



**33 Day
Consecration
to St. Joseph**

Day One

Theme: Noble Offspring of David

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer:

The Old Testament prophets always taught that the Messiah was to spring from the seed of David, the great hero-king to whom the Jews looked back with such pride. The prophecy was first declared by the prophet Nathan to King David himself:

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you: when your days have been completed and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, sprung from your loins, and I will establish his kingdom. He it is who shall build a house for my name, and I will establish his royal throne forever. (2 Samuel 7:11-13)

Joseph was of the royal blood of David. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke show the lineage of Joseph to the Davidic king. Although Jesus is not the biological son of Joseph, he is the Son of Joseph by law and therefore has a legal right to be called a descendant of King David. Joseph is called “Son of David” by the angel who instructed him to take Mary into his home (Mt 1:20). The angel reminds him of his royal ancestry and the role God had given him in the coming of the Messiah.

God gives each of us a role in His plan of salvation. You were born for such a time as this (Esther 4:14). Reflect on the role God has given you and the people He has entrusted to you.

St. Joseph, pray for me so that I may have the grace to carry out my role and care for the people God has entrusted to me. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Reflect on your exalted identity as a beloved son of God the Father and how you are helping those entrusted to your care grow closer to Jesus. 2 Light of the Patriarchs St. Joseph is called the Light of the Patriarchs because he is the shining light among

Day Two

Theme: Light of the Patriarchs

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer:

St. Joseph is called the Light of the Patriarchs because he is the shining light among the forerunners of Christ. He was one of the great patriarchs in a long line of God's servants (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.) who waited for the Messiah. All the patriarchs of the Old Testament foreshadowed the paternal light of God shining through the fatherhood of St. Joseph.

St. Joseph is the bearer of light and helps us to receive the light of Christ. He brings Jesus, the true Light of the World, to us so that we can be a light to others. Jesus says,

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (Mt 5:14-16)

St. Joseph, pray for me so that the light of Christ illumines my life so that my words and actions glorify our heavenly Father. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge:

Identify one way you can be the light of Christ to those you encounter and serve this day.

Day Three

Theme: Spouse of the Mother of God

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer:

On March 19th, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of St. Joseph, but we do so by reference to his being ‘the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary’. In fact, St. Joseph’s whole life is defined by his relation to others. He is the earthly father of Jesus, and the husband of Mary. The feast day celebrates his fidelity and courage in fulfilling his obligations to each of them. Where some broadcast their own virtue from the rooftops via social media, St Joseph is more of a “Nike man”: he just does it . He is a great counter-witness to modern obsessions with autonomy. St. Joseph is the quiet man of action and his actions are oriented to the will of God. Whatever vision he may have had of his life was radically altered that night when the angel appeared to him in a dream:

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
(Mt 1:20-21)

After this vision we are told that when Joseph woke up, he did what the angel told him (Mt 1:20-22, 24). Having contemplated a life without Mary, he now sees that being Mary’s husband and raising a child, not biologically his own, will be his future. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Second Person of the Trinity; Mary is the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church; and Joseph is remembered in relation to them. Joseph’s greatness is to be found in his willingness to let Mary and Jesus be who they should be. Like John the Baptist, he decreases so that they may increase.i

St. Joseph, pray that I may imitate your selflessness and set aside my own ambitions for the will of God...so that you may increase, and I may decrease. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph

Daily Challenge: Examine how willing you are to put aside your own plans and ambitions and like St. Joseph quietly seek to serve the needs of others first.

Day Four

Theme: Chaste Guardian of the Virgin

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph was the Spouse of God's Mother, but by a wonderful anomaly also the Guardian of her Virginity. Just as in Mary are combined miraculously two seemingly incompatible things, motherhood and virginity; so too in Joseph, to be Mary's husband and yet shield of his wife's virginity. Saint Joseph and Mary lived in what is often called a "Josephite marriage." They were truly husband and wife, but they never engaged in sexual relations. They were both consecrated to God and sacrificed a natural good for a greater good: the salvation of souls.

Chastity is an important virtue. To be chaste is to have self-mastery and to be in control of your passions and sexuality. Chastity preserves the human heart and body for authentic self-giving. All people, no matter their vocation in life, are called to chastity.

Next to Jesus, St. Joseph is the greatest example of masculine chastity. In a message given by St. Joseph himself to St. Mary Ephrem in March of 1958, he says, "Let fathers also imitate my great purity of life and the deep respect I held for my Immaculate Spouse. Let them be an example to their children and fellow men, never willfully doing anything that would cause scandal among God's people."ⁱⁱ St. Joseph was married to a beautiful woman, and he treated her with respect, dignity, and reverence. If men today were more like St. Joseph — protectors and defenders of beauty, instead of users and abusers of the feminine mystery — what a different world this would be!

While some men are called to consecrated celibacy, most men are called to marriage. Both vocations are necessary. Without marriage, there are no children. Without priests, there are no Sacraments. Married men need to be chaste in marriage; priests and bishops need to be chaste in their priesthood. God wants all men to model the chastity and self-giving of St. Joseph.ⁱⁱⁱ

St. Joseph, in a world that is blinded by impurity, help me to resist temptations and to have self-mastery over my passions. Pray for me to live my vocation in a chaste and holy way. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph

Daily Challenge: Resolve today to decisively confront patterns of impure thoughts, words and deeds and replace them with the virtue of chastity with the help of St. Joseph

Day Five

Theme: Foster Father of the Son of God

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer:

The naming of a child in ancient Jewish custom was the legal responsibility of the father. Jesus had no earthly father; therefore, it belonged to His Heavenly Father to confer upon Him His name. God the Father transferred this right to Joseph, so that in His place, he should give Him the name of Jesus (Mt 1:21). In doing so, God the Father conferred to Joseph the paternal care of His Only-Begotten Son.

The paternity of St. Joseph is a mystery which deserves deep reflection. We may view the announcement of the angel to Joseph as the counterpart to the Annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary. Joseph, like Mary, was called to his role in salvation history. In addition, St. Joseph's role in salvation history extends to the present day. In his apparition to St. Mary Ephrem, St. Joseph reveals the following:

“All fatherhood is blessed in me whom the Eternal Father chose as his representative on earth, the Virgin-Father of his own Divine Son. Through me the Heavenly Father has blessed all fatherhood, and through me he continues and will continue to do so till the end of time. My spiritual fatherhood extends to all God’s children, and together with my Virgin Spouse I watch over them with great love and solicitude.”iv

In his earthly life, St. Joseph would share in many mysteries he would not understand. His life would take many twists and turns, and he would be constantly thrown into circumstances that would call for the exercise of blind, heroic trust in God. Earthly fatherhood (whether biological or spiritual) also calls for heroic trust in God. Life is filled with circumstances beyond our control. However, fathers today can take comfort in the love and spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph. As he took care of Jesus on earth, he will take care of you too on your earthly pilgrimage.

St. Joseph, pray for me to have trust in God’s plans for me and for my family, especially when times are tough. Watch over my life and be my provider and protector in a world that is filled with uncertainty. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Turn to St. Joseph for his spiritual fatherhood and the grace of imitating his complete trust in God for every current and unforeseeable challenge in caring for your family (or your parish family).

