

# Novena to St. Joseph

## Introduction

In the early traditions of the Church, solemn feasts had nine days of special preparation, also called a novena, in order to fully take part in the great celebration. The Solemnity of St. Joseph, the Husband of Mary, is one such feast. The Sisters of Mary, Queen honor St. Joseph, as our Secondary Patron, and offer a novena, asking for his intercession and requesting that he help us to learn his virtues of humility, service in love, and fervent prayer, following the Will of God.

You are invited to reflect each day on the excerpts that are taken from the Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos* of St. John Paul II "On the Person and Mission of St. Joseph in the Life of Christ and of the Church" (August 15, 1989)

May this novena be a fruitful addition to your life of prayer during this Season of Lent.



## March 10 - St. Joseph: A Model of Faith

"Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took his wife into his home" (cf. *Mt* 1: 24).

Inspired by the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church from the earliest centuries stressed that just as St. Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated himself to Jesus Christ's upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, that is, the Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the exemplar and model. (*Redemptoris Custos* - RC #1)

## March 11 - St. Joseph: The Gospel Portrait

"Joseph, Son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins... when Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife" (cf. *Mt* 1:20-21, 24).



St. Joseph took her in all the mystery of her motherhood. He took her together with the Son who had come into the world by the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way he showed a readiness of will like Mary's with regard to what God asked of him through the angel. (RC #3)

## March 12 - St. Joseph: The Guardian of the Mystery of God

When, soon after the Annunciation, Mary went to the house of Zechariah to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth, even as she offered her greeting she heard the words of Elizabeth, who was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Lk 1:41).

If Elizabeth said of the Redeemer's Mother, "blessed is she who believed," in a certain sense this blessedness can be referred to Joseph as well, since he responded positively to the word of God when it was communicated to him at the decisive moment. While it is true that Joseph did not respond to the angel's "announcement" in the same way as Mary, he "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took his wife." What he did is the clearest "obedience of faith" (cf. Rom 1:5; 16:26; 2 Cor. 10:5-6). (RC #4)



## March 13 - St. Joseph: The Service of Fatherhood

St. Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood. It is precisely in this way that, as the Church's Liturgy teaches, he "cooperated in the fullness of time in the great mystery of salvation" and is truly a "minister of salvation." His fatherhood is expressed concretely "in his having made his life a service, a sacrifice to the mystery of the Incarnation and to the redemptive mission connected with it; in having used the legal authority which was his over the Holy Family in order to make a total gift of self, of his life and work; in having turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of self, an oblation of his heart and all his abilities into love placed at the service of the Messiah growing up in his house."(RC #8)



## March 14 - The Birth at Bethlehem

As guardian of the mystery "hidden for ages in the mind of God," which begins to unfold before his eyes "in the fullness of time," Joseph, together with Mary, is a privileged witness to the birth of the Son of God into the world on Christmas night in Bethlehem. Luke writes: "And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk. 2:6-7).

Joseph was an eyewitness to this birth, which took place in conditions that, humanly speaking, were embarrassing—a first announcement of that "self-emptying" (cf. Phil 2:5-8) which Christ freely accepted for the forgiveness of sins. Joseph also witnessed the adoration of the shepherds who arrived at Jesus' birthplace after the angel had brought them the great and happy news (cf. Lk. 2:15-16). Later he also witnessed the homage of the magi who came from the East (cf. Mt 2:11). (RC #10)

### March 15 - The Support and Education of Jesus

The growth of Jesus "in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk 2:52) took place within the Holy Family under the eyes of Joseph, who had the important task of "raising" Jesus, that is, feeding, clothing and educating him in the Law and in a trade, in keeping with the duties of a father.

For his part, Jesus "was obedient to them" (Lk 2:51), respectfully returning the affection of his "parents." In this way he wished to sanctify the obligations of the family and of work, which he performed at the side of Joseph. (RC #16)



### March 16 - St. Joseph: A Just Man and A Husband

In the course of that pilgrimage of faith which was his life, Joseph, like Mary, remained faithful to God's call until the end. While Mary's life was the bringing to fullness of that fiat first spoken at the Annunciation, at the moment of Joseph's own "annunciation" he said nothing; instead he simply "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (Mt 1:24). And this first "doing" became the beginning of "Joseph's way." The Gospels do not record any word ever spoken by Joseph along that way. But the silence of Joseph has its own special eloquence, for thanks to that silence we can understand the truth of the Gospel's judgment that he was "a just man" (Mt 1:19). (RC #17)

### March 17 - Work as an expression of love

Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth. The Gospel specifies the kind of work Joseph did in order to support his family: he was a carpenter. This simple word sums up Joseph's entire life. For Jesus, these were hidden years, the years to which Luke refers after recounting the episode that occurred in the Temple: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (Lk 2:51). This "submission" or obedience of Jesus in the house of Nazareth should be understood as a sharing in the work of Joseph. Having learned the work of his presumed father, he was known as "the carpenter's son." (RC #22)



### March 18 - The Primacy of the Interior Life

The total sacrifice, whereby Joseph surrendered his whole existence to the demands of the Messiah's coming into his home, becomes understandable only in the light of his profound interior life. It was from this interior life that "very singular commands and consolations came, bringing him also the logic and strength that belong to simple and clear souls, and giving him the power of making great decisions—such as the decision to put his liberty immediately at the disposition of the divine designs, to make over to them also his legitimate human calling, his conjugal happiness, to accept the conditions, the responsibility and the burden of a family, but, through an incomparable virginal love, to renounce that natural conjugal love that is the foundation and nourishment of the family." (RC #26)



## March 19 - Solemnity of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church



Pope Leo XIII once explained: "The reasons why St. Joseph must be considered the special patron of the Church, and the Church in turn draws exceeding hope from his care and patronage, chiefly arise from his having been the husband of Mary and the presumed father of Jesus... Joseph was in his day the lawful and natural guardian, head and defender of the Holy Family.... It is thus fitting and most worthy of Joseph's dignity that, in the same way that 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." (RC #28)

May St. Joseph become for all of us an exceptional teacher in the service of Christ's saving mission, a mission which is the responsibility of each and every member of the Church: husbands and wives, parents, those who live by the work of their hands or by any other kind of work, those called to the contemplative life and those called to the apostolate.

May St. Joseph obtain for the Church and for the world, as well as for each of us, the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (RC #32)

Image Credits:

<http://www.stjoewen.org/>

<https://catholicispure.wordpress.com/2012/03/19/blessed-john-paul-ii-homily-on-the-feast-of-st-joseph/>

<http://catholicarboroffaithandmorals.com/Sermons%20on%20the%20Feast%20of%20St.%20Joseph.htm>

↓

<http://taylormarshall.com/2013/03/saint-joseph-old-man-or-young-man.html>

<http://www.thankevann.com/stjoseph/gallery.html>

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Joseph/holy-family.htm>

[http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=4](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4)