

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Solemnity of St. Joseph during the Year of St. Joseph is coming this Friday, March 19! St. Joseph is the Patron Saint of the Universal Church as proclaimed by Blessed Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1870 (The beginning of the Year of St. Joseph on December 8, 2020 was the 150th Anniversary of that proclamation). St. Joseph is the model and example of just and righteous living for all Christian fathers, husbands, and men. He was the protector of the Holy Family from all danger. This is one of the main reasons the pope named him the Patron Saint for the entire Catholic Church because the family of God, the Church, seeks his prayers and protection from all of the dangers of world which are many in our time. One of his honorary title is "Terror of Demons". If you struggle with any sin or evil in your life, ask St. Joseph to pray for you and develop a spiritual connection to him.

We hope that all will be able to celebrate and honor St. Joseph on this day with prayer and, if possible, worshiping God at Holy Mass. There are a few Mass times to choose from. A secondary feast day will come on May 1, St. Joseph the Worker. However, March 19 is one of the highest celebrations in the church calendar which is called a Solemnity. It is considered as festive a day as Sunday itself. Many times Solemnities are also Holy Days of Obligation. Some of them fall on Sundays and some of them fall during the week. Canon Law (Church Law) gives us a list of the Holy Days that fall outside of Sunday:

Canon 1246 §1. Sunday, on which by apostolic tradition the paschal mystery is celebrated, must be observed in the universal Church as the primordial holy day of obligation. The following days must also be observed: the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Epiphany, the Ascension, the Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Mary the Mother of God, her Immaculate Conception, her Assumption, Saint Joseph, Saint Peter and Saint Paul the Apostles, and All Saints. §2. With the prior approval of the Apostolic See, however, the conference of bishops can suppress some of the holy days of obligation or transfer them to a Sunday.

Canon 1247. On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.

The Bishops of each country may choose which of these days must be kept as days of obligation. In our country, St. Joseph's Day is not a day of obligation. This year, however, we should do whatever we can to keep it holy. Each of these days, like Sunday, is a day of feast and celebration, therefore Canon Law also gives the privilege to the Faithful who are celebrating the day to set aside the obligation to do penance even if that day falls on a Friday in Lent. We are permitted to eat meat on Friday, March 19, 2021 if we are doing so in celebration of St. Joseph's Day. We may choose to abstain from meat on another day of the week in its place but are not required to do so provided that we are doing some form of Lenten penance on the other weekdays of Lent. It is good to remind ourselves of the times of penance as outlined by the Church's disciplinary law, and also of the days that are meant to be days of true celebration, resurrection, and freedom in the Lord, of which St. Joseph's Day is one of them:

Days of Penance

Canon 1249. The divine law binds all the Christian faithful to do penance each in his or her own way. In order for all to be united among themselves by some common observance of penance, however, penitential days are prescribed on which the Christian faithful devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing fast and abstinence, according to the norm of the following canons.

Canon 1250. The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.

Canon 1251. Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, **unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday**. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Canon 1252. The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their 14th year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority, until the beginning of their 60th year. Pastors of souls and parents are to ensure that even

those who by reason of their age are not bound by the law of fasting and abstinence, are taught the true meaning of penance.

Canon 1253. The conference of bishops can determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part, for abstinence and fast.

During the month of April on Wednesdays, we will have four presentations on St. Joseph. These presentations are open to all but are especially helpful to those who will prepare to make a special spiritual consecration to Christ through the spiritual assistance of St. Joseph. This kind of spiritual commitment involves regularly praying for St. Joseph's intercession and seeking to model your relationship with Christ according to St. Joseph's example. People who make this consecration will grow day by day spiritually and gain the special protection of St. Joseph for themselves and their families on their pilgrimage to the Promised Land of Heaven. There are many pitfalls in the spiritual life. St. Joseph guided the Holy Family safely back home to Nazareth and he will also do the same for us and our families on the path of salvation.

Many of us may not be aware that each day of the week has a special devotion or spiritual focus in our devotional life as Catholics. For instance, Mary is honored each Saturday of every week. Mary waited patiently, as the Sorrowful Mother, when Jesus rested in the tomb on Holy Saturday. She trusted her Son's promise that He would rise on the third day. Each Saturday, the entire Church remembers her loving suffering and waits spiritually with Mary to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord who comes to meet us again at Mass in Holy Communion.

Likewise, we honor St. Joseph every Wednesday of each week. Why Wednesday? St. Joseph's life ended before the saving events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. His mission in this world was complete and he went to the just souls who were waiting in the place of the dead for Jesus to descend upon His death and deliver them. St. Joseph's mission was to raise Jesus to maturity so that He could complete His own mission. Then, St. Joseph went to protect and finally guide the Holy Souls who were waiting from the beginning of time to be saved. Each Wednesday, we pray with St. Joseph to protect the dying who are on their way to meet the Savior so that they will persevere in Sanctifying Grace and be saved. St. Joseph is also known as Patron Saint of the Dying. St. Joseph, guide and protect us toward Life Everlasting!

