and cognitive processes<sup>11</sup>. When researchers try to study the construct of listening in partnership research, the look into the affective processes like being motivated to attend to other, behavioural process like responding verbally and nonverbally, and

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<sup>9</sup>Clemente Barrón, “Feast of Saint Joseph, Spouse of Mary,” 19 March 2013, The Passionists of Holy Cross Province, 3, [passionist.org](http://passionist.org). 2022.

<sup>10</sup>Andrew L. Miser, *The Partnership Marriage: Creating the Life you Love... Together*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, 2.

<sup>11</sup>Harry T. Reis and Cheryl L. Carmichael, “Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale (PPRS),” in Debra L. Worthington and Graham D. Bodie, *The Sourcebook of Listening Research: Methodology and Measures*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018, 516-522.

cognitive processes like understanding, perceiving, and interpreting the content of the message.<sup>12</sup>

Joseph can be seen as a man who must have been a great listener in the given light. In multiple occasions we see that Joseph was spoken to and he responded with actions and behaviours that complimented the instructions. In one scenario, the voice of God's angel that spoke to Joseph asked him to go forth with the plans to marry Mary. In another, the voice instructs Joseph to flee with the young mother and child to seek safety in a place unfamiliar to the young couple. The act of Joseph can be recognized as an act of listening and obeying.

*Shema* is well-known prayer that the Jewish people used every morning and evening in the Hebrew language. The prayer *Shema* goes as follows: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God. The Lord is one. And as for you, you shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut 6:4-5). The first word 'Hear' or 'Listen' is called *Shema*, and it means a lot more than just listening and means paying attention or focusing. It also includes the aspect of 'responding to', which is why when Psalm 27:7 says: *Shema* my voice, when I call O Lord, be merciful, answer me- is asking God to do something or respond to the person. When God asks his people to *Shema* (Ex 19:5), the underlying meaning is to Listen and Obey. There is no separate word in Hebrew for 'obey' or to do the wishes of others. So when God asks people to *Shema* the covenant, He asks His people to listen and obey.<sup>13</sup> To listen and to obey is thus a fundamental characteristic of a man of God. Joseph was selected to be the worldly father to Jesus because he had the characteristics of a person who would listen and obey God.

Another important characteristic of effective partnership is listening and responding with an apt behaviour or action. A recent podcast by the American Psychological Association revealed the importance of the nature of the relationship between the partners affecting their longevity.<sup>14</sup> The higher predictor of longevity was the perceived partner responsiveness than the amount of exercise or conflicts that the partners had. Perceived partner responsiveness has been defined as the degree to which a person feels that their

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<sup>12</sup>Kelby K. Halone et al., "Toward the Establishment of General Dimensions Underlying the Listening Process," *International Journal of Listening* 12, 1 (1998) 12-28, at 16.

<sup>13</sup>FIRM, "Shema: The Hebrew Word – and Prayer – You Should Know," [Online].

<sup>14</sup>Richard Slatcher, "Speaking of Psychology: How Close Relationships keep us Healthy and Happy, with Richard Slatcher, PhD," Kim Mills, November 2021, 3.



relationship partners are responsive to them,<sup>15</sup> and it is an effective predictor of psychological health and wellbeing, and health of the relationship.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.1.2. *Effective Parenting*

Parenting is essentially one of the most basic and indispensable foundation of human life. Parents are contributors to the society as they are bringing up children who are the future of the society with the needed skills and abilities to solve the problems in the community and strive for development and betterment of human life. Parts of *The Wholehearted Parenting Manifesto* (Brown) help us to understand what encompasses effectiveness in day-to-day life:

You will learn this from my words and actions- the lessons on love are how I treat you and myself... We will practice courage in our family by showing up, letting ourselves be seen, and honouring vulnerability. We will share our stories of struggle and strength. There will always be room in our home for both. We will teach you compassion by practicing compassion with ourselves first, then with each other. We will set and respect boundaries, we will honour hard work, hope, and perseverance... When uncertainty and scarcity visit, you will draw from the spirit that is a part of our everyday life.<sup>17</sup>

