In any case, Father Kelly has delved into the question, and he puts it this way:

**THE MAN OF MARY'S HEART.**

Of all the suitors seeking love of maid Was ever one who might be more dismayed Than he who challenged Mary's cloudless gate To rate his worth as mate to love all days?

Above all Maids in true discernment's art, In gladness she surrendered hand and heart To Joseph, symbol bright of valiant youth Whose might of arm was as his soul's, forsooth!

Patrician born, was he, of David's line, A lover bold, made strong by love's design To guard the Father's choice of daughters pure The Mail most fair to heaven's Connoisseur. Proclaim the youth of Joseph to the world!

In art, through the centuries, Saint Joseph has almost invariably been pictured as an old man. Whether this has been really justified is, in the minds of some, somewhat open to question. Father John Bernard Kelly of the Archdiocese of New York quotes the noted Jesuit Suarez as opposed to the notion that Joseph was old:

Forasmuch as it was God's design to cover the maidenhood and motherhood of Mary beneath the marriage veil, thus to shield the honor of Jesus from idle rumor, so, likewise, no such shocking difference in ages of the pair would have been allowed, lest it cast shadow of ridicule upon their union.

And Father Kelly further appeals to the celebrated spiritual author Fumard, who says:

Without one exception every sarcophagus and monument of the first four centuries gives a type of manhood for St. Joseph which is very different from the figure we encounter nowadays. He is always represented as a young man and beardless. It is only in the fourth century that certain Fathers, after consulting the apocryphal gospels, made St. Joseph an old man. St. Epiphanius even goes so far as to give his age as about forty-four.

Go to Joseph...for purity and manliness...love of Mary...love of women...love of God...make this novena for your dad in honor of Saint Joseph...pray to him about your own vocation...go to Joseph for the things you heed...more grace...a job.