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If someone were writing a description of you, what would be the first word they would choose? Would they describe your appearance? Your job? Your personality? Or would they describe your character?

One of the first things we learn about Saint Joseph is that he was “a righteous man” (Matthew 1:19). Some translations say that he was a “just” man, which essentially means the same thing.

What does being “righteous” or “just” actually mean? Some synonyms include virtuous, upright, decent, worthy, ethical, and principled. Basically, it means that Joseph was what we would call a “good man.” It doesn’t mean that he was without flaws or faults. He might have snored or

retold the same stories or even got upset at times. What it does mean is that he was a man who could be trusted to keep his word, be honest in his business dealings, and err on the side of kindness.

Since we know so few details about Joseph, the fact that his character is the primary way he is described tells us not only that the writers of the Gospels thought his character mattered, but also that his character was his outstanding characteristic. We have no idea of his age or his appearance, but we know he was a “good man.” To be known for 2,000+ years as a genuinely good person might just be the best description any of us can hope for.

Quotation

Go, then to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you;
Go to Joseph, and obey him as Jesus and Mary obeyed him;
Go to Joseph, and speak to him as they spoke to him;
Go to Joseph, and consult him as they consulted him;
Go to Joseph, and honor him as they honored him;
Go to Joseph, and be grateful to him as they were grateful to him; Go to Joseph, and love him,
as they love him still.

—Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Prayer

Saint Joseph, you know what it is like to live as a good person in trying times. Help us to find our own central core of decency and never compromise our values.

Amen.