

HOLY HEARTS & HOMES

VOL. 2, NO. 3

Liturgical Living Newsletter

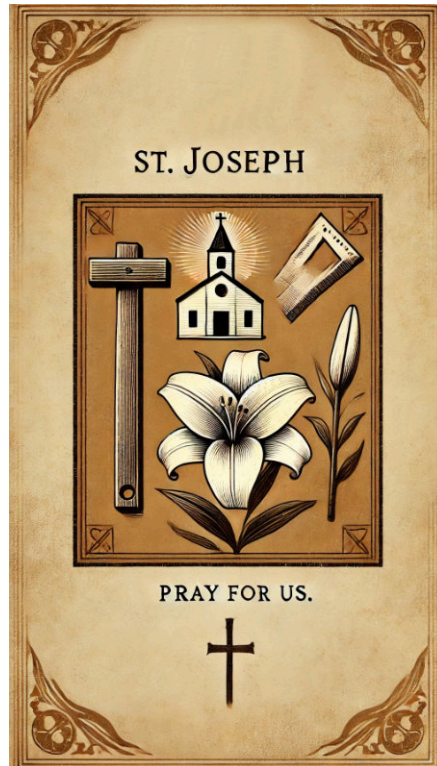
MARCH 2025

“Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.” Acts 4:32

MARCH: Month of *St. Joseph*

Pope's Intention: For families in crisis.

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.



Prayer to St. Joseph, Terror of Demons

St. Joseph, Terror of Demons, cast your solemn gaze upon the devil and all his minions, and protect us with your mighty staff. You fled through the night to avoid the devil's wicked designs; now with the power of God, smite the demons as they flee from you! Grant special protection, we pray, for children, fathers, families, and the dying. By God's grace, no demon dares approach while you are near, so we beg of you, always be near to us! Amen.

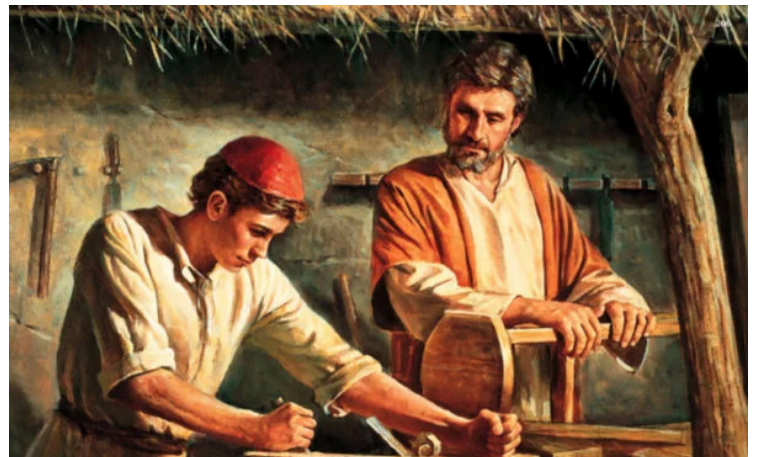
Some other prayers in honor of St. Joseph:

- The Litany of St. Joseph
- Novena for the Solemnity of St. Joseph (to be said March 10-18)

St. Joseph: Our Model of Faith, Humility, and Trust in God

St. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus and the husband of the Virgin Mary, is a central figure in Christianity known for his humility, faith, and obedience to God's will. Though little is written about him in the Bible, he is depicted as a just and righteous man who played a crucial role in the lives of Christ and Mary. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Joseph was a carpenter from Nazareth who was betrothed to Mary when he learned of her miraculous pregnancy. Instead of abandoning her, he accepted his divine mission after an angel assured him in a dream that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Joseph protected and provided for Jesus and Mary, leading them to Egypt to escape King Herod's massacre of infants and later settling in Nazareth, where he raised Jesus in the Jewish faith. He is believed to have passed away before Jesus's public ministry began, as he is not mentioned during Christ's crucifixion.