Adaptability is a critical skill for effective parenting. Joseph was required to adapt to the situations that he was thrown into. Parents are required to model adaptability to the changing situations of their lives and their growing children. Children do not come out with an instruction manual. There is always a battle of how to go about managing things in the house. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). The word 'provoke' can be understood as 'avoiding unfair and cruel behaviour' or even 'blatant favouritism.' Either way, the crux of the message lies in instruction to the parent not to move to anger while responding to the child. The seemingly impossible task has an alternative action that parents can use- discipline and instruction. Experienced parents would find that discipline and instruction need to be given repeatedly and over several occasions. However, the end result is a child who not only able to follow instructions but are raised in the path of love.

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<sup>15</sup>Reis, and Carmichael, *Perceived Partner Responsiveness Scale (PPRS)*, 519.

<sup>16</sup>Slatcher, *Speaking of Psychology*, 4.

<sup>17</sup>Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 100.

### 2.1.3. Elements of Parenting and Partnership

Some of the elements that can be understood from the life of St Joseph about effective partnership and parenting can be seen by how he reacted to various situations.

Collective nature of the couple by putting the other first is seen in the relationship between Joseph and Mary. In all the situations mentioned about Joseph, a man who puts the needs of his family first is seen.

Another important aspect of maintaining a stable home is the aspect of resilience. Parental resilience is one of the lesser studied constructs in the resilience research.<sup>18</sup> Upon examining the literature, resilience over the years have been defined as the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability, or development.<sup>19</sup> How parents navigate their everyday lives within their families and accommodate adversity can be hypothesized by understanding parental resilience. The Centre for the Study of Social Policy brought out some topics that can help focus on family's strengths and build protective factors to help during difficult times.<sup>20</sup> One of them is to have social connections and to stay connected with the people who care about our welfare. Connecting with people with whom there can be a shared experience can provide parents the needed support to bring their goals back into track. Joseph used to take his family to the religious festival of Passover in Jerusalem every year (Lk 2:41). The Bible clearly mentions how when they were returning how, Joseph and Mary thought that Jesus was in their company among their relatives and friends (Lk 2:22). Having a group of like-minded people is essential to providing a safe place to share developmental stories and support when taking on challenges in life.

## 2.2. Role of a Father to Jesus

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<sup>18</sup>Susana Gavidia-payne, et al., "Parental Resilience: A Neglected Construct in Resilience Research," *Clinical Psychologist*, 19. 3 (2015) 3. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cp.12053>.

<sup>19</sup>Ann S. Masten, "Resilience Theory and Research on Children and Families: Past, Present, and Promise," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* (2018) 13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12255>.

<sup>20</sup>CSRP, "Building Resilience in Troubled Times: A Guide for Parents," <https://cssp.org/building-resilience-in-troubled-times-a-guide-for-parents/>. 10 November 2021.

Pope Francis writes, “God called Saint Joseph to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood” and that in this way, “he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation.”<sup>21</sup> Being an earthly father to the Word of God in the flesh is not a shared experience. One can contemplate how Joseph must have consciously taken his role with deliberation and resourcefulness.

The seven M’s of Effective Fatherhood taken about seven characteristics that makes a man an effective father: models character and maturity, motivates others to maximize their ability and make the most of their time, makes participation, creativity, and initiative normal, moulds manners and positive attitude, meditates and moves on what is communicated- active listener, masters humility and operates in integrity, and mindset to benefit multiple generations.<sup>22</sup> Most of these characteristics of Joseph discussed in the article, support the fact that he was an effective father to Jesus.

### ***2.2.1. The Courage to be Vulnerable***

Vulnerability or being vulnerable is part and parcel of parenthood. Often decisions need to be made that can impact the family’s life and become the turning point of the families’ future. This frequently leads parents to become the superman who comes to the child’s rescue and protect them in all their waking time.

Nowadays, parents and teachers are concerned about children who cannot handle disappointments because they are always rescued and protected. Such chronically intervening parents fail because of the fear of showing their children that they are vulnerable. A notable mention by Brown in his book: “It’s not that our children can’t stand the vulnerability of handling their own situation, it’s that we can’t stand the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure, even when we know it’s the right thing to do.”<sup>23</sup>

St Joseph was amid innumerable uncertainties that demanded that he be ready to move from his home and environment for the safety of Mother Mary and the newborn Jesus.

Despite insurmountable fears, Joseph showcased his utter faith in the providence of God, all things working together for good for those

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<sup>21</sup>Francis, “*Patris Corde.*”

<sup>22</sup>Lamont Jones and Jeremy A. Maynard, *The 7 M’s of Effective Fatherhood*, Lulu Press Inc, 2016, 1.

<sup>23</sup>Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 20.

who love him (Rom 8:28). "Even through Joseph's fears, God's will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses."<sup>24</sup>

Jesus picked up the fundamental lessons of formation – the great mission of salvation – from the person of Joseph. Suppose Joseph stood up to fulfil his mission in moulding Jesus for the great ministry of the mystery of salvation. In that case, he can be a great inspiration and guiding light in imparting the right formation to the candidates preparing to be the missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.2.2. *Creating and Sustaining Hope*

C.R. Snyder (1994) provides fascinating insights into the personality of the highly hopeful individual.<sup>26</sup> Snyder's hope theory reflects two kinds of thinking pathways- the perceived capacity to generate routes to desired goals (called pathway thinking) and the associated motivational thoughts to use those paths (called agency thinking).<sup>27</sup> Higher hope correlates with superior physical and mental functioning. It has been found that instilling hope in therapy patient using hope-based vocabulary have facilitated recoveries beyond other treatment measures.<sup>28</sup> Higher hope also appeared to moderate the relationship between unforeseen stressors and successful coping.<sup>29</sup> Positive views about the future and confidence in the ability to cope confer benefits to the individual.<sup>30</sup> Hope also has the capacity to derive the pathways to desired goals, motivate oneself to use those pathways and instil learned optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Francis, "Patris Corde," 12.

<sup>25</sup> Francis, "Evangelii Gaudium," §119, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html).

<sup>26</sup>Snyder, "The Psychology of Hope: You can Get there from Here," Free Press, 1994, 2.

<sup>27</sup>Snyder, "Reality Negotiation: From Excuses to Hope and Beyond," *Journal of Clinical and Social Psychology*, 8 (1989) 130-157.

<sup>28</sup>C.R. Snyder, K.A. Lehman, B. Kluck & Y. Monsson, "Hope for Rehabilitation and Vice Versa," *Rehabilitation Psychology* 51, 2 (2006) 89-112.

<sup>29</sup>C.R. Snyder, & K. Pulvers, "Dr. Seuss, the Coping Machine, and 'Oh, the Place you will Go,'" in C.R. Snyder, *Coping and Copers: Adaptive Processes and People*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, 3-29.

<sup>30</sup>C.R. Snyder and Lopez, *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 3.

<sup>31</sup>Snyder, "Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind," 249-275.

Joseph would have had to play the role of the creator of hope when things were going tough for him and the young mother Mary. Though it is still speculative about the characteristics of Joseph as a father, it is not wrong to think that Jesus must have grown up in an enabling environment at a time when the Jews were crushed under the powerful reign of the Roman Empire. It is important to consider the side of St Joseph as a creator of hope in the holy family because an essential characteristic to effective partnership and parenting is hope. Often family survives by creating hope that inspires and makes us believe that anything is possible.<sup>32</sup> It is possible to develop such hope in families by adapting such characteristics and training self to create and sustain hope.

