

Year of St Joseph



Celebrating The Year of St Joseph in school

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle



Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of St Joseph

**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.**

INTRODUCTION

With a Father's Heart



**I am among
you as one
who serves**



In his Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris Corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), marking the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special “Year of St Joseph,” beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021.

The Year of St Joseph is being launched in schools in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle from March 2021 in time to celebrate Joseph’s feast day on 19 March. Diocesan schools advisers from England and Wales have agreed to share a collection of resources which has been put together on the RE Coordinators SharePoint.

In the Apostolic Letter Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows. We will be celebrating each of those attributes through liturgical prayer each month, reflecting on the Gospel stories about Joseph and commemorating his feast days.

CELEBRATING ST JOSEPH

A monthly focus

MARCH	Loving	<u>Feast day of St Joseph on March 19</u>
APRIL	Obedient	Joseph's first dream
MAY	Working	<u>Feast of St Joseph the Worker on May 1</u>
JUNE	Beloved	Fathers' Day June 20
JULY	Accepting	The Presentation
SEPTEMBER	Courageous	Joseph's second dream
OCTOBER	Creative	The month of the Rosary
NOVEMBER	In the shadows	Jesus lost in the Temple
DECEMBER	Caring	Nativity

The Silent Saint

Most of our information we have about St. Joseph comes from the opening two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. No words of his are recorded in the Gospels; he was the "silent" man. St. Joseph, the husband of Our Lady and the foster-father of Jesus, was probably born in Bethlehem and probably died in Nazareth.

He was an ordinary manual worker, a carpenter, although he was descended from the royal house of David. He was destined to become the husband of the Mother of God. About him Sacred Scripture has little more to say than that he was a just man. He faithfully and quietly fulfilled his role of guarding and caring for God's greatest treasures upon earth, Jesus and Mary.

The most difficult hours of his life may well have been those when he first learned of Mary's pregnancy; but in this time of trial Joseph showed himself great by humbly standing by Mary. Joseph was to be, for all times, the trustworthy witness of the Messiah's birth. After this, he modestly retires into the background of Scripture.

Of St. Joseph's death the Bible tells us nothing. Tradition says, however, that he died before the beginning of Jesus' public life. Humbly and unknown, he passed his years at Nazareth, silent and almost forgotten he remained in the background through centuries of Church history.

St. Joseph is the patron for many causes. He is the patron of the Universal Church. He is the patron of the dying because Jesus and Mary were at his death-bed. He is also the patron of fathers, of carpenters, and of social justice. Many churches and schools in our diocese are named after him.

Symbols of the saint

In art, Joseph is typically portrayed as an older man, with grey hair and a beard. Some statues of Joseph show his staff topped with flowers. He is often shown with carpenters tools.

Here are some of the symbols which are connected with St. Joseph.

Bible; branch; carpenter's square; carpenter's tools; chalice; cross; hand tools; infant Jesus; ladder; lamb; lily; monstrance; old man holding a lily and a carpenter's tool such as a square; old man holding the infant Jesus; plane; rod.

Patris Corde With a Father's Heart

The following passages are taken from the Vatican News website
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-12/pope-francis-proclaims-year-of-st-joseph.html> and give a precis of the Apostolic Letter.

The Holy Father wrote Patris corde against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

A beloved, tender, obedient father

Saint Joseph, in fact, “concretely expressed his fatherhood” by making an offering of himself in love “a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home,” writes Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor St Paul VI.

And because of his role at “the crossroads between the Old and New Testament,” St Joseph “has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people” (PC, 1). In him, “Jesus saw the tender love of God,” the one that helps us accept our weakness, because “it is through” and despite “our fears, our frailties, and our weakness” that most divine designs are realized. “Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser,” emphasizes the Pontiff, and it is by encountering God’s mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we “experience His truth and tenderness,” – because “we know that God’s truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us” (2).

Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his ‘fiat’ he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to “do the will of the Father.” Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he “cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption,” as St John Paul II said, “and is truly a minister of salvation” (3).

Welcoming the will of God

At the same time, Joseph is “an accepting Father,” because he “accepted Mary unconditionally” – an important gesture even today, says Pope Francis, “in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident.” But the Bridegroom of Mary is also the one who, trusting in the Lord, accepts in his life even the events that he does not understand, “setting aside his own ideas” and reconciling himself with his own history.

Joseph’s spiritual path “is not one that explains, but accepts” – which does not mean that he is “resigned.” Instead, he is “courageously and firmly proactive,” because with “Holy Spirit’s gift of fortitude,” and full of hope, he is able “to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.” In practice, through St. Joseph, it is as if God were to repeat to us: “Do not be afraid!” because “faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad,” and makes us aware that “God can make flowers spring up from stony ground.” Joseph “did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.” For this reason, “he encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak” (4).

A creatively courageous father, example of love

Patris corde highlights “the creative courage” of St. Joseph, which “emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties.” “The carpenter of Nazareth,” explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence.” He had to deal with “the concrete problems” his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants.

