

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS – BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE *SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD*

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Abstract. Maintaining brotherly relationships or at least a *spirit of brotherhood* is an ever growing challenge for the contemporary human being. Family, social, inter-ethnic, political or religious conflicts are putting strains on humanity, which is barely finding the necessary resources to maintain order among fellow human beings. Unfortunately, people have forgotten that they have the same parents, that our face shows we are all related first to Adam and Eve and then to Jesus Christ, the new Adam, in whom we are all one (Gal 3:28). In other words, human beings are brothers, whether we relate to our forefathers or to Him who would be the first-born among many brothers (Rom 8:29). Wishing to offer concrete solutions to restore brotherly relationships, we have chosen a paradigm from the Old Testament whose protagonists are the Patriarch Jacob, Joseph and his brothers. Through Jacob, we shall understand in a tangible way how to maintain brotherly relationships and what to do in order to correct possible deviations. Likewise, by means of this endeavour, I envisage highlighting a biblical model that would allow me to pinpoint the manner in which the Holy Scripture perceives the *spirit of brotherhood* that, according to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, lies at the basis of inter-human relationships.

Keywords: The spirit of brotherhood, Joseph, brother, father, paradigm, refugees, attitude, restoration, empathy.

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a **spirit of brotherhood.**” (art. 1)

(*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* – the UN, December 10th 1948)

Introduction

The tendency of refugees (coming from North African countries and from the Middle East) to emigrate to our continent has represented a real challenge for European countries. They have been forced to act in the spirit of brotherhood towards the immigrants coming from countries where the most basic human rights