

TOGETHER

a monthly bulletin insert from the archdiocese



ARCHDIOCESE
of DUBUQUE

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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

7 January 2021, 8:15 AM

CAPITOL RIOTING OF JANUARY 6

On 6 January 2021, we witnessed – live on TV, and in living color – how a group became a mob, a protest became a riot, resulting in deaths, harm to health and well-being, destruction of property, fright that led to fear and flight, and the threat to the common good of right government. Oh my.

Shocked and befuddled, I ask myself: What would Jesus do?

He might express righteous anger (I know I would, and maybe not so righteous). He would certainly forgive, no doubt (I would, too, but find it greatly challenging). He would also call for repentance and conversion (which I'm always in need of): from self-service to self-gift; from pride to humility; from unkindness to charity; from my good to the common good. Not me, but thee, God and others.

Not one of us can stand aside, with arms folded, looking accusingly at others. No, we're all called to repentance and conversion, to forgive. And if we're angry, to make sure it's righteous, and that the sun doesn't go down on it.

Who was it that said: Be the change you wish to see in the world? And pray, pray, pray for a peaceful transition of government, for the sake of all, and for the healing of our Nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

Archbishop Michael Jackels
Archbishop of Dubuque

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