

Solemnity of Saint Joseph - March 20 2023

Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples of this land and pay our respects to Elders past and present. The First Peoples of this land have loved and respected the land, as it has nurtured them and continues to nurture us all; they were the first to sit and talk to each other here. The First Peoples of this land were the first to listen to the wisdom of the Ancestors here; they were the first to listen deeply to each other and the earth, and so make it part of their way of living, their way of proceeding. In acknowledging the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country we commit ourselves listening more deeply to country and being active participants to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context - Saint Joseph

We hear very little of Saint Joseph in the gospels: we hear a few snippets concerning him in Jesus' early life and then he seemingly disappears. Sr Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, reminds us that what is told of Joseph, however, highlights the importance of faithful listening to God's word spoken in the ordinary experiences of one's life and the need to respond with generosity and courage. Joseph was an ordinary man who received an extraordinary calling from God and in doing so he teaches us to trust in God's providence quietly at work in our world.



Figure 1 St Joseph and Jesus walking hand-in-hand. 18th/19th century French coloured woodcut. Photography. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.

Scripture: Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ.

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "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." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.



The Dream of Saint Joseph- Antonio Ciseri accessed [here](#) at Wikimedia commons

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection by Kirby Will Project Officer Identity and Outreach.

As evident in the scripture reading for this solemnity, Joseph was a just man. He did not want to expose Mary to shame and punishment and was prepared to back away quietly to ensure that this did not happen. The scripture also shows us that he trusted in the Providence of God and acted upon God's will immediately. What a great example of faith and trust in God!

Whilst we hear very little of Joseph in the gospels, his name is prolific in society. Parishes, schools, hospitals, religious congregations all bear his name as they go about their work in the community. This reflects an important point about Saint Joseph: presence. He is there in the life of Jesus and Mary, supporting them in their life and vocation and so too is he there for us in our lives.

Joseph was a loving father to Jesus: he strove to find a place where he could be born, he moved his family to Egypt to ensure Jesus' safety, he returned immediately to find the lost boy in Jerusalem. He fulfilled God's will through ordinary acts done with immense love and provided a loving family for Jesus to *increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man* (Luke 2:52). Joseph shows us that great gestures are not required to show our faith but it is in the daily grind of our lives where our faith rings true. Not all of us will be called to great public works but we are all called to faithfulness in our families and everyday tasks.



Figure 2 August Macke, Flight to Egypt. Fine Art. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.

Prayer from Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Call to Action:

- pray the [Litany to St Joseph](#) as a family.
- learn more about Joseph by watching this [video](#).
- discuss ways your family could carry out ordinary tasks with great love.
- complete some (or all) of these [St Joseph](#) activities.