St. Joseph is honored as the patron saint of many causes, including fathers, workers, and the Universal Church. As a model of humility and diligence, he is particularly revered by laborers and craftsmen. Pope Pius IX declared him the patron of the Universal Catholic Church in 1870, recognizing his protective role over Jesus and Mary as symbolic of his continued guardianship over the Church. He is also invoked as the patron of a happy death because he is believed to have died in the presence of Jesus and Mary, a peaceful and blessed passing that many Christians aspire to. His feast day is celebrated on March 19th, and another feast, known as the



Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, is observed on May 1st, emphasizing his connection to laborers.

While the Seven Sorrows of Mary are well-known in Christian devotion, there are also the lesser-known Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph, which highlight both the struggles and consolations he experienced as the earthly father of Jesus. The Seven Sorrows are: (1) his distress upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, as he initially did not understand God's plan; (2) his sorrow at Jesus's birth in a poor stable, realizing the difficult conditions in which the Son of God entered the world; (3) the circumcision of Jesus, marking His first shedding of blood; (4) the pain of witnessing Simeon's prophecy that Jesus and Mary would suffer greatly; (5) the hardship of fleeing to Egypt to protect Jesus from King Herod; (6) the fear of returning to Israel, knowing Herod's successor still posed a threat; and (7) the agony of losing the young Jesus for three days in Jerusalem. The Seven Joys are: (1) the angel's message that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit; (2) the birth of the Savior and witnessing the adoration of the shepherds and Magi; (3) the privilege of giving the Christ child the Holy Name of Jesus; (4) the knowledge of the effects of Jesus's redemptive work as prophesied by Simeon; (5) the overthrowing of the idols of Egypt (Is. 19:1); (6) the return to Nazareth with Jesus and Mary; and (7) finding Jesus in the Temple, safe and teaching the elders.

Each of these trials and joys reflects Joseph's deep sense of responsibility and his unwavering faith in God's guidance. Despite facing uncertainty, danger, and sorrow, he remained obedient and steadfast, always trusting in Divine Providence. Joseph's life was filled with moments where his own understanding and plans had to be set aside so that he could follow God's will, even when it was difficult or unclear. His example reminds us that true humility is not about weakness, but about surrendering our own desires in favor of God's greater plan. Trusting in God does not mean we will be free from suffering, but like St. Joseph, we can endure hardships with faith, knowing that God is always guiding us. St. Joseph's silent strength, unwavering obedience, and deep devotion encourage us to embrace our own struggles with patience and trust, confident that every challenge has a purpose in God's divine design.

Celebrating the Feast of St. Joseph as a family is a wonderful way to honor his faith, humility, and service. Families can begin by attending Mass and praying together, whether through the Litany of St. Joseph or the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, reflecting on his role in Jesus's life. Setting up a home altar with an image of St. Joseph, candles, and lilies (symbolizing his purity) can serve as a focal point for devotion. A special meal known as the St. Joseph's Table is a meaningful tradition, featuring Lenten-friendly dishes such as fava beans (symbolizing survival) and breadcrumb-covered foods (representing his carpenter's sawdust). Acts of charity, such as donating food to the poor or volunteering, are also fitting ways to honor his legacy of service and protection.

Since St. Joseph is the patron of fathers, the feast is a great time to show appreciation for fathers, grandfathers, and godfathers. It is also an opportunity to honor priests, our spiritual fathers, by offering prayers for them, writing letters of appreciation, or preparing them small gifts or meals. Families can also consecrate themselves to St. Joseph, entrusting their home to his care. Hands-on activities like woodworking, coloring pages, or family discussions on St. Joseph's virtues can make the celebration more engaging, especially for children.

CONFESSION AND THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH

The Sacrament of Confession, also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, is one of the most powerful gifts of grace offered by the Catholic Church. When a person confesses their sins to a priest, who acts in the person of Christ, they experience the forgiveness of sins and the healing of their souls, restoring them to a state of grace with God. The Sacrament of Confession is a refuge not only for those in sin, but also for those who are still in the state of grace. It is a wellspring of grace which deepens the soul's union with God, fortifies virtue, strengthens against temptation, and fills the heart with His light. It is a profound reminder of God's infinite mercy and love, offering peace and healing to those who approach with a sincere heart.



