

PRAYERS IN THE PEW™ MONTHLY

FAITH IN ACTION CALENDAR / HIGHLIGHTS

SAT DECEMBER 3	St. Francis Xavier, Priest
FRI DECEMBER 9	St. Juan Diego
MON DECEMBER 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe

Faith Formation Companion to Prayers in the Pew™

→ MONTHLY SYNOPSIS ←

December 2022 – As we walk through the journey of Advent into Christmas this month, we recall that Christ became a member of the human race when He was born into a family, the Holy Family. Family life, as challenging as it may be at times, is also our richest blessing, and when we consecrate our families to the Holy Family we will never be lacking in anything.

THE PRAYER TO ST JOSEPH

While Marian devotion is common among Catholics, not many are aware of how deeply the Church has held St. Joseph in veneration throughout the centuries. St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus and the husband of Mary, is one of the few saints to have two feast days in the Church calendar. March 19th is the traditional feast of St. Joseph, and May 1st is the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, a more recent celebration honoring Joseph's patronage of all working men and women.

Given his important role in the earthly life of Jesus, St. Joseph was also solemnly declared *Patron of the Universal Church* by Pope Pius IX in 1870, a title given to no other saint in history.

The New Testament is sparse on information about St. Joseph (he only appears in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 2), but what little we know of him mirrors the life of the Patriarch Joseph of the Old Testament. Consider these astounding parallels: both Josephs had fathers named Jacob; both had dreams; both went down to Egypt in difficult circumstances; both were laborers; and both provided bread for their people saving them from destruction.

It was Pharaoh himself who gave the Church its deepest devotional cry to our patron when he said: *Ite ad Joseph!* "Go to Joseph!" (Genesis 41:55).

The ancient novena prayer to St. Joseph – said to date back to the very beginnings of Christianity – is one of the

Church's greatest treasures. It emphasizes Joseph's protection and care for the Holy Family and his intercession for souls at the hour of death. Among his other titles, St. Joseph is known as the Patron of a Happy Death, since he likely died with Jesus and Mary at this bedside.

The *Prayer to St. Joseph* can be prayed at any time but particularly during the nine days (novena) before Joseph's feast on March 19th:

O Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires.

O Saint Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most Loving of Fathers.

O Saint Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss his fine head for me and ask him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath.

Saint Joseph, Patron of departed souls – pray for me. (Mention your intention) Amen.

Clearly, St. Joseph is one of our greatest champions of faith!

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

In the month of December I challenge all families to make time for the family meal, particularly on Sundays. This challenge includes putting down phones and devices so that you can talk to each other uninhibited by noise and distractions. Try to live Advent in the spirit of Mary and Joseph as they prepare for the Child to come.

– CA State Chaplain, Father John P. Grace, OSA



Colossians 3:12-13 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do."

Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

Mark 3:34-35 "And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. [For] whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'"

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS



Pope John Paul II on St. Joseph

In 1989, on the Feast of the Assumption, Pope John Paul II issued an apostolic exhortation to all the Catholic faithful regarding the life and virtues of St. Joseph. The short, brilliant letter is entitled *Redemptoris Custos* ("Guardian of the Redeemer") and reminds the Church of the importance of Joseph for our spiritual and ecclesial lives.

The pope's letter especially highlights the most important aspect of his life; namely, that, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary, he was called by God to be the "guardian of the Redeemer". The six parts of the letter discuss everything we know and love about Joseph:

- Joseph in scripture
- Joseph's vocation
- A just man and a husband
- Joseph the worker
- The interior life of Joseph
- Patron of the Church

This beautiful letter can be easily found on the Vatican's website. Take time to read it during the Advent or Christmas season and nurture your love the spouse of the Virgin Mary and the faithful guardian of Christ!

CATECHISM CONNECTION



1653 – Parents are the principal and first educators of their children. In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life.

1655 – Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than "the family of God." From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers "together with all [their] household" (cf. Acts 18:8).

1657 – The home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment." Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous — even repeated — forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life.

CALENDAR OF FAITH | DECEMBER

DEC 3 Sat	St. Francis Xavier, Priest
DEC 4 Sun	St. John Damascene, Priest and Doctor
DEC 7 Wed	St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor
DEC 8 Thu	SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY
DEC 9 Fri	St. Juan Diego, Confessor
DEC 11 Sun	St. Damasus I, Pope
DEC 12 Mon	Our Lady of Guadalupe
DEC 14 Wed	St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor
DEC 21 Wed	St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor
DEC 23 Fri	St. John Cantius, Priest
DEC 24 Sat	VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS
DEC 25 Sun	CHRISTMAS DAY
DEC 26 Mon	St. Stephen, First Martyr
DEC 28 Wed	Holy Innocents, Martyrs
DEC 29 Thu	St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr
DEC 30 Fri	FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY
DEC 31 Sat	St. Sylvester, Pope

THE SCHOOL OF SAINTS



"I wish I could persuade everyone to be devoted to this glorious saint... I have never known anyone to be truly devoted to him and render him particular services who did not notably advance in virtue, for he gives very real help to souls who commend themselves to him."
~ St. Teresa of Avila

"To gather round the Bethlehem grotto contemplating there the Holy Family, enables us to appreciate the gift of family intimacy in a special way, and spurs us to offer human warmth and concrete solidarity in those unfortunately numerous situations which, for various reasons, lack peace, harmony, in a word, lack 'family'."
~ Pope St. John Paul II

- FAITH IN ACTION -

FEATURED PROGRAM

"FOOD FOR FAMILIES"

The Knights of Columbus are committed to helping end hunger through the Food for Families Program which has donated millions of dollars and millions of pounds of food toward this cause. Council and parish families raise funds to support their local food pantries, food banks, and soup kitchens. Although in-kind donation of food is valuable, leaders of hunger-relief organizations believe that financial contributions can be stretched even further and allow nonprofits to procure the exact items needed by the organization and its clients. Please check with your local K of C council to see how you can get involved.