

HOLY HEARTS & HOMES

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Liturgical Living Newsletter

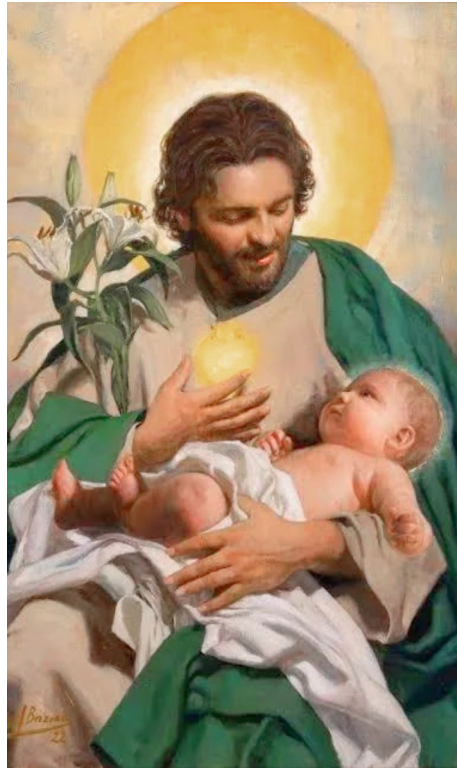
MAR. 2026

“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 *Saint Joseph*

Pope’s Intention: For discernment and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective discernment, particularly nuclear discernment, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.



Prayer Corner

Psalm 46

Verses 1-3 & 9-11

God’s Defense of His City & People

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though
the earth should change, though
the mountains shake in the heart of
the sea; though its waters roar and
foam, though the mountains
tremble with its tumult . . . He
makes wars cease to the end of the
earth; He breaks the bow, and
shatters the spear; He burns the
shields with fire. “Be still, and know
that I am God! I am exalted among
the nations, I am exalted in the
earth.” The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

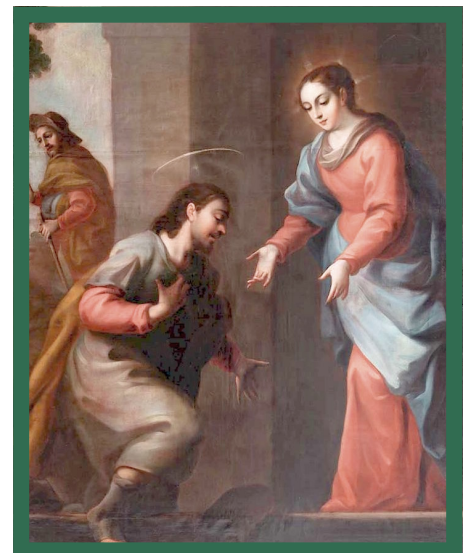
Finding Forgiveness and Peace Amidst Life’s Trials

Life brings with it a wide range of wounds. Some are small and personal — a disagreement with a friend, a harsh word from a spouse, a misunderstanding that lingers longer than it should. Others cut more deeply — betrayal, injustice, or being wronged in a way that seems impossible to undo. And then there are the great sorrows: the loss of a loved one, a frightening diagnosis, financial hardship, or upheaval that changes everything we thought was secure.

In every circumstance, the human heart longs for peace. Yet peace is rarely found by replaying arguments in our minds or clinging to resentment. It is found in forgiveness, surrender, and trust — even when forgiveness feels undeserved and trust feels risky.

One of the most powerful examples of this quiet strength is St. Joseph. Though Scripture records no spoken words from him, his life speaks volumes. Joseph’s story was marked not by comfort, but by trials that required extraordinary faith. He was betrothed to Mary when he discovered she was with child — a moment that must have caused confusion, sorrow, and anguish. Before he understood God’s plan, Joseph was already wrestling with heartbreak. Yet instead of reacting in anger or humiliation, he chose mercy. Even in his uncertainty, he resolved not to expose Mary to shame.

When the angel revealed the truth — that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit — Joseph did not hesitate. He surrendered his expectations and embraced God’s will. That first trial teaches us something essential: forgiveness and peace begin with humility. Joseph did not cling to pride or demand explanations. He trusted that God was at work beyond what he could see.