Day Six

Theme: Zealous Defender of Christ

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph is called the Zealous Defender of Christ because when Christ was threatened and persecuted he did not hesitate, not even for a moment, to defend and to protect Jesus and Mary. When Herod threatened to kill the baby Jesus, he listened to the instructions of God and obeyed, leading the Holy Family to Egypt:

When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. (Mt 2:13-14)

We too have the opportunity and duty to defend Christ and His Church today. We have Christ fully present among us in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist, Christ's very body, blood, soul, and divinity, is His most precious gift to us yet many people do not understand or believe in His real presence in the Eucharist. Do we ourselves truly show love and reverence to Christ in The Most Blessed Sacrament? Do we attend Mass faithfully and lead the people God has entrusted to us to our Eucharistic Lord? As faithful disciples of Jesus, we will be criticized, hated, ridiculed, and mocked by the world — oftentimes by our own family and friends. Our suffering may be great, but our witness to Jesus — will be greater.

Let us resolve today to make the Eucharist a priority in our lives. Let Jesus transform our hearts. Let us be a Holy Vessel of Christ and a light to shine in a world that is filled with darkness. If we are to be the Light of Christ to others we must come and receive Christ in the Holy Eucharist with humility and surrender.

St. Joseph, Defender of Christ! Teach us how to defend Christ zealously. Pray for us so we may be worthy to love and defend Jesus as you loved and defended Him. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Reflect on the reality and power of Jesus being present in his entirety in the Holy Eucharist, and if not already, make weekly Sunday Mass a nonnegotiable for your family.

Day Seven

Theme: Noble Offspring of David

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer:

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover . . . He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. (Luke 2:41, 51)

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph compose the Holy Family. Jesus was God, and Mary the Mother of God; and yet we see from the above passage that St. Joseph was head of the Holy Family; for thirty years Jesus and Mary paid him homage and obedience.

The Holy Catholic Church teaches, through Scripture and Tradition, that the husband is the head of his family and has God-given authority over his wife and children. This gift of authority does not give a husband any greater dignity than his wife. Both are equal members of the marital covenant, as is reflected by God creating woman from the side of man (as opposed to his head or feet). Instead, this order of authority reflects the divine order between God, Christ and man. The Sacred Scriptures clearly affirm that God has assigned the responsibility of spiritual leadership in the home to husbands:

Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So [also] husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (Eph 5:21-28)

In this passage, St. Paul is calling for wives to freely put themselves under the care of their husbands and he calls husbands in their role as “head” of the family to be like Christ. With Jesus as the model, this can only mean that the man is supposed to follow the path of a servant-leader. The man dies to self and prioritizes his family’s (or parish family’s) needs over his own. He is concerned for the family’s spiritual welfare. He looks for ways to help its members grow in their relationship with God. He provides physical support, grace, and encouragement. He is ready to protect, help, and defend. In good times and in bad, he is ready to lay down his life for those who have been entrusted to his care.

Jesus and Mary delighted in the headship of St. Joseph. His fatherly example shows that strength, authority, and headship are meant to be at the service of others. Families and parishes around the world will be strengthened if husbands, fathers, and pastors imitate St. Joseph.

St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family, help me to live my role as head of my household (or head of my parish) in humble service. Pray that I may have the grace to imitate Christ’s sacrificial love and love the ones you have entrusted to my care. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph

Day Seven (continued)

Daily Challenge: Think of one way you can “die to self” and prioritize your family’s needs (or your parish family’s needs) over your own. Commit to this behavior for at least one week.

Day Eight

Theme Most Just

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

The Scriptures pay Joseph the highest compliment: he was a “just” man. By saying Joseph was “just,” the Scriptures reveal that he was completely open to all that God wanted to do for him. He became holy by opening himself totally to God. Joseph was also a righteous man--a man of honesty, integrity, and virtue. St. Joseph is the greatest and holiest saint after the Blessed Mother herself. In fact, some of the Doctors of the Church said that there was no grace ever given to any of the Saints (except Mary) that was not given to St. Joseph as well.

The virtue of justice involves “giving to another his due.” For example, in our relationship with God, we owe it to Him to be grateful for our existence, to praise Him for His goodness, and to have gratitude for the many ways He has blessed us. In our relationship with others, it means treating family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, parishioners, and all people with love, dignity, and respect. Remember what Jesus says: “*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*” (Lk 6:31)

St. Thomas Aquinas says that God gives grace proportionate to our office and to our state in life. So, if you are a husband and father, you will be given the grace to be a holy husband and father. If you are an ordained priest, you will be given the grace to be a priest and spiritual father to your people. Imagine how much grace St. Joseph received to be the foster father of the Son of God and the spouse of the Mother of God! However, being a just person doesn’t happen automatically. It takes a specific attitude and mindset to want to do what is right and desire to receive God’s grace. We should ask ourselves, “Do I want to do what’s right in the sight of God? Am I open to God’s grace to transform my heart and mind to grow in the virtue of justice? Do I want to develop the integrity and character of St. Joseph?”

St. Joseph, Most Just, pray that I may grow in the virtue of justice. Help me to examine my life to see if I am really open to all that God wants of me. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Resolve to be completely truthful and just in every interaction you have this day

Day Nine

Theme: Most Chaste

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

In 1998, in an apparition to Edson Glauber, a Brazilian university student, the Child Jesus spoke to Edson about the Most Chaste heart of St. Joseph. Jesus said, “Here in this Heart you will find me living, because it is pure and saintly. That all hearts could be like this one, so they could be my home on earth. Imitate this Heart so that you may receive my graces and blessings.” v

How many hearts are like that of St. Joseph? Lust is the predominant vice at work in the hearts of many men today. The world is filled with immoral and lust-filled actions. These actions greatly offend God, ruin families, and cry out to heaven for justice. The Scriptures give a clear warning about avoiding immorality:

Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. (Col 3:5)

St. Joseph is a powerful intercessor in the battle for purity. If temptations against purity batter your mind, heart, and soul, cling to St. Joseph! St. Joseph is capable of increasing the virtue of chastity in your heart and leading you to true, virtuous love of God and neighbor. The Church needs virtuous and holy priests, and the world needs holy men who love their wives as St. Joseph loved Mary. If men reverence their wives as holy temples, families will be renewed, and the evils of our age that attack the dignity of the human person will be overcome.vi

St. Joseph, Most Chaste, pray that I may grow in the virtue of chastity. Help me to be victorious against lust and triumphant over sin. Fight for me against the wickedness and snares of the devil and help me to take refuge in you. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Honestly and prayerfully confront and expose any lustful thoughts and actions that you entertain or engage in this day, however seemingly harmless, or insignificant, or habitual. Resolve to bring these to the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Day Ten

Theme: Most Prudent

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Prudence is the mother of all virtues and the key virtue in the Christian moral tradition; it is the ability to make right judgments. Prudence helps us to determine our true good in every circumstance. Wisdom and prudence go hand in hand. Wisdom is knowledge combined with the practical experience necessary to use it effectively at the right time or in the right situation. Prudence is the ability to act in accordance with knowledge and wisdom. The Book of Proverbs helps us to see the value of wisdom and prudence:

Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold.
[For Wisdom is better than corals,
and no treasures can compare with her.]
I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence,
and useful knowledge I have.
(Proverbs 8:10-12)

In every situation in life, St. Joseph was a model of prudence. He prayed and waited on the Lord to reveal the mysteries of his wife's pregnancy to him. He educated the God-Man, and, in every situation, allowed prudence to govern his actions. Each time Joseph knew the will of God, he acted decisively, swiftly, and accurately. He acted neither rashly nor timidly, but prudently.vii

Real life has endless opportunities to exercise the virtue of prudence. Some acts are intrinsically evil, and they must never be done. But that list is short, so most of life requires prudential judgment. Let us pray and ask St. Joseph for an increase in prudence.