If we are unable to participate in Mass in person or live-stream this coming Friday, March 19, please offer some special prayers in honor of St. Joseph either personally or in common with your family. It would be great if the father of the family led the prayers on the feast of the foster-father of Jesus Christ, who is the model of righteousness and justice for all fathers of families, and all men in general. Here are a few suggested prayers to be offered on St. Joseph's Day:

Litany of St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of 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 .
Saint Joseph, pray for us.
Illustrious son of David, pray for us.
Light of the patriarchs, pray for us.
Spouse of the Mother of God, pray for us.
Chaste guardian of the Virgin, pray for us.
Foster-father of the Son of God, pray for us.

Watchful defender of Christ, pray for us.
Head of the Holy Family, pray for us.
Joseph most just, pray for us.
Joseph most chaste, pray for us.
Joseph most prudent, pray for us.
Joseph most valiant, pray for us.
Joseph most obedient, pray for us.
Joseph most faithful, pray for us.
Mirror of patience, pray for us.
Lover of poverty, pray for us.
Model of workmen, pray for us.
Glory of domestic life, pray for us.
Guardian of virgins, pray for us.
Pillar of families, pray for us.
Solace of the afflicted, pray for us.
Hope of the sick, pray for us.
Patron of the dying, pray for us.
Terror of demons, pray for us.
Protector of Holy Church, pray for us.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. He made him the lord of His household,

R. And prince over all His possessions.

Let Us Pray.

O God, Who in Your ineffable providence were pleased to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Your most Holy Mother, grant that as we venerate him as our protector on earth, we may be worthy to have him as our intercessor in Heaven, You Who live and reign forever and ever.

R. Amen.

Here is the official prayer for the Year of St. Joseph:

"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*](#). The Holy Father asked that it be added to the end of the Rosary especially during October, the month of the Holy Rosary. This prayer is enriched with a partial indulgence (Source: USCCB).

THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH PRAYER

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.

"I do not remember even now that I have ever asked anything of [St. Joseph] which he has failed to grant... To other saints the Lord seems to have given grace to succour us in some of our necessities, but of this glorious saint my experience is that he succours us in them all..." (Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila)

The above prayer and quote were taken from the following website which has several other prayers and devotions which are highly recommended to be prayed during this Year of St. Joseph: <https://yearofstjoseph.org/devotions/prayers/>

Some of us may also have heard of the tradition of St Joseph's Table. It is difficult to follow this tradition this year as a parish family because we are unable to gather for a meal outside of Mass. Maybe next year! Maybe you can do this at home this week. Here is a description of the practice:

St. Joseph's Table (altar)

The Feast of St. Joseph, which always falls in the middle of Lent, is especially commemorated and celebrated in Italy in general, and Sicily in particular, where St. Joseph has been long regarded as the island's Patron saint. It is there, among Sicilians, that the tradition of the "Tavola di San Giuseppe" or "St. Joseph's Table" has its origins. March 19th is, in Italy, also Father's Day—which isn't at all surprising, as St. Joseph was, of course, the foster father of Jesus. This celebration is a symbolic "thank you" and a renewal of the Sicilian people's devotion to Saint Joseph. It is a *shared* celebration with the

entire community where the riches of food are given as alms to the poor: traditional etiquette is that *no one* can be turned away from this table.

Origins

Legends from the Middle Ages attributed the end of a devastating drought to a prayer-devotion that the Sicilian people made to St. Joseph.

During a time of drought and famine, no rain fell on Medieval Sicily. Food crops for both people and livestock withered and died. The people prayed to St. Joseph for help. When the clouds opened, the desperately needed rain poured down, and there was much rejoicing! After the harvest, to show their gratitude, they prepared a table with special foods to honor St. Joseph and to share with the poor. After thanking and honoring the saint, they distributed the food to the less fortunate. This celebration became an annual tradition. Each year, wealthy families prepared huge buffets. The less fortunate people of the community, especially the homeless and sick, were invited, and all the remaining food and proceeds were given to the poor. Through the years, the tradition has remained throughout Italy, and is also prevalent in Poland, Malta, Spain, the Phillipines, and, with the influx of Sicilian immigrants to the US, here in our own country.

Three-Fold Purpose

The heart of this tradition can be found in these three aspects:

Veneration—special recognition of St. Joseph during Mass and at the “table”.

The Table—both a kind of “altar of reverence”, and a communal celebration.

The Poor—The intention of all the gifts is to help those in need.

Ideas can be found for celebrating the St. Joseph's Table tradition at the website from which the above information was taken:

<https://yearofstjoseph.org/devotions/st-joseph-table/>

Lastly, we wish the SMV Fr. Anselm Weber, OFM Knights of Columbus Council a very happy 2nd Anniversary on St. Joseph's Day. The council had a wonderful celebration with the State Deputy present at Mass on the Solemnity of St. Joseph 2019. That day was specially chosen as the founding of the council to remind all members that Catholic gentlemen should always follow St. Joseph's example as faithful husband and father and courageous and righteous man of faith. We especially thank our Knights who have served so well during our outdoor Masses in this time of need.

St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, Patron of the Dying, and Terror of Demons, pray for us!

As St. Joseph lived, in the Father's will, we remain,
Fr. Derda, Fr. Steve, Deacon Russ, Deacon Ed