

# NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH

MARCH 11 - MARCH 19

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In addition to the nine day Novena of Masses, a Mass will be offered each day in March for the intentions of all our subscribers and benefactors.

**Please join the Novena by reading the short reflections for each day, and saying the Novena Prayer to St. Joseph.**

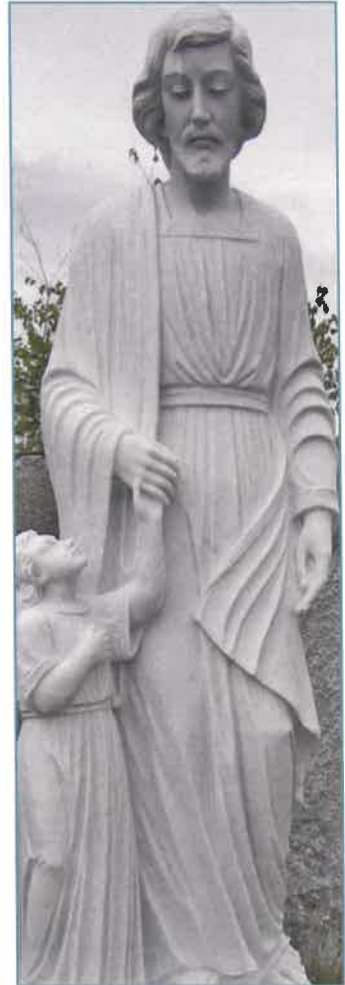
## **Novena Prayer to St. Joseph**

Ever glorious St. Joseph, good and faithful servant, God was pleased to place his own family in your care. We thank you for being such a wonderful example of humility and faith, of prayerfulness and courage, in your ordinary daily life.

Through your intercession, may God grant us the blessing of living continually in his presence, and responding to his love in our daily lives. And when we have lived our days on earth, may God give us the great joy he gave you - that of entering eternal life in the company of Jesus and Mary. Most loving St. Joseph, accept our Novena prayers and obtain for us through your powerful intercession, the favours and graces we ask for in this Novena.

*Pause to call to mind your special intentions ...*

St. Joseph, Pray for us.  
Add: Our father..., Hail Mary...,  
Glory be to the Father..., Amen.



## DAY 1 JOSEPH - THE PROTECTOR/GUARDIAN

'Joseph took the child and his Mother and left for Egypt'. (Mt. 2:14)

When Fr. Herbert Vaughan founded the Mill Hill Missionaries (St. Joseph's Missionary Society) in 1866, he chose St. Joseph to be the patron and protector of his missionaries. He wanted them to be in the care of this great saint. Joseph would look after them as he looked after Mary and Jesus in the 'flight to Egypt' and at all other times. He took Mary and their new born child to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from Herod. Joseph was the 'guardian of the redeemer' (Saint John Paul II) on that 'missionary journey' to a foreign land and fulfilled his role as guardian or protector of Jesus and Mary for the rest of his life.

Pope Francis sees St. Joseph as a protector to whom we can turn when we are struggling to cope with suffering or heartbroken with grief or weighed down with distress and loneliness.

*May St. Joseph be our protector on our journey through life.*

## DAY 2 JOSEPH - A JUST MAN

'Joseph was a just man who always did what was right' (Mt. 1:19)

What a predicament Joseph was in when he discovered Mary was pregnant. Joseph did not know who was the father of the child. He only knew that the child was not his. We can imagine how devastated he was when he discovered that the love of his life was pregnant before they came to live together. What was he to do? In the culture of the time he had no choice but to divorce Mary. It must have been heart-breaking for him but he was not going to make a fuss.

Even before he received the Angel's message that Mary was pregnant through the Holy Spirit, he had decided to act in a caring way. He was going to act quietly and thus save her publicity and disgrace. He was a caring, honourable man, a just man, a man of God.

*May St. Joseph help us to put our problems before God and trust in Him.*

## DAY 3 JOSEPH - A MAN OF FAITH

'An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said ...' (Mt. 1:20)

"If discouragement overwhelms you, think of the faith of Joseph." (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) Joseph lived his life in the light of faith, always drawing strength and courage from his openness to God. He was a good listener. His heart was in the right place to discern God's Will. We see this when Joseph had decided to divorce Mary quietly, but then received the Angel's message that Mary 'had conceived what was in her by the Holy Spirit'. He responded with the 'obedience of faith' (St. John Paul II) and took Mary to his home as his wife. "St. Joseph exercised his role by hearing God's voice and being guided by God's will in his daily life. He did this with faith and fidelity, with goodness and tenderness, as a strong and courageous man." (Pope Francis)

*May Joseph lead us to a deeper faith and trust in God.*

## DAY 4 JOSEPH - MODEL OF HOPE AND LOVE

(Jesus said) 'Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God and trust in me' (Jn. 14:1)

Joseph is an example of one who lived with a deep awareness of God's Spirit in his heart and life, always noticing and responding to the movements of the Spirit. This was the ground of his hope and the source of his boundless love for Mary and Jesus.

