



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

5 January 2020, 9:00 AM

Year of St. Joseph

Introduction

It used to be, when Mass was ordinarily in Latin, that everyone read from a *St. Joseph Missal*, with the Latin text and an English translation on facing pages; I had one.

Inside the front and back covers were listed all the things for which St. Joseph was named patron: fathers, workers, immigrants, and a happy death, just to name a few.

When I had to pick a Confirmation name, I chose Joseph, figuring that if he was named patron of... everything, he must be important (give me a break; I was only 9 years old).

Year of St. Joseph

St. Joseph was also named, by Pope Pio Nono, of happy memory, as patron of the Catholic Church throughout the world.

The 150th Anniversary of that event fell on 8 December 2020, which inspired our Holy Father Pope Francis to dedicate this next year, until 8 December 2021, to St. Joseph.

Pope Francis hopes the observance will result in more: more love for Joseph; more prayers asking his intercession; and more imitation of his virtues and zeal.

With regard to imitation, some of us may think it doesn't concern us: I'm not a man; I'm not married; I don't have children; and I'm not working (except in the home).

But consider what virtues from the life of Joseph that the Pope highlights (in his Apostolic Letter "With a Father's Heart") as worthy of our imitation:

- Show compassion, tender love, and mercy, the same as God has for us.
- Defer to the plan of God, or to the well-being of others, or to the common good.
- Rejoice in what is, instead of lamenting over what is not.
- Be active and creative when God engages us in finding solutions to problems.
- Have a practical love for the community of the Church, and for the poor.
- Work, and work hard, even if it isn't glitzy or exciting, and help others find work.
- Accept responsibility to give to and to forgive others, any other, even an enemy.

As you can see, those *Josephian* qualities aren't reserved to men, but are for women too, and for all, whether single, childless, retired from work outside the home, or not.

Prayers and spiritual practices

Our Holy Father proposes specific prayers and spiritual practices to help us meet the objectives of the year of St. Joseph:

- 1) Meditate for 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer;
- 2) Participate in a Spiritual Retreat for at least 1 day, with a meditation on Joseph;
- 3) Perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy;
- 4) Recite the Holy Rosary with a family, or among engaged couples;
- 5) Entrust the day's activities to the protection of St. Joseph;
- 6) Ask for Joseph's intercession on behalf of those looking for employment;
- 7) Recite the Litany to St. Joseph for the Church, persecuted from within and without;
- 8) Recite a prayer to St. Joseph on any Wednesday, or on the 19th of any month, or on the Feast of the Holy Family, or on the 1st of May (Memorial of St. Joseph, the Worker), or on the 19th of March (Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary).

Moreover, by way of an incentive, Pope Francis has granted an indulgence for whenever we complete these prayers and spiritual practices, until the end of 8 December 2021.

What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is the pardon by God of all or some of the temporal punishment due to our sins that have already been confessed and forgiven.

The priest in Confession forgives the eternal punishment for sin (read: hell), but also imposes on us a penance, which is a temporal (as opposed to eternal) punishment.

Justice demands we repair the material and spiritual damage our sins caused. We work at this by doing the penance from Confession: a prayer, self-denial, or a work of mercy.

But who knows if that penance is enough to make reparation? So, we are expected to pray, deny ourselves, and serve the poor as the ordinary practice of our Catholic Faith.

We receive the indulgence when we complete a specified prayer or spiritual practice, done with the right disposition, and fulfilling the necessary conditions, namely:

- 1) On that day, be in the state of grace (free from the guilt of mortal sin), and...
- 2) On that day (or 20 days before or after), confess to a priest, and be detached from sin, that is, desire to do better and avoid even the near occasion of sin, and...
- 3) On that day, worthily receive the Eucharist, preferably while participating in Holy Mass, or if that's not possible, outside of Holy Mass, and...
- 4) On that day, pray an Our Father and a Hail Mary for the intentions of the Pope.

People who are homebound, in hospital, or at a care center, because they are frail from age or illness, may also receive an indulgence *simply by reciting a prayer to St. Joseph*, provided they are detached from sin, and intend to fulfill the above-mentioned conditions as soon as that's possible.

Who benefits?

The Church teaches that we can receive a plenary, or complete pardon of temporal punishment, once a day, either for our benefit, or that of the poor souls in purgatory.

But mightn't we include other people and purposes to benefit from an indulgence? Or at the very least ask Joseph to intercede for other needs?

Like for an end to this God-forsaken pandemic, for those who live in fear for their lives or their livelihood, and for the speedy distribution to all of a safe and effective vaccine.

After all, Joseph is traditionally invoked as the terror of evil spirits, and there must be at least one of them prowling about the world, seeking our ruin with the COVID.

And Joseph is a model of bravery, obedience, and patience, all of which we need to continue washing our hands, wearing a mask, and keeping a safe distance.

Or couldn't our prayers and works benefit the spiritual and material success of ArchdioceseOne, our special appeal? Or at least to ask Joseph to intercede for this?

I mean, Joseph was a migrant like those we need to help; a worker like those who will repair our Cathedral; and his Son was a priest, like our retired priests and wannabees.

And with Joseph, we want to protect the Church, as well as heal it with the medicine of charity, and to be good stewards like Joseph, model of justice and prudence.

Through the mercy of God, and begging the intercession of St. Joseph, may we all find the help we need to imitate his virtues, to be delivered from the evil of the COVID, and to celebrate the spiritual and material success of ArchdioceseOne. May it be so. Amen.

Archbishop Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque

Prayers with an indulgence for the year of St. Joseph

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.

Prayer to St. Joseph (written by Pope Leo XIII, to be recited after the Rosary)

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, 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.