

The Year of St. Joseph

8th December 2020 – 8th December 2021

Part 3

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.

Welcoming the Will of God

Pope Francis describes St. Joseph as welcoming the will of God in his life as he accepts Mary as his wife and agrees to be a father to the holy baby she carries in her womb. Pope Francis continues that this is an important gesture even today "in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident".



This does not mean that Joseph is passive or resigned in his spiritual role. Instead, he is courageous, active and full of hope with the strength "to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments." Through St. Joseph, God says to us "do not be afraid!" because "faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad".

A Courageous Father, an Example of Love

Pope Francis highlights "the creative courage" of St. Joseph, which "emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties." "The carpenter of Nazareth," explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in God. He had to deal with the difficult problems his family faced, problems experienced by families in today's worlds.

In this sense, St. Joseph is the patron of all those who suffer because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty. As the guardian of the Child Jesus and the Virgin Mary, Joseph cannot "be other than the guardian of the Church," of all God's People. "Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect." From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, "we must learn... to love the Church and the poor".

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.*