St. Joseph, help me to increase in the virtue of prudence. Guide me to do what is right no matter how much I have to suffer for it. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Are there situations in my life right now that require great wisdom and prudence to know the right thing to do? If so, identify these and resolve to seek Godly wisdom through counsel and prayer to be prepared to act with prudence.

Day Eleven

Theme: Most Courageous

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph shines as a model of courage and fortitude. When told by the angel "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife," (Mt 1:20) he courageously obeyed. He travelled many miles to Bethlehem in the cold and wind, only to meet rejection when he got there. He found refuge in an animal shelter for the birth of Jesus. Just days later, he arose early to flee into Egypt saving the Child Jesus from the vicious and murderous threats of King Herod. Faced with so many difficulties, St. Joseph stood tall and confronted the obstacles in his life with manly courage.

The cardinal virtue of fortitude strengthens the will and gives a person courage and a firm resolve to do God's will, even in the midst of great suffering. Fortitude helps us to overcome any dangers, obstacles, and fears; it enables a person to withstand whatever difficulties may block him from attaining his true goal.

What are you afraid of? Losing your health? Losing your job? Providing for your family? Caring for your parish family? Are you afraid of rejection? Do you fear not measuring up to others? It is said that, in the Bible, God tells us "Do not be afraid!" 365 times – one for each day of the year. Clearly, God calls us to trust in Him and to have courage:

Be strong and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the LORD, your God, who marches with you; he will never fail you or forsake you. (Dt 31:6)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. (Jn 14:27)

At once [Jesus] spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." (Mt 14:27)

It is easy to be courageous when times are good, but it is difficult to be courageous when times are tough. When things get tough, we can call on St. Joseph to help us to be courageous. We can ask for his intercession so that Jesus can infuse us with fortitude and courage through the power of the Holy Spirit. For it is from Jesus Christ that we receive the grace and virtues, so that we become not just sons of his earthly father St Joseph, but adopted sons of our Father in heaven.

St. Joseph, help me to imitate you and to be courageous, especially in times filled with difficulty and sorrow. Give me the courage to be a good and faithful witness to Jesus Christ in word and in deed. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Eleven (continued)

Daily Challenge: Are there situations in my life right now that require great wisdom and prudence to know the right thing to do? If so, identify these and resolve to seek Godly wisdom through counsel and prayer to be prepared to act with prudence.

Day Twelve

Theme: Most Obedient

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Obedience requires trust. Lack of trust on the part of our first parents (Adam and Eve) is what caused all mankind to fall into sin. In the Garden of Eden, the devil instilled in their minds doubts regarding God's trustworthiness and tricked our first parents into disobeying God. Ever since, humanity has struggled to trust and obey God.

In today's culture, obedience is largely misunderstood. Many people are of the opinion that obedience limits their freedom. To them, freedom means the ability to do whatever they please with few if any limits. In this case, freedom is always from something, but for a Christian, freedom is always for something. The Christian, biblical understanding of freedom is the capacity and ability to obey God. Pairing freedom and obedience seems paradoxical, but in obeying God, we are truly free because each of us becomes the man He created us to be. The very nature He gave us is perfected by the freeing obedience of faith.

We find in St. Joseph a refreshing model of obedience. Consider how he follows God's commands through the angel. He, heir to the throne of David the king, lives the humble life of a carpenter. Betrothed to the young virgin Mary, he perhaps saw his future life as one of comfort: a steady job, a loving wife, a simple existence.

Then he receives his call: be an earthly father to God Himself. He could have said no, but instead, he listens to the angel, travels to Bethlehem, and sets up a home there after the birth of Christ. He again listens to the angel and flees to Egypt, and originally sought to return to Bethlehem, but changes his plans in accord with God's will and returns to Nazareth.

In our lives, sometimes we try to order God around. We tend to put our wills against God's and put conditions on what we expect from Him. Yet even with our attempts to derail His plans for us, God still guides our lives. However, the longer we fight God's Providence, the longer it will take for us to truly be happy. God has a plan for our lives, and it is in our best interest to listen to Him. He is God, after all.

Go to St. Joseph to become obedient sons of the Church.

St. Joseph, help me to examine my life to discover what holds me back from trusting and obeying God more fully. Pray for me so that I may have a humble heart and yield to God at all times. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Twelve (continued)

Daily Challenge: Identify an area of your life where you resist obedience to God's will. Pray to St. Joseph for an increase of trust so you may experience the true freedom that comes through obedience to God.

Day Thirteen

Theme: Most Faithful

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

When a man has faith, he is in possession of something invaluable, something that acts as an impenetrable bulwark against life's suffering and trials. Think of a man of true faith whom you've encountered. Men like this are constructed from something otherworldly, almost as if they don't live by the same norms, maxims and values most commonly found among men. They have a resolve that defies what most consider reasonable. No matter the era or circumstance, a man of true faith lives with his compass directed towards God, overcoming any and all obstacles.viii

St. Joseph is the model of this kind of faith. Joseph knew, with a certainty beyond human reason, that the voice of God had spoken to him to take Mary as his wife, and he responded with generous faith. His faith never wavered through all the uncertainty and trials of the life of the Holy Family. He never doubted the divinity of Jesus or his power to conquer evil. To the world, Jesus looked like an ordinary child, but St. Joseph knew he was God.

The greatest fear of any father is failing to protect and provide for their families. Fathers also have to contend with the innumerable threats that lie in wait for their children in the spiritual and moral sphere. What will be on TV at their friend's home? Will someone show pornography on their smart phone? What leering looks or vulgar comments might their daughters face? What bullying or peer pressure towards evil will they be subjected to? In many such situations, fathers will not be able to be present to protect their families.

Therefore, we must rely on the spiritual weapons available to us as powerful defenses: the intercession of our spiritual father, St. Joseph, as well as our own Guardian Angels and those Angels assigned by God to watch over the members of our families. To raise a child today as a faithful Catholic takes a commensurate level of faith: the more severe the danger, the greater the faith that is required.

St. Joseph, Most Faithful, pray for us and for our families! Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Compose a simple prayer to your guardian angel and ask God to help you be aware of their presence, their spiritual weapons and heavenly aid. Reflect on Ephesians 6: 10-17, "Put on the Armor of God".

Day Fourteen

Theme: Mirror of Patience

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Be still before the LORD;

wait for him.

*Do not be provoked by the prosperous,
nor by malicious schemers.*

Refrain from anger; abandon wrath;

do not be provoked; it brings only harm.

Those who do evil will be cut off,

but those who wait for the LORD will inherit the earth

(Ps 37:7-9)

Patience is a virtue that is talked about throughout the Bible in the Old and New Testaments. Being patient is a vital part of trusting in God as our life circumstances are not always what we would prefer. However, patience is a virtue that many people find hard to practice. We tend to want things to happen according to our own timeline. In addition, today's advances in technology have put almost everything in life at our fingertips. Our meals, entertainment, music, and contacts are instantly available to us. With this capability, it can be very difficult to wait and acquire the virtue of patience.ix

St. Joseph exhibited heroic patience throughout his life. St. Joseph did not demand to know the full plan laid out step-by-step before God's chosen time. We must imagine he was anxious when he could not find a fitting place for Mary to give birth in. We must imagine he was anxious to hear that his family was being hunted. But he patiently awaited the revelation of God's plan, submitting himself completely to God's Providence.