Receiving the Sacrament of Confession is essential, particularly in light of our ultimate goal—attaining a happy death. St. Joseph, the patron of a happy death, is often invoked for a peaceful passing, as he is believed to have died in the loving presence of Jesus and Mary. Confession ties into this vision of a happy death, as it offers us the grace to reconcile with God and the Church before we face our final moments. By regularly receiving Confession, we can maintain a clear conscience, stay spiritually prepared, and cultivate a heart that is at peace with God, ready for the moment of death. Just as St. Joseph's life was marked by faithfulness and humility, Confession allows us to live in a constant state of readiness, ensuring that we are prepared to meet God with the grace and peace that come from Reconciliation.

Featured Saints of March



St. Katharine Drexel

Feast Day: March 3rd
Patron of: philanthropists and racial justice

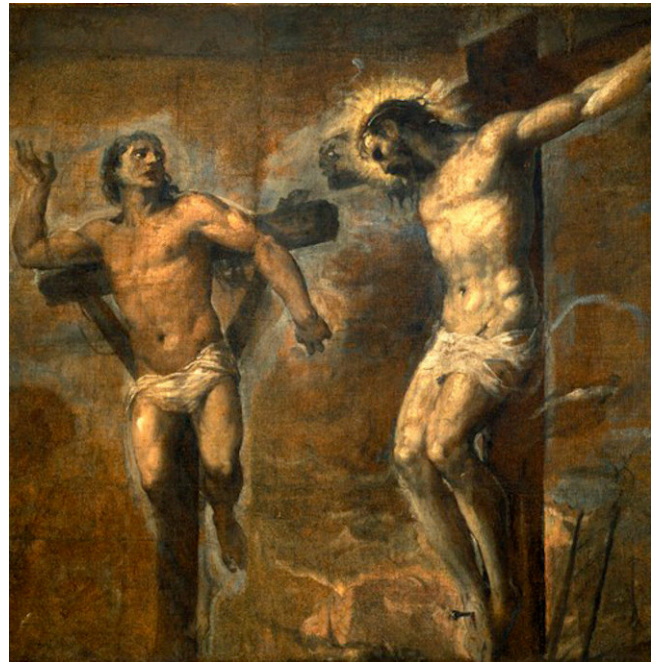
St. Katharine Drexel, an American heiress, dedicated her life to serving God and marginalized communities, particularly Native Americans and African Americans. Born into wealth in 1858, she was inspired by her stepmother's missionary support.

In 1887, while touring Europe, she and her sister Louisa met Pope Leo XIII, seeking missionaries for the Indian missions they funded. The Pope suggested Katharine become a missionary herself. After consulting her spiritual director, she decided to devote her life and inheritance to serving Native and African Americans, writing, "The feast of St. Joseph brought me the grace to give the remainder of my life to the Indians and the Colored."

With her inheritance, she founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in 1891, focusing on education and social justice. She established over 60 schools, including Xavier University of Louisiana, the first historically Black Catholic university in the U.S.

Her work was driven by deep faith and a commitment to justice. Canonized in 2000, she was recognized for her charitable efforts and dedication to equality. Her legacy continues to inspire service to the marginalized, showing how talents and resources can change the world.

Ways to honor her feast day: Donate to charities supporting education, Native or African American communities, or religious missions. Perform small acts of kindness, like helping someone in need or donating school supplies.



St. Dismas

Feast Day: March 25th
Patron of: prisoners, repentant thieves, and undertakers

The story of St. Dismas, known as the Good Thief, is a powerful testament to the grace of a happy death. Dismas was crucified alongside Jesus, and in his final moments, he acknowledged Christ's divinity and humbly asked, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). In an incredible act of mercy, Jesus responded, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Despite a life of sin, Dismas found salvation in his last breath, proving that no matter how late one turns to God, His mercy is always available.

This narrative reflects the essence of a happy death—not necessarily one without suffering or fear, but one marked by reconciliation with God. In Christian understanding, a happy death is characterized by repentance, forgiveness, and the hope of heaven. St. Dismas, by acknowledging his sins and turning to Christ in his last moments, exemplifies the peace and joy that can accompany death when one dies in grace. Through his example, we are reminded that no one is beyond redemption, and that our final moments can become a gateway to eternal joy. By following his example of humility and trust in Christ, we can grow in faith and recognize the ever-present invitation to God's grace.

