

The Year of St Joseph



On the 8th December 2020, Pope Francis wrote a letter to all the faithful to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. It is called *Patris Corde* or in English, *With a Father's heart*.

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html.

Among many other things he declared a year dedicated to St Joseph from 8th December 2020 through till 8th December 2021. As St Joseph is the guardian of the Holy Family, so he is the guardian of the whole Church, our local Churches, our families, and he is a ready protector and intercessor for each of us. The traditional way of expressing this has always been the exhortation – *Ite ad Joseph – Go to Joseph*. So many saints and mystics in the Church have promoted devotion to Joseph built on their personal experience of his protective care for them. I quote from the autobiography of St Teresa of Avila, chapter 6: “*I do not remember even now that I have ever asked anything of him (St Joseph) which he has failed to grant. I am astonished at the great favours which God has bestowed on me through this blessed saint, and at the perils from which He has freed me, both in body and in soul.*”

In order to celebrate this year of St Joseph and to help each of us grow in devotion to him, I would propose that we focus on the following suggestions.

- A Novena to St Joseph beginning on 10th March in order to prepare for his feast day on 19th March this year. You will find the prayers for the Novena here: <https://www.praymorenovenas.com/st-joseph-novena> The Novena could be prayed at home as a family or by individuals, or in Church in the form of a public service, depending on the circumstances and Covid19 restrictions.
- Each Wednesday, if there is no other feast or obligatory *Memoria*, the Votive Mass of St Joseph might be *celebrated* (see p.1422 of the Roman Missal); readings could be taken from the feasts of either 19th March or 1st May, if so desired, but better to use the readings provided by the Church for that day.
- The Litany of St Joseph could be used as part of our daily devotions or incorporated into the Novena or other paraliturgical services that are celebrated in our Churches, Prayer Groups/Meetings etc. The Litany can be found here together with other helpful resources about St Joseph and the Year of St Joseph: <https://catholic-link.org/the-resources-you-need-for-the-year-of-st-joseph/>
- Schools, both primary and secondary, are warmly encouraged to enter into the spirit of the year by helping our children and young people to come to know St Joseph as their personal guardian and helper, the man appointed by God the Father to nurture and educate Jesus

as he grew from infancy, childhood and into adolescence. He was the one who taught Jesus his trade - carpentry. What a powerful and attractive patron we have in St Joseph! Surely the way Jesus saw the world, treated others, spoke, and prayed to his heavenly Father must have been influenced by his interaction with St Joseph.

There is a special section of the Diocesan website dedicated to St Joseph which can be found here: <https://middlesbrough-diocese.org.uk/year-of-saint-joseph/> As time goes on and we move further into the year, more things will be suggested and different ways of celebrating this year will be offered.

There is also a Plenary Indulgence connected with the Year and the devotions to St Joseph. Information on this can be found on the link already mentioned above: <https://catholic-link.org/the-resources-you-need-for-the-year-of-st-joseph/> and scroll down the page until you come to the part entitled *Conditions For The Plenary Indulgence During The Year Of St. Joseph.*

Within the next few weeks, the Diocese will be producing a prayer card with the Holy Father's prayer to St Joseph to be distributed to every parish and school in the diocese. During the course of this year, may we, as the Diocese of Middlesbrough, experience St Joseph's care and protection for us, and as we grow in devotion to him, may we come to know and love Jesus, our Saviour and be wrapped in the maternal love of Mary, our mother, the Mother of God and the spouse of St Joseph.

Yours in blessed hope,

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