We will all experience many trials in life that will test our patience. God allows such trials because he wants us to grow in virtue. A concrete area in your life where you can exercise the virtue of patience is by being merciful to others, especially when you know their faults. While St. Joseph lived with two perfect people, he must have frequently encountered unpleasant and difficult people: employers, co-workers, tax collectors, politicians, etc. You, too, will experience unpleasant people in your life. In such instances, imitate the patience of St. Joseph. Ask God for the grace to love all the people who cross your path.x

St. Joseph, pray for an increase in the virtue of patience in me. Teach me to love the difficult people in my life, help me to be still in the midst of the storms that come my way, and to trust that your timing is always perfect. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Fourteen (continued)

Daily Challenge: Ask the Holy Spirit to suggest a person or situation where you can exhibit greater patience. Ask St Joseph, Mirror of Patience, to teach you how to practically do so.

Day Fifteen

Theme: Lover of Poverty

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
(Mt 5:3)*

What does it mean to be poor in spirit and why is it a blessing? To be poor in spirit means that one is detached from the things of this world. Jesus tells us that those who are poor in spirit are not far from the kingdom of heaven. A person who is detached from worldly things is spiritually rich. In this sense, poverty is understood to be a virtue, and it is in this context that we attribute the title “Lover of Poverty” to St. Joseph.

St. Joseph embraced an austere life as a craftsman and humble father. The birth of Christ in a cave, the Flight to Egypt, and his laborious occupation all demonstrate his detachment from worldly goods. The New Testament also reveals to us that the Holy Family was very poor. When the Holy Family journeyed to the Temple in Jerusalem to participate in the Jewish ritual of purification for a new mother, Joseph couldn't even afford to purchase a lamb for a burnt offering; he could only offer a poor man's gift, that is, two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Had the Baby Jesus not been given gold, frankincense, and myrrh by the Wise Men in Bethlehem, it is likely that St. Joseph would not have had money to purchase food and other necessities for his family when they traveled to Egypt.^{xi} Yet despite his financial austerity, one can only imagine what an inconceivable grace it must have been to be present with the Blessed Mother and the Son of God and to contribute to God's plan of salvation.

Those who depend on worldly things are destined for unhappiness. True happiness is never found in material goods, but in the things of God.

St. Joseph, Lover of Poverty, pray that I may become poor in spirit. Help me to detach myself from worldly things and to abandon my life to the Providence of God. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any area of your life where undue dependence on worldly goods keeps you from pursuing the virtue of poverty and relying on God's providence. Entrust these areas to God in a simple prayer.

Day Sixteen

Theme: Model of Workmen

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

May 1, or “May Day,” was celebrated throughout the Communist world as a way of supposedly honoring the role and importance of laborers in Marxist countries. The Communist conception of work, as almost an end in itself was, of course, very different from the Christian understanding, and in 1955, to highlight this difference, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

St. Joseph spent a lifetime laboring as a carpenter. His primary motivation for working was not a quest for riches or status, but a desire to serve God and to care for his family in a loving way. Joseph never worked any miracles; he never made any important speeches; he wasn’t a public figure, but was known only as a humble carpenter. Joseph labored in obscurity, but was nonetheless given an important part in God’s plan.

Work is not intended to be an end in itself or a path to earthly riches; rather, it’s meant to glorify God and to help us prepare for eternity. As Jesus said, *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Matthew 6:20-21).xii*

No matter our jobs, we spend many of our waking hours working. If we view our daily tasks as meaningless unpleasanties, then doubtless we will become bitter and fail to cultivate any virtue. On the contrary, if we resolve to be sanctified through our jobs, we will develop an honorable Christian character.

We should also guard against working too much. The vast majority of men who work too much do so for unhealthy reasons: avoiding home, getting unmet needs met, the need for approval, etc. Workaholics are of no benefit to themselves, the family, or society. St. Joseph is an able aide at achieving a proper work-life balance. Consider that St. Joseph was willing to leave his work behind when he fled to Egypt to protect Christ.

St. Joseph also serves as the model workman for the imitation of those who work for the salvation of souls, especially deacons, priests, bishops, and religious. Consecrated souls are to work diligently and faithfully in God’s vineyard. This work, too, can be difficult and burdensome.xiii

St. Joseph, Model of Workmen, help me to make Christ known through the way I carry myself at work. Pray that I may work diligently and faithfully, and help me to make time for God, family, and rest. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Sixteen (continued)

Daily Challenge: Take a few moments to examine your work/life balance, and ask the Holy Spirit along with St. Joseph to inspire your thoughts, desires, and decisions as to what might need to be adjusted to reflect God's priorities. Ask for God's grace to adjust.

Day Seventeen

Theme: Glory of Domestic Life

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

*Train the young in the way they should go;
even when old, they will not swerve from it. (Proverbs 22:6)*

To say that St. Joseph is the Glory of Domestic Life is to say that in him we see a supreme example of how a man magnificently transforms home life. There is a certain splendor, even honor in the household when it is properly ordered and guided by the fatherly example of St. Joseph.

For many men, domestic life is a secondary consideration. Most Catholic men understand that they are to work hard to provide the material necessities for their families. However, Catholic men also have the responsibility, together with their wives, to build the domestic Church. The term domestic Church refers to the family as the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ; it is the universal Church in microcosm. It is a home where family life is completely centered on the lordship of Jesus Christ, where parents who are disciples of Jesus, embrace their role as leaders to make disciples of their children. How can a father ensure this if he spends most of his time away from the home? In a word, he can't. It is true that many places of employment are not overly concerned with ample leisure and family time. Husbands/fathers who are stuck between the proverbial "rock and a hard place" should not feel ashamed; a work-life balance is difficult.

However, as disciples of Christ, we do not operate by mere material and earthly means, but instead rely on grace to perfect nature, and the supernatural to transform the natural. If we follow the model of St. Joseph, we see that we can find a way to blend our work and home life into a single organism, something that moves with and for the rhythms of domestic life.

We must ask ourselves, what sacrifices can we make as husbands and fathers in order to spend more time with our families? Do we really need all that living space? Can we take less expensive vacations? Might our children not do better with less toys, clothes, and entertainment? In most cases, we can find ways to reorient our money, and abstain from costly habits, in order to maximize our resources. If we are honest with ourselves, we can make more and greater sacrifices for the good of our family life and be more generous with God.

Day Seventeen (continued)

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph, Glory of Domestic Life, you were yourself once faced with the responsibility of providing the necessities of life for Jesus and Mary. Look down with fatherly compassion upon me so that I may have the grace to build the domestic Church in my home and lead my family along the path of discipleship. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Ask God how are you doing in allocating your time, activities and resources in forming your family as the domestic Church; discuss with your wife what you heard in prayer. For priests, ask God to show you how you can better equip the families in your parish to live as domestic Church.

Day Eighteen

Theme: Guardian of Virgins

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

God calls us to profound purity. In both the Old and New Testaments, Scripture is replete with exhortations to “Be Holy as I am Holy” (Lv 11:44), and “Be Holy as your Father in Heaven is Holy” (Mt 5:48). Our good and loving God knows well the challenge posed by His call to “be Holy as He is Holy.” He understands and sympathizes with our fallen nature, and sends us an abundance of grace to overcome the temptations of this transient world. In St. Joseph, God offers us an outstanding illustration of personal purity.

Our Heavenly Father chose the virtuous St. Joseph to be the guardian of the purity of the precious Holy Family. Under the title “Guardian of Virgins,” St. Joseph offers us a shining example of the value of chastity. Through his holy intercession we have a magnificent channel of grace available to aid in overcoming the myriad of obstacles to virtuous living that confront us each day.

