

+Dear QOA Families,

Tomorrow we celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph, the Husband of Mary. Saint Joseph is my very favorite saint, after, of course, Jesus and Mary. Saint Joseph is often referred to as the Shadow of God our Father. If you think about it, Joseph was never in the limelight. He is not quoted once in the Gospels. The Gospels do indicate though that Joseph listened to the messages of the Angel on more than one occasion. To be open and obedient to a messenger of God demonstrates that Joseph was a man of prayer because he listened for God's will and carried it out. In the Gospels we also read that Joseph was a just and righteous man, a carpenter by trade.

At Saint David Parish, we have been praying the Novena to Saint Joseph since March 11 and it concludes on March 19, the feast of Saint Joseph. **Good news – since this day is a solemnity (a very special feast) we are permitted by the Church to break our Lenten fast and eat meat this Friday, 3/19 – thanks, Saint Joseph.** QOA Families, as I have been participating in the novena, you and your intentions have been in the forefront of my mind and prayers during these nine days. As I have been reading and praying with my dear friend, Saint Joseph, I share with you characteristics that I believe correspond with each letter of his name and offer an intercession. I pray that Saint Joseph, Protector of the Holy Family, protect and guide your family.

In Mary's Immaculate Heart, I am,
Sister Mary

Just and righteous. Joseph was not afraid to do the right thing, even though he may not have fully understood the angel's message, but he trusted in God. Saint Joseph, pray for us that we may have a deeper faith and trust in God and put our faith into action daily.

Obedient to God's will. Joseph had an open mind and heart to do God's will. He must have been a prayerful man because he put into action what was asked of him. Saint Joseph, please intercede for us that we will listen to God's will for us and be courageous in doing it.

Supportive of Mary and Jesus. **S**hadow of God the Father's love. Saint Joseph, pray for us that we too will be supportive and loving to those in our care.

Energetic and enthusiastic. Saint Joseph did not wait around when the angel, the messenger of God, told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt, to flee from the wickedness of Herod. Joseph got Mary and Jesus ready immediately and they escaped. Many artists depict Joseph as an old man. I disagree with this depiction because how could an old man travel from Bethlehem to Egypt for a total of 4032 miles on foot and by donkey – no way! Saint Joseph, please pray for us that we will have the graces and strength to do God's will, no matter the difficulties.

Protector of the Holy Family and us. Saint Joseph, just as you were the faithful guardian of Jesus and Mary, you are also eager to help us in our necessities. Saint Joseph, devoted protector, please watch over and guide each of us and our families to grow in our love for God and for one another. Help us to teach the faith to our children as you did to Jesus.

Honest, hard worker. Saint Joseph, you used your God-given gifts and talents to serve Jesus, Mary, and your neighbors. Please pray for us that whatever our work may be, that we do it to the best of our ability and for the glory of God, to benefit our loved ones, and to be of service to others.

The official prayer of the Year of St. Joseph—To you, O blessed Joseph (Ad te, beate Ioseph)—was composed by Pope Leo XIII in his 1889 encyclical, *Quamquam Pluries*.

To you, O blessed Joseph (Ad te, beate Ioseph)

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

