

St. John's Newsletter



St. Joseph: a model for fathers, all Catholics

To celebrate fathers in the month of June, let's take a closer look at the earthly father of Jesus – St. Joseph. St. Joseph's life offers a blueprint for Christian living, as noted in the Catechism (CCC 532-533). His obedience to God's will, despite uncertainty (Matthew 1:20-24), exemplifies trust in divine providence. His role as a worker and provider highlights the dignity of labor, making him a patron for workers. His silent presence in Scripture underscores humility, a virtue Catholics are called to emulate. His protection of the Holy Family (Matthew 2:13-15) models care for others, especially the vulnerable. There are many prayers, which encourage Catholics to imitate St. Joseph. His intercessory power is seen as an extension of his earthly faithfulness. Devotion to him fosters spiritual growth, aligning with the Church's call to holiness (CCC 2013-2014). St. Joseph's example is particularly relevant in times of trial, offering hope and guidance.

What we know about St. Joseph

We know he was a carpenter, a working man, for the skeptical Nazarenes ask about Jesus, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55). He wasn't rich. When he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised and Mary to be purified, he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (Luke 2:24).

Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. Indeed the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.

We know Joseph was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he knew the child was not his but was as yet unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. He resolved to send her away quietly to not expose her to shame or cruelty. However, when an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him: "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23).

We know Joseph respected God. We are told that he took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man. Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry. Joseph is the patron saint of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him.

Joseph is also patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers (pregnant women), travelers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general.

We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: **March 19** for Joseph the Husband of Mary and **May 1** for Joseph the Worker. March 19 has been the most commonly celebrated feast day for Joseph, and it wasn't until 1955 that Pope Pius XII established the Feast of "St. Joseph the Worker" to be celebrated on May 1. This is also May Day (International Workers' Day) and believed to reflect Joseph's status as the patron of workers.

Sources: https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4
<https://www.catholicshare.com/7-little-known-powerful-prayers-st-joseph-every-catholic-know/>

Volume 16 - June 2025- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. – Submitted by Mary Jo Peters