"If anxiety has its grip on you, think of the hope of Joseph. If exasperation or hatred seizes you, think of the love of Joseph, who was the first man to set eyes on the human face of God in the person of the infant conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Let us praise and thank Christ for having drawn so close to us, and for giving us Joseph as an example and model of love." (*Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI*)

*Through the intercession of St. Joseph may we grow in faith, hope and love.*

## DAY 5 JOSEPH - A CARING, LOVING FATHER

"Where did that man (Jesus) get all this wisdom?" (Mt.13:54)

"We can now see that Joseph must have played a decisive role in the formation of the youthful Jesus and his message. A key pointer in this area is the question of the contemporaries of Jesus: "Where did that man (Jesus) get all this wisdom?" (Mt.13:54) Traditionally, Christians would be inclined to answer: "Well, Jesus was divine, so he knew everything." But that is not a good answer, for St. Paul warns us that Jesus never took advantage of his divine nature, and had to learn the same lessons as all of us. The answer must be: he learnt it at home, from his parents Joseph and Mary.

It is good to realize that all that Jesus knew about fatherly love that is so central to his message, he had learnt from Joseph, whom he admired and loved so dearly. In that he followed the example of his mother Mary, who must have loved Joseph beyond measure." (*Hans Burgman, mhm*)

*May St. Joseph help us to know and experience God as a loving and merciful Father.*

## DAY 6 JOSEPH - THE WORKER

"Isn't he the carpenter's son?" (Mt. 13:55)

In 1955 pope Pius XII chose May 1st as a special day to remember St. Joseph the worker. He described him as the patron of all working people. Joseph was dedicated to his work as a carpenter and Jesus, the carpenter's son, would have learned the skills of his craft. In the words of Pope Francis: "Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. Joseph exercised his role as teacher of Jesus: "Discreetly and humbly, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity. From the time of his betrothal to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem and then back in Nazareth, he is there at every moment with loving care."

Joseph probably knew the hardship of unemployment when there was little or no work for himself and Jesus.

*St. Joseph help us to be committed to our work and help those who cannot find work.*

## DAY 7 JOSEPH - THE FAMILY MAN

Mary said: 'See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you' (Lk. 2:48)

Some of the Saints were convinced that 'the discovery of Joseph' is a personal journey to Nazareth, to meet Joseph in the intimacy of the Holy Family. We can be sure that he held the baby Jesus in his arms and sat him on his lap; that he often carried Him as a child. St. Francis de Sales found the thought of this closeness fascinating: "I find nothing sweeter to my imagination than to see the child Jesus in the arms of this great Saint, calling him daddy."

With Joseph everything is so simple and yet so profound, so ordinary and yet so special. He is a person we can feel at home with. He was the village carpenter, the family man who worked for his living. He was profoundly loved by God and experienced that love and lived it and shared it, especially in the home at Nazareth with Jesus and Mary.

*May St. Joseph help us to discover God's closeness in the ups and downs of family life.*

## DAY 8 JOSEPH - PATRON OF A HAPPY DEATH

'At death life is changed, not ended'

In the Autumn Issue of St. Joseph's Advocate, we usually have a photo of a stained glass window that depicts St. Joseph on his deathbed. The text at the base of the window reads: 'Saint Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, pray for us.' Jesus is holding Joseph's hand and blessing him, while Mary is praying and grieving close by. Just gazing at the window can bring comfort when we have to turn our thoughts to death or perhaps find ourselves grieving the loss of a loved one. The same gentle, loving Jesus is with each of us all through life and at the hour of our death. We draw great comfort from his promise: 'I am the Resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live; everyone who believes in me will never die.' (Jn. 11:25-26). The preface of the Mass for the dead reminds us: 'At death life is changed, not ended.'

*St. Joseph obtain for us the grace of entering eternal life in the company of Jesus and Mary.*

## DAY 9 JOSEPH - LOVING SERVICE

'To love and to serve'

'To love and to serve' is the motto that was chosen by Herbert Vaughan in 1866 for St. Joseph's Missionary Society of Mill Hill. He pointed to the example of Joseph's life of loving service and wanted his future missionaries 'To love and to Serve.' He saw in Joseph a model for missionary life. Later as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, he wrote: "Of old it was said to the needy and suffering people in the kingdom of Egypt: 'Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.' (Gen. 41:55). The same is now said to all needy and suffering people: 'Go to Joseph.' What was truly said of the first Joseph in the Old Testament as to his goodness and love is verified much more perfectly in the second Joseph - St. Joseph". In 2016 the Mill Hill Missionaries celebrated 150 years of missionary service. Our mission continues now with around 100 young missionary priests from Africa and Asia and nearly 200 students preparing for the missionary priesthood.

*We celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19) with gratitude for the past and hope for the future.*