Due to his chastity and vocation, Joseph has further been entrusted to continue his mission of guarding the pure ones of God and of the integrity of the family. This power flows through him now as a reward of his perfect fidelity. All clergy/religious and families should have recourse to this most powerful intercessor.

Like the four arms of the cross, there are four particular areas of chastity to which we are called: that of body, mind, heart and spirit. Accepting the challenge of personal purity is a cross we each bear, but is not one that is either unreasonable nor impossible. As we strive to conquer the temptations of the world, let us seek the assistance of the Holy Heart of St. Joseph.xv

St. Joseph, Guardian of Virgins, may I, with your help, live as a disciple of Christ with purity in body, mind, heart and spirit all the days of my life. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Daily Challenge: Find an accountability partner to join you in prayer if there are any of these areas of purity that you struggle to gain freedom. Resolve to turn over any temptations against purity to St. Joseph and Mary whenever they occur .

Day Nineteen

Theme: Pillar of Families

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph was the Pillar of the Holy Family. Throughout those unseen years of Christ's youth, it was Joseph who built and guided a family worthy of the Son of God. What a mountain of a man Joseph must have been to deserve the honorable obedience of our Savior! It is hard enough for the average man to handle the stress of running a normal household, with normal children. Yet somehow St. Joseph could withstand the weight and power of the Creator of Heaven and Earth, living amongst him, looking up to him with the eyes of a child. What an awesome responsibility!

In these times of terrible confusion about family and fatherhood in our decaying society, let us look to St. Joseph. All men must strive to foster a pious and fervent devotion to him. How else do we expect to lead our families well? In an apparition to St. Mary Ephrem, St. Joseph said,

“The imitation of the Holy Family, my child, of the virtues we practiced in our little home at Nazareth is the way for all souls to that peace which comes from God alone and which none other can give.”^{xvi}

Beg St. Joseph for the grace to imitate him; to have a holy headship over your family. This, too, is an awesome responsibility, yet God has entrusted it to you.

As Christ Himself looked to Joseph, carrying heavy loads of wood on his shoulders from forest to workshop; let us look to the man who showed the Child Jesus how to carry His forthcoming Cross, for inspiration to carry ours.

St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, Pray for me! Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: What heavy crosses are you bearing? Unite them with Jesus. Invite your family members to do the same. Take the time to ask them and pray with them today so that they may also learn how to seek God's will and His strength to carry their cross. Receive His peace.

Day Twenty

Theme: Comfort of the Afflicted

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Comforting the Afflicted, sometimes called Comforting the Sorrowful, is a spiritual work of mercy because it refers to our need to support each other emotionally and spiritually. God's mercy towards us is not merely given for our own comfort in affliction, but so that we might also display His mercy as we comfort others:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. (2 Cor 1:3-4)

For those who are not compassionate by nature, speaking truth into a situation is much easier than showing compassion. However, if we are to model St. Joseph and display the character of God in its fullest expression, we also need to extend mercy and give comfort to those around us, especially our families. Comforting the Afflicted is part of the "job description" as it were for a husband and father, and even more so for priests and deacons.

Life is filled with many sorrows. Whether it's financial problems, marital hardships, rebellious children, difficulties in relationships, the death of loved ones/parishioners, or a thousand other woes, we will all experience misery in life.

God will give you all the mercy and comfort you need for every affliction you endure, but don't let that comfort end with you. Don't simply hold on to the care you have received. Let it grow you and make you better at caring for those God has given you opportunity to care for. Remember that you don't have to go it alone! No matter the situation, you can look to St. Joseph to be your consolation. He knows well the hardships of life. He is a kind and loving father and he can intercede for you in times of need.

St. Joseph, Comfort of the Afflicted, pray that I may be merciful to others as God has been merciful to me. Help me to have a compassionate heart to those entrusted to me and to have the humility to receive mercy and compassion in times when I am afflicted. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Twenty (continued)

Daily Challenge: Daily Challenge: Having identified the crosses you and your family currently bear, spend some quiet moments asking Jesus to give you His heart of compassion and mercy that you may come alongside your loved ones to lighten their load.

Day Twenty One

Theme: Hope of the Sick

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

God has healed many people through the intercession of St. Joseph. In 1847 when a typhoid epidemic threatened the village of Bytown in Ontario (now Ottawa), the chaplain placed a statue of St. Joseph in the church where people gathered each day. The disease quickly disappeared. St. Teresa of Avila was miraculously cured of a terrible illness after praying to St. Joseph, and in order to honor him, the first Convent that she founded was named after St. Joseph. St. Therese of Lisieux became deathly ill as an infant, but after her mother's prayers to St. Joseph, Therese was healed.

St. Joseph offers hope in times of sickness. If you or someone you know is sick, go to St. Joseph. Let us raise our voices in prayer for the intercession of Saint Joseph for those who are sick:

Benevolent Joseph,
the Son of God placed his life in your hands.
With the Virgin Mary, our Blessed Mother,
you cared for the Child Jesus,
who is the force of life in our world.
May your compassion embrace our fragility
and bring us the comfort of the divine presence.
Loving Saint Joseph,
we join with you in prayer by crying out:
Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God,
say a word for our healing!
Make us sensitive to the illnesses
of those closest to us.
Support us in our efforts
to care for our sick brothers and sisters.
Give us courage in the fight against all evil.
Help us to find meaning
in God's great project for humanity
beyond the sickness and suffering that blind us.
May the Love of God be with us,
because our only hope is with Him.
We make this prayer
through the intercession of Saint Joseph
to Christ Jesus, Our Lord and Savior. Amen.
St. Joseph, Hope of the Sick, pray for us!
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Twenty One (continued)

Daily Challenge: Pray a rosary with your family or throughout the day offering each decade for the healing of those you know who are sick in body, mind or spirit. Invite St Joseph to pray with you. Perhaps make a short call to a loved one who is ill to let them know they are in your prayers.

Day Twenty Two

Theme: Patron of the Dying

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

The death of St. Joseph is not recorded in the Gospels; however, we do know that he was not present during the Crucifixion of Jesus, and according to Church tradition, Joseph most likely died before the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It is believed that St. Joseph died a holy and happy death, gazing upon Jesus and resting in the arms of Mary. What a blessed death to see God before you die and for God Himself to tell you to go. This was Joseph's gift from his Son, who would hand his father over to His Father. Thus, Christ entrusted Joseph a particular intercessory power for all those at the moment of death.

St. Joseph's death is a touching and desirable example for us. God has designated St. Joseph as the Patron of the Dying because he wants us to experience a death similar to that of St. Joseph -- a holy and happy death. Death is a part of life; but letting go and saying goodbye to family and friends is not easy. However, we need to be prepared for death because Satan always tries to get a soul to despair and turn away from our loving God at the hour of death. Ask any priest; he will tell you that a spiritual battle takes place over a soul at the hour of death.^{xvii} However, St. Joseph can help us to make our death beautiful. The example of his passing encourages us not to fear death because the holy protecting powers that hovered near the saint's deathbed are at our command, especially through the means of grace given us by Mother Church, in holy Viaticum (the Eucharist given to someone who is near death).

Therefore, when we die, we could surely benefit by praying to St. Joseph to help usher us to eternity. Moreover, we can ask St. Joseph to intercede for a family member or a friend, who might be close to the end of his or her life.

