

Novena of St. Joseph leading to the end of the Year of Saint Joseph

November 29th

Saint Joseph, patron of the Universal Church

Reflection

Thus it is that we may prefigure the new in the old patriarch [Joseph, cf. Gen 37]. And as the first caused the prosperity of his master's domestic interests and at the same time rendered great services to the whole kingdom, so the second, destined to be the guardian of the Christian religion, should be regarded as the protector and defender of the Church, which is truly the house of the Lord and the kingdom of God on earth. These are the reasons why men of every rank and country should fly to the trust and guard of the blessed Joseph. Fathers of families find in Joseph the best personification of paternal solicitude and vigilance; spouses a perfect example of love, of peace, and of conjugal fidelity; virgins at the same time find in him the model and protector of virginal integrity.¹

Prayer – for an end to the coronavirus pandemic

Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church,
we ask that you intercede with your Son,
the Saviour of the world, for an end to the coronavirus pandemic,
that the sick may experience healing, the dying, peace,
healthcare workers, strength, and our leaders, wisdom.

V. Protect me, O God,

R. For in you I take refuge. (Ps 16.1)

Action

Implore God's help, with increased fervour and constancy, for an end to this pandemic.

¹ *Quamquam Pluries*, 4 (Encyclical by Pope Leo XIII, 1889)

November 30th

Saint Joseph, patron of Canada

Reflection

At the circumcision Joseph names the child “Jesus.” This is the only name in which there is salvation (*cf. Acts 4.12*). Its significance had been revealed to Joseph at the moment of his “annunciation”: “You shall call the child Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (*cf. Mt 1.21*). In conferring the name, Joseph declares his own legal fatherhood over Jesus, and in speaking the name he proclaims the child’s mission as Saviour.²

Prayer – for those who have died

Saint Joseph, Patron of Canada,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
for those who have died,
that all who have passed from this world
may attain a share in eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

V. I will extol you, O Lord,

R. For you have drawn me up. (Ps 30.1)

Action

Let us seek ways to learn from Saint Joseph “how to be servants of the ‘economy of salvation’”.³

² *Redemptoris Custos*, 12 (Apostolic Exhortation by Saint John Paul II, 1989)

³ *Redemptoris Custos*, 32

December 1st

Saint Joseph, a beloved father

Reflection

The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he [...] concretely expressed his fatherhood “by making his life a sacrificial service to the mystery of the incarnation and its redemptive purpose. He employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work. He turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home”.⁴

Prayer – for the family, the Domestic Church

Saint Joseph, beloved father,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
for the domestic church,
that its members may imitate the Holy Family
in practising the virtues of Christian family life
so that, one day, they may delight in eternal rewards.

V. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,

R. Even as we hope in you. (Ps 33.22)

Action

Perform an act of selfless service for a member of your family.

⁴ *Patris Corde*, 1 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)

December 2nd

Saint Joseph, a tender and Loving Father

Reflection

Even through Joseph's fears, God's will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture.⁵

Prayer – for Peace and Unity in Our Country

Saint Joseph, tender and loving father,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
that the people of Canada may know the peace which comes from God
and be always united in a fraternal spirit.

V. As a father has compassion for his children,

R. So the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. (Ps 103.13)

Action

Explore opportunities to contribute to the building of peace and unity in our country and commit to engaging in one of them.

⁵ *Patris Corde*, 2 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)

December 3rd

Saint Joseph, an obedient father

Reflection

“Saint Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood” and [...] in this way, “he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation.”⁶

Prayer – for an End to Racism and Discrimination

Saint Joseph, obedient father,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
that we may be given the wisdom and courage
to address the persistent sins of racism and discrimination
that we may work toward systems
that support the dignity of every person and promote respect for all.

V. Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
R. Who walk in the law of the Lord. (Ps 119.1)

Action

Leaning on Gospel values, use a pastoral and non- partisan lens to respond to concerns of family and community members about racism and discrimination, policing and public safety.

⁶ *Patris Corde, 3 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)*

December 4th

Saint Joseph, an accepting Father

Reflection

Joseph's attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak (*cf. 1 Cor 1.27*). He is the "Father of orphans and protector of widows" (*Ps 68.6*), who commands us to love the stranger in our midst. I like to think that it was from Saint Joseph that Jesus drew inspiration for the parable of the prodigal son and the merciful father (*cf. Lk 15.11-32*).⁷

Prayer – vocations to the priesthood and consecrated Life

Saint Joseph, accepting father,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
to give to the Church an increase in vocations
to the priesthood and consecrated life, filled with zeal
for the work of evangelization.