### 3. Crisis Management in the Family Setting

The crisis seemed to be an everyday life event of a Jew in those ancient times. With the burden of an abandoned kingdom crumbling under the rule of Romans and heavy taxation, the Jews were praying and looking forward to the arrival of a mighty King who could save them from their miserable lives. For Joseph, the challenges of looking after his family and child during these hardships meant finding a stable job and dealing with the crisis.

Having a safety plan with a crisis management component can reduce the stress when instability threatens to overwhelm the family.<sup>33</sup> From a Humanistic approach, Carl Rogers believed that crisis management believes that people can grow if they experience acceptance.<sup>34</sup> Reflective and empathic techniques help the person express emotions and contribute to positive crisis outcomes.<sup>35</sup> From a Cognitive-behavioural approach, crisis management looks into the behavioural decision-making model that forms its base. After defining the problem and reviewing the efforts to correct it, the person can brainstorm alternative interventions, select the best alternative, and commit to seeing it follow through.<sup>36</sup> However, from a Family Systems Approach, the assumption taken is that if a family

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<sup>32</sup>Matthew Emerzian, *Every Monday Matters for Families: 52-Weeks to Make a Positive Difference in You, Your Family, and Your Community*, Sourcebooks Inc, 2021.

<sup>33</sup>Mara Briere, *Safety and Crisis Management: Developing Your Family Plan*, Independently Published, 2019, 40.

<sup>34</sup>K.A. Kanel, *A Guide to Crisis Intervention*, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooke/Cole, 1998.

<sup>35</sup>R.J. Corsini and D. Wedding, *Current Psychotherapies*, Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 1989.

<sup>36</sup>Kanel, *A Guide to Crisis Intervention*.

member makes a significant change, the rest of the family will also have to change to maintain balance in the family. A resilience approach is the most recent and effective way to crisis management in a system-based family approach.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.1. Decision-Making Skills

Decision-making entails the aspects of deciding the virtues and principles of bringing up the family (e.g. the Christian values having family prayers and weekly mass) and deciding on the boundaries of defining the family.

Family rules are the paradigm for moral rules.<sup>38</sup> Regarding the ordinariness of virtue, Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* I. II. 6) makes a helpful distinction between a human act (any deliberate action) and an act of a human (which does not require any deliberate reason). Effectively he claims that every human action is inevitably a moral action; “every individual action is either good or bad.”<sup>39</sup> As an example of a moral act, he uses the simple human act of going to bed, which parents try endlessly to teach their children how important an action is.

### 3.2. Hope and Faith in Achieving Goals

Pope Francis through his apostolic letter, *Patris Corde*, the Father’s Heart, invites us to visit the school of Joseph. “Each of us can discover in Joseph—the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence—an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation” (*Patris Corde*, Introduction). Emphasizing the role of the people who embrace the school of Joseph, Pope Francis highlights the importance of such a company in combating the miseries of Himalayan proportion caused by the Covid-19 pandemic:

our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are indeed shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses,

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<sup>37</sup>Janice G. Weber, *Individual and Family Stress and Crises*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2011.

<sup>38</sup>James F. Keenan, “Character Formation and Virtue Ethics: A Moral Theologian’s Point of View,” *Vinayasadhana* (2018) 7.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd, rev. ed., trans, Fathers of the English Dominican Province, New Advent., 2008, 1920. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2001.htm>

storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men, and women were working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others (*Patris Corde*, 6).

## **Conclusion**

Effective partnership and parenting are crucial topics in the present-day scenario as divorce and separation cases rise. By joining the Christian perspective of a family headed by St Joseph and the psychological perspective of the effective parenting models, this article reflects ways to develop goal orientation, demonstration, and practice in everyday family life. As the paper demonstrated, the model holy family headed by St Joseph had qualities that facilitated effective partnership and parenting. In such a family, operational crisis management based on decision-making skills and hope and faith in achieving goals are easily attained. We can have confidence that like St Joseph, who worked diligently in the shadows, we would also put in the hard work that enables us to bear good fruits in our families.