

**NOVENA IN HONOR OF SAINT JOSEPH**  
on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation  
of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church

**Seventh Day | March 16**

**SIGN OF THE CROSS**

**PRAYER**

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,  
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.  
To you God entrusted his only Son;  
in you Mary placed her trust;  
with you Christ became man.  
Blessed Joseph, to us too,  
show yourself a father  
and guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,  
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

**REFLECTION**

From the apostolic letter *Patris corde* of the Holy Father, Francis:

*A creatively courageous father, continued*

At the end of every account in which Joseph plays a role, the Gospel tells us that he gets up, takes the child and his mother, and does what God commanded him. Indeed, Jesus and Mary his Mother are the most precious treasure of our faith.

In the divine plan of salvation, the Son is inseparable from his Mother, from Mary, who “advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son until she stood at the cross”.

We should always consider whether we ourselves are protecting Jesus and Mary, for they are also mysteriously entrusted to our own responsibility, care and safekeeping. The Son of the Almighty came into our world in a state of great vulnerability. He needed to be defended, protected, cared for and raised by Joseph. God trusted Joseph,

as did Mary, who found in him someone who would not only save her life, but would always provide for her and her child. In this sense, Saint Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history, even as Mary's motherhood is reflected in the motherhood of the Church. In his continued protection of the Church, Joseph continues to protect *the child and his mother*, and we too, by our love for the Church, continue to love *the child and his mother*.

That child would go on to say: "As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me". Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is "the child" whom Joseph continues to protect. For this reason, Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying. Consequently, the Church cannot fail to show a special love for the least of our brothers and sisters, for Jesus showed a particular concern for them and personally identified with them. From Saint Joseph, we must learn that same care and responsibility. We must learn to love the child and his mother, to love the sacraments and charity, to love the Church and the poor. Each of these realities is always *the child and his mother*.

## NOVENA PRAYER

Saint Joseph, you are the faithful protector and intercessor of all who love and venerate you. You know that I have confidence in you and that, after Jesus and Mary, I come to you as an example for holiness, for you are especially close with God. Therefore, I humbly commend myself, with all who are dear to me and all that belong to me, to your intercession. I beg of you, by your love for Jesus and Mary, not to abandon me during life and to assist me at the hour of my death.

Glorious Saint Joseph, spouse of the Immaculate Virgin, pray for me to have a pure, humble, charitable mind, and perfect resignation to the divine Will. Be my guide, my father, and my model through life that I may die as you did in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

Loving Saint Joseph, faithful follower of Jesus Christ, I raise my heart to you to implore your powerful intercession in obtaining from the Divine Heart of Jesus all the graces necessary for my spiritual and temporal welfare, particularly the grace of a happy death, and the special grace I now implore: *time for silent prayer*

Guardian of the Word Incarnate, I feel confident that your prayers on my behalf will be graciously heard before the throne of God. St. Joseph Most Just, Pray for us! Amen.

## SIGN OF THE CROSS