



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

2 February 2021, 2:15 PM

Go to Joseph

Here's the deal, Parker: I'm asking Catholics in the Archdiocese of Dubuque to recite a prayer to St. Joseph (see below) on the 19th of the month, from March through November - a novena of 19s - for charity, unity, and humility in our Church, and in our Country:

The charity to love those on the other side of any issue as brothers and sisters in the Lord, such that others will comment – see how they love one another!

The unity that comes from forgiving and giving to anyone, everyone, even an enemy, especially an enemy, according to the teaching and example of Jesus.

The humility to acknowledge the truth that...

- It isn't a sin in and of itself for a Catholic to belong to one political party or another;
- It isn't a sin in and of itself for a Catholic to vote for a candidate of one political party or another;
- Life issues are pre-eminent for Catholics, like opposing abortion, embryonic stem cell research, capital punishment, and physician-assisted suicide;
- But there are also other important issues we may not ignore, like advocating for the poor, promoting racial justice, immigration reform, and protecting the environment;
- The COVID pandemic is serious, and the safety precautions are reasonable;
- It is more than morally permissible to receive any of the COVID vaccines;

... and to admit that, even though we might still disagree, we are all of us the apple of God's eye, the darling of the Deity, and our names written on the palm of his hand.

And because the Catholic faithful are citizens of the Nation, we pray that God will bless our Country too with the blessings of this novena of 19s – charity, unity, and humility.

Disagreement does not betoken division

This last election cycle and the pandemic have not only thrown our differences into high relief, but have also led to divides, distrust, and bad-mouthing among us.

For example, people insisted that I state that it's morally wrong to belong to this or that political party, or that it's a sin to vote for a candidate from one party or another.

And some people insisted that I should *mandate* mask-wearing, and others that I would rally folks for a mask-burning, like a politically-charged piece of clothing from the past.

People on both sides were upset I wouldn't change my mind. I might be wrong; it's happened. There was that one time when I thought I was wrong, but I was really right.

But they wouldn't change their minds either. So, I asked that we might at least love each other as brothers and sisters in the Lord, and pray for each other.

Differences are normal in any community; in fact, our Church teaches that diversity, like a difference of opinions, is essential for true unity to survive and thrive.

But a difference of opinion does not, and should not result in division, or distrust, or making disparaging remarks about people on the other side of an issue.

We are meant to be united

Our great Nation is suffering from divides, distrust, and bad-mouthing, and because some of citizens of our Country are Catholics, the Church is suffering from them too.

This isn't tolerable in our Nation, which was founded to be one, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, from womb to tomb, no matter the gender, color, or...

It's even less tolerable in our Church, established as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, and whose members are supposed to be distinguished by mutual love (John 13:35).

Division, distrust and disparaging remarks all bear the marks of the evil one, known for fomenting rebellion against unity, and called the father of lies.

Go to Joseph

What to do? Our Holy Father Pope Francis may not have had this divide in mind when he established the Year of St. Joseph, but it is nonetheless a good remedy for it.

After all, St. Joseph is called the terror of evil spirits, and there has to be at least one of them prowling about the world, seeking the ruin of our souls by the COVID or division.

Good Pope Francis hopes that we will imitate the virtues of St. Joseph such that they cast out vice, and they become a good life-long habit; for example:

- Show compassion, tender love, and mercy, the same as God has for us.
- Defer to the plan of God, to the well-being of others, and to the common good.
- Have a practical love for the community of the Church, and for the poor.
- Be active and creative when God engages us in finding solutions to problems.

As you can see, these *Josephian* qualities are not only most appropriate for Catholics following the way of Jesus, but are also an effective remedy for the divides that vex us.

The Holy Father also proposes certain spiritual practices to seek the intercession of St. Joseph, and to promote imitation of his virtues.

One practice is to recite a prayer to St. Joseph on the 19th of March (the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary), and on the 19th of each month during 2021.

And a variation on that theme is the proposed novena of 19s – For the love of God, neighbor, country, and of all that is good and holy, please join in.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque

Litany to St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

God our Father in heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.
Noble son of the House of David, pray for us.
Light of the Patriarchs, pray for us.
Husband of the Mother of God, pray for us.
Guardian of the Virgin, pray for us.
Foster father of the Son of God, pray for us.
Faithful guardian of Christ, pray for us.
Head of the Holy Family, pray for us.
Joseph, chaste and just, pray for us.
Joseph, prudent and brave, pray for us.
Joseph, obedient and loyal, pray for us.
Pattern of patience, pray for us.
Lover of poverty, pray for us.
Model of workers, pray for us.
Example to parents, pray for us.
Guardian of virgins, pray for us.
Pillar of family life, pray for us.
Comfort of the troubled, pray for us.
Hope of the sick, pray for us.
Patron of the dying, pray for us.
Terror of evil spirits, pray for us.
Protector of the Church, pray for us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

God made him master of his household, and put him in charge of all that he owned.

Let us pray. O God, who in your inexpressible providence were pleased to choose Saint Joseph as spouse of the most holy Mother of your Son, grant, we pray, that we, who revere him as our protector on earth, may be worthy of his heavenly intercession. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.