V. One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:

R. To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. (*Ps 27.4*)

Action

Accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and show special concern for the weak.⁸

⁷ *Patris Corde, 4 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)*

⁸ *Patris Corde, 4*

December 5th

Saint Joseph, a creatively courageous father

Reflection

We should always consider whether we ourselves are protecting Jesus and Mary, for they are also mysteriously entrusted to our own responsibility, care and safekeeping. The Son of the Almighty came into our world in a state of great vulnerability. He needed to be defended, protected, cared for and raised by Joseph. God trusted Joseph, as did Mary, who found in him someone who would not only save her life, but would always provide for her and her child. In this sense, Saint Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history, even as Mary's motherhood is reflected in the motherhood of the Church. In his continued protection of the Church, Joseph continues to protect *the child and his mother*, and we too, by our love for the Church, continue to love *the child and his mother*.⁹

Prayer – for youth and the elderly

Saint Joseph, creatively courageous father,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
that we may honour and cherish the youth and the elderly
by defending, protecting and caring for them, as you cared for your Son
and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

V. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself,

R. Where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. (Ps 84.3)

Action

Take a step toward interior healing by accepting your personal history and embracing the things in life you did not choose.

⁹ *Patris Corde, 5 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)*

December 6th

Saint Joseph, a working father

Reflection

Working persons, whatever their job may be, are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us. The crisis of our time, which is economic, social, cultural and spiritual, can serve as a summons for all of us to rediscover the value, the importance and necessity of work for bringing about a new “normal” from which no one is excluded. Saint Joseph’s work reminds us that God himself, in becoming man, did not disdain work. The loss of employment that affects so many of our brothers and sisters, and has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, should serve as a summons to review our priorities.¹⁰

Prayer – for Workers, especially frontline workers, and for the unemployed

Saint Joseph, working father,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
that we may complete the life-giving work
that God, Creator of all things, has set us to accomplish
and attain the promised rewards.

V. Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands—

R. O prosper the work of our hands! (Ps 90.17)

Action

Let us [...] find ways to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work.¹¹

¹⁰ *Patris Corde, 6 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)*

¹¹ *Patris Corde, 6*

December 7th

Saint Joseph, a father in the shadows

Reflection

Being a father entails introducing children to life and reality. Not holding them back, being overprotective or possessive, but rather making them capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities. Perhaps for this reason, Joseph is traditionally called a “most chaste” father. That title is not simply a sign of affection, but the summation of an attitude that is the opposite of possessiveness. Chastity is freedom from possessiveness in every sphere of one’s life. Only when love is chaste, is it truly love. A possessive love ultimately becomes dangerous: it imprisons, constricts and makes for misery. God himself loved humanity with a chaste love; he left us free even to go astray and set ourselves against him. The logic of love is always the logic of freedom, and Joseph knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus.¹²

Prayer – for the needy, the addicted and the excluded

Saint Joseph, father in the shadows,
we ask that you intercede with your Son, the Saviour of the world,
for the needy, the addicted and the excluded, that these who live in the shadows of
this world may find relief through the Father’s loving mercy.

V. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

R. Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! (Ps 130.1-2)

Action

Let us strive to love others with freedom, to not think of ourselves, but to focus on others, especially those most in need.

¹² *Patris Corde*, 7 (Apostolic Letter by Pope Francis, 2020)

December 8th

Saint Joseph, a father in the shadows

Act of Entrustment

O loving and humble Saint Joseph,
Protector of the Holy Family and Patron of the Universal Church and of Canada,
we honour you as the model of Christian virtues and entrust ourselves to you
as our inspiration and guide in living an authentic Christian life.

Modelled after you, whom the Scriptures call the Just man,
draw us closer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
that we may easily turn to the Lord in every circumstance of our lives
and, consecrated to Him, we may know, in our vocation,
the peace and joy of a holy life.

A man of listening and of action,
you who have always been so attentive to the voice of the Lord
and to the fulfilling of His will,
help us to discern the signs of the times
and to engage in the transformation of our world.

Husband, father and worker, in solidarity with the human condition,
teach us how to be faithful to our baptismal promises
and sensitive to the sufferings and needs of our sisters and brothers.

A man of great faith, unshakeable hope
and a heart burning with charity, come to the aid of the Church and our country,
watch over the elderly, the weak and the infirm,
protect our children and families,
and sustain those who give of themselves selflessly in pastoral and health care.

Merciful and compassionate companion on our journey,
you who know the burdens weighing heavily on our hearts,
intercede for our many needs, so that, by your powerful prayer,
we may be delivered from the many dangers that surround us
so as to experience safety and solace in the Lord
and, at the hour of our death, come at last to the glory of our eternal home. Amen.

Act of Entrustment Response

V. Joseph, who placed your hope in the Lord,

R. Pray for us.

V. Joseph, who experienced the unconditional love of Jesus and Mary,

R. Pray for us.

V. Joseph, whose poverty was turned into treasures in God,

R. Pray for us.

V. Joseph, who taught Jesus how to pray,

R. Pray for us.

V. Light of the Patriarchs,

R. You enlighten our path by welcoming the One who is the Light of the world.

V. Patron of the dying,

R. You accompany us on our journey into Life.

Final Blessing

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.