In this sense, St. Joseph is “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.” As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot “be other than the guardian of the Church,” of her motherhood, and of the Body of Christ. “Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is ‘the child’ whom Joseph continues to protect.” From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, “we must learn... to love the Church and the poor” (5).



A father who teaches the value, dignity and joy of work

“A carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family,” St Joseph also teaches us “the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one’s own labour.” This aspect of Joseph’s character provides Pope Francis the opportunity to launch an appeal in favour of work, which has become “a burning social issue” even in countries with a certain level of well-being. “there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron,” the Pope writes.

Work, he says, “is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion.” Those who work, he explains, “are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us.” Pope Francis encourages everyone “to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new ‘normal’ from which no one is excluded.” Especially in light of rising unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope calls everyone to “review our priorities” and to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!” (6).



A father “in the shadows,” centred on Mary and Jesus

Taking a cue from *The Shadow of the Father* — a book by Polish writer Jan Dobraczyński — Pope Francis describes Joseph’s fatherhood of Jesus as “the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father.”

“Fathers are not born, but made,” says Pope Francis. “A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child.” Unfortunately, in today’s society, children “often seem orphans, lacking fathers” who are able to introduce them “to life and reality.” Children, the Pope says, need fathers who will not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be “capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities.”

This is the sense in which St Joseph is described as a “most chaste” father, which is the opposite of domineering possessiveness. Joseph, says Pope Francis, “knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus.”

Happiness for Joseph involved a true gift of self: “In him, we never see frustration, but only trust,” writes Pope Francis. “His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust.” Joseph stands out, therefore, as an exemplary figure for our time, in a world that “needs fathers,” and not “tyrants”; a society that “rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction.” True fathers, instead, “refuse to live the lives of their children for them,” and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that “he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes ‘useless,’ when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied.” Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, “has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a ‘sign’ pointing to a greater fatherhood”: that of the “heavenly Father” (7).

A daily prayer to St Joseph... and a challenge

In his letter, Pope Francis notes how, “Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds [Morning Prayer]” he has “recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary.” This prayer, he says, expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph,” on account of its closing words

“My beloved father, all my trust is in you.
Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain,
and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary,
show me that your goodness is as great as your power.”

SCRIPTURE

Good News Translation

1

**Matthew
1:18-20**

This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately.

While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins." Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel" (which means, "God is with us"). So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to. And Joseph named him Jesus.

2

Matthew 1:20-25

3

**Matthew
2:13-15**

After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave." Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod died. This was done to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "I called my Son out of Egypt."

4

Matthew 2:19-23

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel, because those who tried to kill the child are dead." So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Israel.

...Isn't he the carpenter's son?

5

Matthew 13:55

6

Luke:2:1-7

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. 5 He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, 6 and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. 7 She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger.

7

Luke2:1-7

The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: “Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord.” They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God: “Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,

and you may let your servant go in peace.

With my own eyes I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:

A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel.”

The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, “This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart.”

There was a very old prophet, a widow named Anna, daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple; day and night she worshiped God, fasting and praying. 38 That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.

When Joseph and Mary had finished doing all that was required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown of Nazareth in Galilee.

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. When the festival was over, they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this; they thought that he was with the group, so they traveled a whole day and then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him, so they went back to Jerusalem looking for him. On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers. His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you." He answered them, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand his answer. So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Suggested school activities

Launch the Year of St Joseph in school with the Mission Together Five Facts Assembly

<https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/feast-of-st-joseph/>

Follow the St Joseph's Week of Prayer from March 15 (same website)

Celebrate the liturgical prayer for his feast day on March 19. There is an Italian tradition of bringing food to a shared table on St Joseph's day and distributing this to the poor. Schools could adapt the tradition and collect for the local food bank.

Make prayer cards of the Year of St Joseph prayers to send to families and practitioners

Create a St Joseph display and share it on your website and the Diocesan Education website

Explore the many images of St Joseph in religious art

Write a school or class prayer for the Year of St Joseph

Write your own litany of St Joseph

Write a song to St Joseph

Invite families and parishioners to the monthly liturgical prayers virtually

Use the shared resources on the RE Coordinators SharePoint which will be updated regularly

Litany of St Joseph

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us. 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 Ghost,
have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God,
have mercy on us.

Holy Mary

St. Joseph

Illustrious son of David

Light of patriarchs

Spouse of the Mother of God

Chaste guardian of the Virgin

Foster father of the Son of God

Watchful defender of Christ

Head of the Holy Family

Joseph most just

Joseph most chaste

Joseph most prudent

Joseph most valiant

Joseph most obedient

**Pray
for us**

**Joseph most faithful
Mirror of patience
Lover of poverty
Model of workmen
Glory of home life
Guardian of virgins
Pillar of families
Solace of the afflicted
Hope of the sick
Patron of the dying
Terror of demons
Protector of 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!**

Let Us Pray

**O God, Who in Thine ineffable Providence
didst vouchsafe to choose Blessed
Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most holy
Mother, grant, we beseech Thee, that
he whom we venerate as our protector on
earth may be our intercessor in Heaven.
Who lives and reigns forever and ever.
Amen.**



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION