

## Pastor's Notes: The Year of St. Joseph

January 17, 2021

This past December 8th, Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter called "*Patris Corde*", "With a Father's Heart". He wrote the letter to inaugurate a year dedicated to devotion to St. Joseph. Its express purpose is to "increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtue and zeal." St. Joseph has been given the title, "Guardian of the Redeemer", "Patron of the Catholic Church", and "Patron of Workers". His is a quiet witness, in that no words are recorded of St. Joseph, but his example of faith through actions speaks louder than any words. The pope says in his letter, "At the end of every account in which Joseph plays a role, the Gospel tells us that he gets up, takes the child and his mother, and does what God commanded him." What a beautiful summary of what the Christian life is supposed to be! Would that we would always be open to the prompting of grace in our lives. When God speaks, we should embrace Jesus in the sacraments, and stay close to and guard our mother, the Church.

In this Year of St. Joseph, all the faithful are called to follow the example of St. Joseph and daily reinforce their own life of faith in complete fulfillment of God's will. Through the apostolic penitentiary, the Holy Father has extended a series of *plenary indulgences* centered around devotion to St. Joseph. You can find links to these documents on the new Year of St. Joseph page of our website. In particular, certain actions have received the grant of an indulgence:

- a. Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Our Father, *or*  
Participate in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph
- b. Perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, after the example of St. Joseph
- c. Recite the Holy Rosary in families and as engaged couples
- d. Entrust your work daily to the protection of St. Joseph or invoke with your prayers the intercession of the worker of Nazareth
- e. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (for the Latin tradition) or some other prayer to Saint Joseph, for the persecuted Church and for the relief of all persecuted Christians, *or*  
Pray any lawfully approved prayer or act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, on any day, but special days include: March 19th (Solemnity of St. Joseph), May 1st (Feast of St. Joseph the Worker), the 19th day of every month, and every Wednesday (a day dedicated to the memory of St. Joseph)

It should be noted that for any plenary indulgence to be obtained, there are several conditions that usually must be met, in addition to the primary act. These usual conditions include reception of the Holy Eucharist, sacramental confession, praying for the intentions of the pope, and a detachment from all sin. In this time of pandemic the pope has extended the indulgences in a special way to the sick, the elderly, and all who are unable to access the sacraments physically but intend to fulfill the conditions as soon as possible. They are to recite an act of piety to St. Joseph, Comfort of the Sick and Patron of a Happy Death, faithfully offering to God their suffering.

We will be encouraging these devotions at the Basilica in our public worship and by sharing resources online and in the bulletin. Please explore the Year of St. Joseph page on our website, and watch for updates during the year. To facilitate the granting of the first indulgence, I hope to offer a spiritual day retreat later this year, as well as a men's weekend trip for St. Joseph. Stay tuned! I encourage the faithful on their own and in families to fulfill the requirements of (b) and (c) by doing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy following the example of St. Joseph, and by praying the Rosary as a family or a couple. In fulfillment of (d) and (e), I intend to introduce the Litany of St. Joseph to be prayed at the end of daily Masses every Wednesday, the day traditionally dedicated to devotion of St. Joseph. We will also be encouraging on the Seven Sundays Devotion prior to the feast of St. Joseph by honoring his Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys. To facilitate the last indulgence action, we will sing and pray songs and prayers dedicated to St. Joseph throughout the year, especially on the occasions of March 19 and May 1. We will also recite a special prayer to St. Joseph at the end of every Sunday Mass.



JANUARY- Joseph, Most Valiant Protector of the Church

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,  
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.  
To you God entrusted his only Son;  
In you Mary placed her trust;  
With you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,  
Show yourself a father  
And guide us in the path of life.  
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,  
And defend us from every evil. Amen.*

The Holy Father concluded his letter by saying that our world today needs fathers. May our devotion to the Foster Father of Jesus, St. Joseph, inspire the fathers of our parish to be fathers we need for our day, and may we all benefit from the prayerful intercession of St. Joseph.

*Rev. J. David Carter*