Glorious St. Joseph, behold I choose thee today for my special patron in life and at the hour of my death. Preserve and increase in me the spirit of prayer and fervor in the service of God. Remove far from me every kind of sin; obtain for me that my¹⁹ death may not come upon me unawares, but that I may have time to confess my sins sacramentally and to bewail them with a most perfect understanding and a most sincere and perfect contrition, in order that I may breathe forth my soul into the hands of Jesus and Mary. Amen
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Life is busy, and we do not often stop to contemplate the final things such as death. Set aside some quiet time today to contemplate your own mortality and death. Invite Joseph, Mary and the Holy Trinity to meet you there and to help you prepare in this lifetime for uniting with them in eternity.

Day Twenty Three

Theme: Terror of Demons

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

In her Diary, St. Faustina writes of terror - the terror of dying souls as well as her own brief moments of terror. In one instance, Jesus asks her to help Him to save souls by praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for dying sinners. She records, "I found myself in a strange cottage where an elderly man was dying amidst great torments. All about the bed was a multitude of demons and the family, who were crying. When I began to pray, the spirits of darkness fled, with hissing and threats directed at me. The soul became calm and, filled with trust, rested in the Lord" (1798).

Yet St. Faustina, too, experienced moments of terror. Jesus rebukes her for this at one point, saying: I am displeased when a soul yields to vain terrors. Who will dare to touch you when you are with Me? Most dear to Me is the soul that strongly believes in My goodness and has complete trust in Me (453).

St. Faustina would eventually learn to whom she can turn in order to calm her fears and unite her to Jesus. It was none other than Jesus' foster father, St. Joseph. The famous Litany of St. Joseph identifies him under the title Terror of Demons, and it's no wonder. Surely, this man entrusted by God with the singular mission of caring for and protecting the Holy Family was endowed with graces enough to strike fear in the forces of darkness. The demons don't stand a chance against St. Joseph. Saint Faustina writes: St Joseph urged me to have a constant devotion to him. ... He has promised me this special help and protection (1203).

When you find yourself feeling overcome by the trials of life, turn to St. Joseph. He was a man who, in his earthly life, never succumbed to "vain terrors." He remained ever grounded in faith, ever attuned to the will of God in his life. From Heaven, he stands as a go-to saint to help you when forces beyond your control - including demonic forces - seek to unsettle you and pull you toward despair and ruin.

At the end of our lives, many people are susceptible to despair. St. Joseph, Terror of Demons, will squash such despair and all things that stand in opposition to the hope found in the Risen Christ. From Heaven, this humble, quiet man of strength will lead us to the peace found in Jesus.xviii

St. Joseph, Terror of Demons, protect us. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Twenty Three (continued)

Daily Challenge: Write out the verse from Isaiah 41:10 and place it in a spot that will be a daily reminder for you to invite St. Joseph to pray for you in times of deep fear, that you might not despair, but in great confidence place yourself in God's hands.

“Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand” – Isaiah 41:10.

Day Twenty Four

Theme: Protector of the Holy Church

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph probably didn't see himself becoming a central character in the history of salvation and being given a title like "Protector of the Holy Church." Yet, because he responded in faith to protect and provide for the Holy Family, the Church teaches that God has called him to protect and provide for the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

In 1870, Pope Leo XIII explained the title of St. Joseph this way, "It is thus fitting and most worthy of Joseph's dignity that, in the same way he once kept unceasing holy watch over the family of Nazareth, so now does he protect and defend with his heavenly patronage the Church of Christ."

This title shows how this simple, just, and good man continues to protect and intercede for us as members of the Church. He was a man of faith and action. Not a single word of his is recorded in all of Scripture, yet his quiet example can inspire us to remain faithful and diligent, working to fulfill our duties in the Church and in our families.

St. Joseph is a wonderful intercessor for priests. The priesthood can be overwhelming given all the pastoral difficulties and challenges. St. Joseph was faced with many difficulties as well. Clearly, he was called to this, and God gave him the grace to do it. God gives that same grace to His priests. Being in a leadership role requires meeting unexpected trials that will test your abilities, but God does not expect you to meet these trials on your own. He wants you to depend on His grace through the intercession of your spiritual father, St. Joseph.^{xix}

St. Joseph, Protector of the Holy Church, pray for the Holy Father, all bishops, priests, and deacons, that they be renewed in their vocation and humbly and faithfully carry out their mission. Pray for all leaders, that they may have a servant's heart and rely on the wisdom of God in their decision-making. Pray for all lay members of the Church to fulfill their baptismal call to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into every corner of the world. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Twenty Four

Daily Challenge: Daily Challenge: For priests, identify one pastoral challenge with which you are struggling and bring it to St. Joseph. For those who are not priests, pray for a priest that has been an important part of your (and your family's) faith journey. Pray for him by name, to thank God for his vocation and role in your faith life. Ask St. Joseph and Mary to intercede for all priests for their perseverance and fidelity and the Holy Trinity to confirm them in holiness with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to sustain them in their call.

Day Twenty Five

Theme: Guardian of the Mystery of God

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved. In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. (Eph 1:3-10)

The opening chapter of Ephesians announces “the mystery” of God’s will—that is, God’s plan of salvation, a plan that was kept secret in the past (Old Covenant), but has been revealed in the fullness of time (New Covenant). God’s will is that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and become sharers in the divine nature (cf. Eph 2:18; 2 Pt 1:4). Together with Mary, St. Joseph is the first guardian of this divine mystery.

To be a guardian is to be a defender, protector, or keeper. The Blessed Virgin Mary “protected and defended” God’s plan of redemption through her faith. Throughout Jesus’ life, she was faithful to God’s plan, especially at Calvary and during the event of Pentecost. Although Joseph’s earthly life ended before the mystery of the Redemption was complete, Joseph’s way of faith moved in the same direction: it was totally determined by the same mystery, of which he, together with Mary, had been the first guardian. The Incarnation and Redemption constitute an organic and indissoluble unity, in which “the plan of revelation is realized by words and deeds which are intrinsically bound up with each other.” Precisely because of this unity, Pope John XXIII, who had a great devotion to St. Joseph, directed that Joseph’s name be inserted in the Roman Canon of the Mass—which is the perpetual memorial of redemption—after the name of Mary and before the Apostles, Popes and Martyrs. (Redemptoris Custos , n.6)

As disciples of Jesus, we too are called to be Guardians of the Mystery of God through our faith in the promises of God and through the way we live our lives. We live in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world that is greatly influenced by secular worldviews and nonbiblical perspectives. These views will become increasingly more prevalent unless we speak up, debunk false teaching, and become heralds of the Gospel. Scripture is clear about the fact that we must be prepared to communicate the truth of the Gospel when given the opportunity—and to do it with charity.

Day Twenty Five (continued)

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph, Guardian of the Mystery of God, pray for me that I may do my part to guard and defend the mystery of the Redemption and proclaim it to those that Christ brings before me. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Can you identify the false teachings of the secularized world today that are leading us away from the truths of God? Identify one of these that perhaps has crept into your thinking or that of a family member. Ask for the wisdom to see anew through the eyes of faith, seek the resources from a solid Catholic source to equip yourself with a faithful response to speak the truth in love.

Day Twenty Six

Theme: Patron of Carpenters

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

To provide for his family, St. Joseph worked as a carpenter. The original word in the Gospel is tekton which means “craftsman” or “artisan,” thereby suggesting that he could well have been a builder of homes as well as a carpenter. St. Joseph left an example to all those who must earn their bread by work of their hands, which constitutes an overwhelming majority of mankind; and therefore, he is the principal patron in the world of work.

