



Office of the Vicar General

1316 Peger Road ♦ Fairbanks, Alaska 99709 ♦ (907) 374-9504 ♦ rfath@cbna.org

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Holy See Proclaims A Year of Saint Joseph

Dear Brothers & Sisters:

Yesterday, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis announced a year dedicated to St. Joseph beginning on December 8, 2020 and ending on December 8, 2021 to mark the 150th anniversary of Pope Pius IX's declaration of St. Joseph as patron of the universal Church in 1870. Since that declaration various popes have encouraged devotion to the foster father of Christ in various ways:

- Leo XIII in 1889 asked that a prayer to Joseph be added to the rosary during the month of October and that the month of March be kept in honor of St. Joseph;
- Pius XII in 1955 erected the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker celebrated on May 1st;
- John XXIII in 1962 added Joseph's name to the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I); and
- Francis completed an effort begun by Benedict XVI by decreeing that Joseph's name be added to all the Eucharistic Prayers.

To inaugurate the Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis issued the apostolic letter *Patris corde* (<https://bit.ly/2VZQJva>) reflecting on the role St. Joseph in the life of the Holy Family and the life of the Church. In addition, the Apostolic Penitentiary issued a decree authorizing the gift of indulgences during this year to foster devotion to St. Joseph. Plenary indulgences are granted to the faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intentions) to the faithful who participate in the Year of St. Joseph in the following ways:

- The plenary indulgence is granted to those who will meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, or take part in a Spiritual Retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph. The indulgence can also be obtained by those who, following St. Joseph's example, will perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy. St. Joseph "encourages us to rediscover the value of silence, prudence and loyalty in carrying out our duties," the decree notes.
- The recitation of the Holy Rosary in families and among engaged couples is another way of obtaining indulgences, in order that "all Christian families may be stimulated to

recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family.”

- Everyone who entrusts their daily activity to the protection of St. Joseph, and every faithful who invokes the intercession of St. Joseph so that those seeking work can find dignifying work can also obtain the plenary indulgence. On 1 May 1955, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph “with the intent that the dignity of work be recognized by all, and that it inspires social life and laws, based on the fair distribution of rights and duties.”
- The plenary indulgence is also granted to the faithful who will recite the Litany to St. Joseph (for the Latin tradition), or the Akathistos to St. Joseph (for the Byzantine tradition), or any other prayer to St. Joseph proper to the other liturgical traditions, for the persecuted Church ad intra and ad extra, and for the relief of all Christians suffering all forms of persecution. Because, the decree notes, “the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt shows us that God is there where man is in danger, where man suffers, where he runs away, where he experiences rejection and abandonment.”

In addition, due to the continuing pandemic, the gift of the plenary indulgence is extended to the sick, the elderly, the dying and all those who for legitimate reasons are unable to leave their homes. They can obtain the indulgence if they are detached from sin and have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions and to recite and act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, offering up to God their pains and hardships. In this case, priests are strongly encouraged to facilitate the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and the administration of Holy Communion to the sick and homebound with a generous spirit as circumstances allow.

To assist our parishes and the faithful during the Year of St. Joseph, the Diocese of Charlotte has set up a website (<http://yearofstjoseph.org>) providing links to devotions and prayers, artwork and activities for families. All are encouraged to avail themselves of these resources.

As a diocese, let us invoke the protection of he who guarded the Holy Family. Through the intercession of St. Joseph, may we be strengthened in our relationship with the Blessed Mother and with Christ, their Son.

Fraternally in Christ,



Fr. Robert Fath, JCL
Vicar General