Ways to honor his feast day: Pray for the conversion of sinners and God's mercy, especially through the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Since he is the patron of prisoners and the repentant, support prison ministry by donating, writing to inmates, or performing acts of kindness in the spirit of mercy and forgiveness.

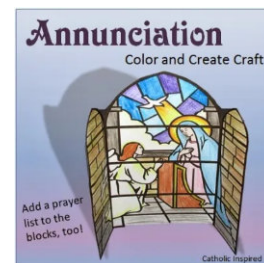
To help celebrate these and other saints throughout the year with your children, ShiningLightDolls.com offers many free downloads for coloring pages, crafts, games, & activities!

CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION



The Feast of the Annunciation, celebrated on March 25th, commemorates the angel Gabriel's announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive Jesus through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38). This feast highlights Mary's fiat—her joyful “yes” to God’s plan—and marks the moment of the Incarnation, when Jesus became flesh in her womb.

To celebrate, attend Mass, pray the Angelus, pray the Rosary (especially the Joyful Mysteries), and reflect on Mary's trust in God. Families can enjoy special meals, such as angel-shaped cookies or angel food cake, foods featuring white and blue to honor Mary, or waffles, which are a traditional Annunciation treat in some European countries. Try sweet waffles for breakfast or savory waffles for dinner! For kids, fun crafts include Annunciation coloring pages, angel paper crafts, or a “Mary’s Yes” scroll where they write ways they can say “yes” to God in their daily lives. The Catholic Inspired website has a great Annunciation “stained glass” coloring craft for kids.



SUGGESTED RESOURCES

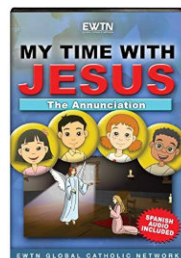
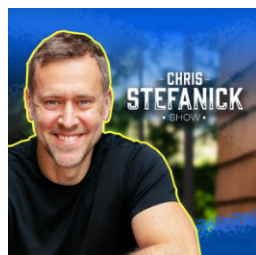


Books by Bob Schuchts (Age Group: Adult)

Bob Schuchts' books focus on healing and transformation through God's love, particularly in the areas of emotional wounds, relationships, and spiritual growth. Drawing from Scripture, personal experiences, and his work as a therapist, his writings guide readers toward deeper healing and intimacy with Jesus.

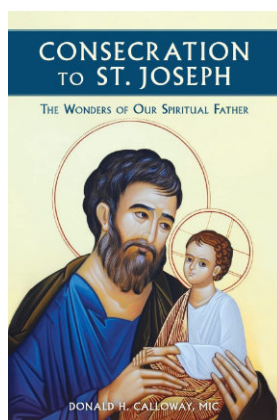
Podcast: *The Chris Stefanick Show* (Age Group: Adult)

A dynamic and engaging series that helps Catholics live out their faith with joy and conviction. Hosted by speaker and author Chris Stefanick, the show features inspiring interviews, practical advice, and real-life stories that encourage listeners to deepen their relationship with Jesus. With a mix of humor and heartfelt discussion, it tackles faith, culture, and everyday challenges in an accessible way.



My Time with Jesus: The Annunciation by EWTN (Age Group: Children)

My Time with Jesus is a children's series that teaches young viewers about the Catholic faith through engaging stories, animations, and lessons on prayer and the sacraments, helping kids grow in their love for Jesus by presenting Church teachings in a simple and relatable way. One episode covers the Annunciation, making it a perfect choice for children to watch in preparation for the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25th.



Consecration to St. Joseph by Fr. Donald H. Calloway (Age Group: Adult+)

A spiritual guide that invites readers to develop a deeper devotion to St. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. Modeled after Marian consecration, the book presents a 33-day preparation that includes reflections on St. Joseph's virtues, titles, and role in salvation history. Drawing from Scripture, the saints, and Church tradition, Fr. Calloway highlights St. Joseph's powerful intercession and protection. The book aims to help Catholics grow in holiness by imitating St. Joseph and entrusting themselves to his fatherly care.

Have a Liturgical Living idea? Contact: holyheartsandhomes@gmail.com

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