St. Joseph is also referred to as the Model of Artisans. This is a beautiful title that reminds us that St. Joseph was fully human--talented, hard-working, with an eye for beauty and quality. At our baptism, God gives us spiritual gifts (charisms), which are special abilities to enable us to be channels of God’s love and presence in the world. Some are given the charism of craftsmanship which empowers an individual to be an effective channel of God's grace to others through artistic or creative work that beautifies and/or orders the physical world. It is quite possible that St. Joseph had the charism of craftsmanship.

Today, God continues to give the Body of Christ a variety of gifts through which He can continue to make His presence known in the world. Those of you who have the gift of craftsmanship have a special intercessor in St. Joseph. St. Joseph can help you to glorify God by practicing your trade with integrity and skill.

Day Twenty Six (continued)

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Let us pray the St. Joseph Prayer for Workers to honor carpenters, artists, and craftsman:

*Joseph, by the work of your hands
and the sweat of your brow,
you supported Jesus and Mary,
and had the Son of God as your fellow worker.*

*Teach me to work as you did,
with patience and perseverance, for God and
for those whom God has given me to support.
Teach me to see in my fellow workers
the Christ who desires to be in them,
that I may always be charitable and forbearing
towards all.*

*Grant me to look upon work
with the eyes of faith,
so that I shall recognize in it
my share in God's own creative activity
and in Christ's work of our redemption,
and so take pride in it.*

*When it is pleasant and productive,
remind me to give thanks to God for it.
And when it is burdensome,
teach me to offer it to God,
in reparation for my sins
and the sins of the world.*

(Note: This prayer was adapted from the booklet "Devotions to Saint Joseph" by Brian Moore, S.J., printed and published by the Society of St. Paul.)

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: What are some of the charisms or spiritual gifts that God has given you? Reflect on how you are using these to bring beauty to your world. Is there some small way you might use your gifts to better channel God's love and presence? Ask for the grace and opportunity to do so.

Day Twenty Seven

Theme: Patron of Social Justice

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

*Open your mouth in behalf of the mute,
and for the rights of the destitute;
Open your mouth, judge justly,
defend the needy and the poor!
(Proverbs 31:8-9)*

St. Joseph is called the Patron of Social Justice because of his righteousness. He followed all laws that came from God. He made justice a practical way of living out love for others. He fulfilled his divine assignments because he was a man of justice. St. Joseph was fair to his companions, to his family members, and to society. God guided him in judging what was right and what was wrong, and he stood for right.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to imitate St. Joseph and work for social justice. Our families are the starting point and the center of a vocation for justice. How we treat our parents, spouses and children is a reflection of our commitment to Christ's love and justice. We demonstrate our commitment to the Gospel by how we spend our time and money, and whether our family life includes an ethic of charity, service and action for justice. In the world of business, business owners, managers, and investors face important opportunities to seek justice and pursue peace. Ethical responsibility is not just avoiding evil, but doing right, especially for the weak and vulnerable. Decisions about the use of capital have moral implications: Are they creating and preserving quality jobs at living wages? Are they building up community through the goods and services they provide? Do policies and decisions reflect respect for human life and dignity, promote peace and preserve God's creation? As citizens in the world's leading democracy, Catholics in the United States have special responsibilities to protect human life and dignity and to stand with those who are poor and vulnerable. We are also called to welcome the stranger, to combat discrimination, to pursue peace, and to promote the common good.xx

Working for justice in everyday life is not easy, but we can call on the intercession of our spiritual father, St. Joseph, to help us live our faith in the world in a way that is pleasing to God.

St. Joseph, Patron of Social Justice, pray that we may have a vision of the world as God would have it: a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor, a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love. Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Twenty Seven (continued)

Daily Challenge: Who do I see as the poor and vulnerable in my life? How do I talk about them and respond to their needs? Examine whether you are living your life conveying a consistent life ethic that aligns with God's plan of justice, with a willingness to make amends.

Day Twenty Eight

Theme: Patron of Unborn Children

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.
(Jer 1:5)*

In our times, abortion is often defended in pregnancies arising from irregular situations. Although the circumstance is quite different, St. Joseph too is faced with the most irregular of all pregnancies, a situation leaving him quite unsettled: his wife has conceived by the Holy Spirit! The child is not his biologically or genetically. It is not the fruit of his physical relationship with his wife. In fact, he is called to believe that the child is conceived not by physical relationship with any man, but by the unique and direct intervention of God. How can a man accept such an overwhelming pregnancy? Only by faith. How can he accept fatherhood over such a child that could be called not his own? Only by openness to the will of God, by willingness to do as the angel of the Lord tells him.

We learn from Joseph that fatherhood is much more than simple physical generation. In fact, Joseph, who does not engender any child at all, is the best of fathers and a model for every father. He accepts the life in the womb by honorably taking Mary his wife. He journeys with her to Bethlehem to register the child in the list of humanity. He gives the child a name in the line of David. He defends the child from the cruel attack of Herod.

Joseph was the one chosen for the role of father to the Son of God incarnate in Mary's womb, and he fulfilled this role so faithfully. Within his universal patronage, it is certainly fitting in our times that he be given a new title as "Patron of the Unborn." No one can be a better defender of innocent, helpless life in the womb. No one is a better model of fatherhood to parents of pre-born children. No one can more fittingly aid in the process of healing and reconciliation for those who grieve and agonize over having committed the sin of abortion. No one is a better image for women who have been hurt by men unwilling to accept fatherhood of the child they engendered.^{xxi}

Day Twenty Eight (continued)

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Invoking the intercession of St. Joseph, Patron of the Unborn, let us pray today for all expectant mothers:

O Holy Joseph, protector and provider of the Holy Family and all families, through your intercession may God grant all expectant mothers the grace to cherish the new life within their wombs. May mothers and fathers realize that their baby is a gift from God and have the courage to choose life for their child. Through the Mystery of Baptism may the parents and newborns become children of God and heirs to eternal life in Christ. Amen.

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Locate the nearest prolife pregnancy resource center to your home or parish and ask if you might be able to support them in some way. Become familiar with available resources so that you may also defend and protect unborn lives and women in crisis when the occasion arises.

Day Twenty Nine

Theme: Patron of Travelers

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

One of St. Joseph's titles is the Patron of Travelers and for obvious reasons—he did a lot of traveling! Mary and Joseph traveled about 150 kilometers from Nazareth to Bethlehem before the birth of Jesus Christ. The family moved to Egypt after Joseph was told in a dream to flee to the now North African country to escape the command of Herod the Great to slaughter children in and around Bethlehem. They reached Egypt after a 65 kilometers journey where they lived for three years until after the death of Herod. When Joseph had a dream that it is safe to return to Israel, the family traveled to Nazareth which took them a journey of at least 170 kilometers. Once settled in Nazareth, the Holy Family would travel 146 kilometers to Jerusalem three times each year for the required feasts.

The Holy Family most likely traveled by foot or by donkey. Walkers had to wear heavy shoes or sandals, and to carry tents, bedding and provisions. Walking speed depended on the climate, season, and terrain, but one could generally walk about 20 miles in a day. Travel in the winter was more difficult as snow often blocked high passes, and rains in October and May flooded the rivers, making them difficult to cross. People travelling by foot would try to travel in groups for protection against the numerous robbers and wild animals.

Today, we can entrust our travels to the intercession of St. Joseph. He who protected the life of our Savior can protect your life and the lives of our loved ones in the journeys in life.

*St. Joseph, Patron of Travelers, protect my family in all of our travels near and far.
Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.*

Daily Challenge: Recall a time when you were aware of God's protection during a trip or outing. Share this testimony with those close to you in order to increase their faith.

