How and why did Catholic votaries in early seventeenth-century Antwerp allegorize the relation between the material circumstances and spiritual properties of the vita Christi? This question proves crucial to manuscript MPM R 35 Vita S. Iosephi beatissimae Virginis sponsi patriarcharum maximi iconibus delineata ac versiculis ornata (Life of St. Joseph, Husband of the Most Blessed Virgin, Greatest of the Patriarchs, Portrayed in Images and Ornamented with Verses), a small octavo volume housed in the printroom of the Plantin Moretus Museum.