



The Year of St. Joseph

8th December 2020 – 8th December 2021

Part 2

In his Apostolic Letter '*Patris corde*' ("With a Father's Heart"), to mark the Year of St. Joseph, Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

A Beloved, Tender, Obedient Father

Pope Francis writes that St. Joseph, "concretely expresses his fatherhood" by offering himself in love, quoting St. Pope Paul VI - "a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home"

And because St. Joseph is at "the crossroads between the Old and New Testaments," he has always been venerated as a father to Christians. In St. Joseph, the Child Jesus experienced the tender love of God, the one that helps us accept our weakness, because it is through the love shown to others that divine love becomes a reality. Pope Francis writes "Only tender love will save us", and it is by encountering God's mercy, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we "experience His truth and tenderness," – because "we know that God's truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us".

For Pope Francis, St. Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his acceptance of God's call to be the Virgin Mary's husband, he protects her and Jesus and teaches Jesus to "do the will of the Father." Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he "cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption," as Pope St. John Paul II said, "and is truly a minister of salvation" .

A Prayer to St Joseph

Pope Francis concludes his Letter with a prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all to pray

*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.*