Day Thirty

Theme: Patron of Immigrants

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

The Holy Family of Nazareth was an immigrant family. To avoid King Herod's persecution, Joseph took Jesus and Mary to live in exile in Egypt, fleeing persecution and violence. He experienced the sadness of being away from home and faced the difficulties and hardships of living in a foreign land, facing poverty, having to learn another language, and being treated as an outsider, an undesirable, even a criminal.

But in the face of all these difficulties, Joseph kept his peace and integrity. He obeyed God who gave him the strength to face the challenges, hardships, and difficulties that came while he was seeking safety and a better future for the Holy Family.

There are literally millions of Josephs in our time. There are Central American migrants leaving behind spouses and children to find opportunities in the north; Syrian and Lebanese families taking dangerous voyages to Europe only to be confined in crowded camps; persecuted families in Eritrea and the Horn of Africa fleeing to neighboring Ethiopia to find nothing but drought.

St. Joseph stands as an example of resolute trust and a great intercessor for immigrants. He conveys the same message carried to him by an angel: Do not be afraid (Matthew 1:20). Having made such a perilous journey himself, St. Joseph shows us that God will walk with each of us too, wherever our journey takes us. Xxii

St. Joseph, Patron of Immigrants, intercede for all those who are migrants and refugees who are seeking asylum from oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Protect them and keep them safe. Help us to defend those who are marginalized, to give aid to those in need, to come to the defense of those who are poor or vulnerable. Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: What lengths might I go to, to protect my family and seek a better life for them? Thank God for the ways he has provided for you to care for your family and ask Him to provide a way for all fathers seeking safety and peace for their families.

Day Thirty One

Theme: Powerful Intercessor

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Over the last 30 days, we have reflected on various aspects of St. Joseph's life. Hopefully, you have gotten to know him and have been inspired by his life. We have invoked his intercession for a wide variety of needs. Today we simply ask him to be our intercessor, and, as a first step toward consecration day, we offer this prayer to entrust ourselves to his fatherly care.

Dear St. Joseph,

After Mary, you are the most powerful intercessor before God. In a sense, Jesus remains obedient to you and will listen to you as you bring my intentions to Him. Because of this, I especially want to entrust myself to your fatherly care, just as Jesus Himself did. And while in the past, I may have brought to you one of my intentions here or there, this time I want to do something new. This time, I want to give you all. In other words, St. Joseph, I'm not here to offer you a regular "novena" for just one of my intentions. Rather, I want to forever entrust to you all of my needs and cares, trusting that you will bring them, with Mary, to your Son, Jesus.

Dear St. Joseph, as the best of fathers, as the one God chose to be the virginal father of Jesus, I believe that you know what I need better than I do myself. So go ahead, St. Joseph. I give you permission to care for me as your child. In doing so, I trust that you will do everything in your power to make my life into something beautiful for God. I trust that you will watch over me and that your prayers will guide me, bless me, and protect me. I trust that you will now care for me with the same love and tenderness with which you cared for Jesus. I'll confirm this special relationship with you in nine days, when I make my prayer of consecration.

Saint Joseph, Powerful Intercessor, please pray for me and all my intentions. Amen.

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Day Thirty One (continued)

Daily Challenge: Take some time today to list your personal intentions that come to mind ending with the words “and for all the other intentions in my heart, St Joseph, I bring to you in my consecration.”

Day Thirty Two

Theme: Man of Joy and Peace

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

St. Joseph was a man of peace and joy. It must have been an inconceivable grace to live in the presence of the Son of God and the Mother of God and to participate in God's plan of salvation. Through this prayer to St. Joseph, let us prepare for tomorrow's consecration day by asking for a share in the peace and joy that he experienced in his earthly life and now experiences in the eternal bliss of heaven.

Dear St. Joseph, I know the Bible doesn't speak directly of your joy, but how could you not have been full of joy? I'm sure you were. You lived in the presence of Jesus and Mary. Well, St. Joseph, please pray for me that I will also find my joy by also living in their presence. And having yourself lived in their presence, you must have been a man of such peace. St. Joseph, please pray for me that I keep my joy and not give in to sadness, laziness, or discouragement. Also, pray that I keep my peace of soul and not hold on to anger and bitterness in my heart. Help me to be merciful to everyone by offering forgiveness that I might also, like you, be a man of true peace and joy.xxiii

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Daily Challenge: Surrender your deepest worries, concerns and fears, entrusting them to God as you ask for this gift of the peace and joy of Christ that surpasses all understanding.

Day Thirty Three

Theme: Consecration Day

Reflection, Scripture, Prayer

Congratulations! You made it! Today, you will consecrate yourself to St. Joseph. The Holy Trinity wants St. Joseph to be more known and loved. You have been invited to imitate the virtues and holiness of St. Joseph's pure heart. With St. Joseph at your side, virtue and holiness will increase in your life. With St. Joseph's paternal cloak over you, you will be protected from spiritual harm. Fear nothing! Your spiritual father is the father of Jesus, the husband of the Mother of God, and the Terror of Demons. xxiv

Pray the Litany of St. Joseph.

Act of Consecration to St. Joseph

O Glorious Patriarch and Patron of the Church! O Virgin Spouse of the Virgin Mother of God! O Guardian and Virginal Father of the Word Incarnate! In the presence of Jesus and Mary, I choose you this day to be my father, my guardian, and my protector. O great St. Joseph, whom God has made the Head of the Holy Family, accept me, I beseech you, though utterly unworthy, to be a member of your "Holy House." Present me to your Immaculate Spouse; ask her also to adopt me as her child. With her, pray that I may constantly think of Jesus, and serve him faithfully to the end of my life. O Terror of Demons, increase in me virtue, protect me from the evil one, and help me not to offend God in any way. O my Spiritual Father, I hereby consecrate myself to you. In faithful imitation of Jesus and Mary, I place myself and all my concerns under your care and protection. To you, after Jesus and Mary, I consecrate my body and soul, with all their faculties, my spiritual growth, my home, and all my affairs and undertakings. Forsake me not, but adopt me as a servant and child of the Holy Family. Watch over me at all times, but especially at the hour of my death. Console and strengthen me with the presence of Jesus and Mary so that, with you, I may praise and adore the Holy Trinity for all eternity. Amen.xxv

Litany of St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Noble Offspring of David, pray for us.

Light of Patriarchs, pray for us.

Spouse of the Mother of God, pray for us.

Chaste Guardian of the Virgin, pray for us.

Foster-Father of the Son of God, pray for us.

Zealous Defender of Christ, pray for us.

Head of the Holy Family, pray for us.

Joseph Most Just, pray for us.

Joseph Most Chaste, pray for us.

Joseph Most Prudent, pray for us.

Joseph Most Courageous, pray for us.

Joseph Most Obedient, pray for us.

Joseph Most Faithful, pray for us.

Mirror of Patience, pray for us.

Lover of Poverty, pray for us.

Model of Workmen, pray for us.

Glory of Domestic Life, pray for us.

Guardian of Virgins, pray for us.

Pillar of Families, pray for us.

Comfort of the Afflicted, pray for us.

Hope of the Sick, pray for us.

Patron of the Dying, pray for us.

Terror of Demons, pray for us.

Protector of the Holy Church, pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us.

V. He has made him lord of his household,

R. And prince over all his possessions.

Let us pray. O God, who, in your loving providence, chose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of your most Holy Mother, grant us the favor of having him for our intercessor in heaven whom on earth we venerate as our protector. You, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

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