But the trials did not stop there. Soon after Jesus was born, Joseph learned of King Herod's deadly plot. The order to slaughter the Holy Innocents was one of the most horrific acts of violence recorded in the Gospels. Families were torn apart. Mothers wept. Innocent lives were taken out of hatred and fear. Joseph had to gather Mary and the Christ Child in the night and flee to Egypt, becoming a refugee in a foreign land. Imagine the fear that must have gripped his heart! Imagine the sorrow he felt for the families who lost their children and the anger he could have harbored toward Herod for such cruelty and for the disruption forced upon his young family.

Yet, Joseph's response was not one of bitterness, but rather of obedience and trust. He protected his family. He worked. He waited. He hoped. Joseph likely struggled in his humanity — he was not immune to fear or grief — but he did not allow those emotions to turn into hatred. Instead, he entrusted

justice to God and chose peace in the midst of chaos.

This is where his example becomes deeply personal for us. When someone offends us, our instinct may be to replay the offense, defend ourselves internally, or even retaliate. When we are wronged in a serious way, forgiveness can feel like surrendering justice. And when we suffer great loss, anger may rise: anger at others, at circumstances, even at God.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending the hurt did not happen, or approving of wrongdoing. Forgiveness means releasing our grip on resentment so that it does not poison our own hearts. It means trusting that God sees beyond what we see, and that He is capable of bringing justice and healing in ways we cannot. Without this forgiveness, we cannot find true peace. St. Joseph teaches us that true peace is not the absence of trials, but instead is the presence of trust.

In disagreements, we can ask: Am I clinging to being right more than to being reconciled? In being offended, we can ask: Is this wound worth sacrificing my interior peace? In being deeply wronged, we can ask: Can I entrust this injustice to God? Joseph entrusted even the terror of Herod's violence to Divine Providence, and absorbed hardship without allowing it to define him.

Through life's greatest sorrows — the death of a loved one, a shattered dream, a season of uncertainty — Joseph reminds us that God is still present. The Holy Family's exile in Egypt was not a detour outside of God's plan; it was part of it. The same is true in our own lives. God wastes nothing — not even grief. Forgiveness and peace are not one-time decisions. They are daily choices. They are quiet acts of surrender: choosing not to rehearse the offense again, choosing to pray for the one who hurt us, choosing to believe that God can bring good even from devastation.

St. Joseph's life was hidden, humble, and filled with trials. Yet he became the guardian of the Redeemer and the protector of the Church because he trusted God in every storm. He did not demand clarity before obedience. He did not demand comfort before faith. He walked forward, step by step, even when the path led through fear and exile. In our own trials — whether small misunderstandings or overwhelming loss — we are invited to do the same. To forgive. To trust. To surrender.

Peace is not found in controlling circumstances. It is found in placing them, like Joseph did, into the hands of God. And in His hands, even the deepest wounds can begin to heal.

Hidden for a Time: Veiling Images and Statues in Lent



During Passiontide (the final two weeks of Lent), many Catholic churches veil their statues, crucifixes, and sacred images in purple cloth. At first glance, it can feel surprising — beloved images suddenly hidden from view. Yet this ancient practice carries deep spiritual meaning. The custom became widespread in the Middle Ages as a way to intensify the Church's preparation for Holy Week. Purple, the color of Lent, represents penance and mourning. By covering sacred images, the Church creates a visible sense of absence. What is normally a source of comfort is temporarily hidden. This absence awakens longing and reminds us that we are entering more deeply into Christ's Passion. There is also a scriptural echo. In John 8:59, after speaking boldly about His identity, Jesus "hid Himself" from the crowd. The veiling

reflects this movement toward His suffering and death. As Christ prepares to offer Himself, the Church symbolically enters into that solemn mystery. The starkness of covered statues serves as a visual reminder that something is different. The simplicity prepares our hearts for the dramatic joy of Easter, when the images are unveiled and the Resurrection is celebrated in light and glory.

This tradition can also be lived in the "domestic churches" of our homes. Veiling a crucifix or holy image during the final two weeks of Lent creates a noticeable shift in the atmosphere. It prompts reflection, sparks conversation, and gently calls us back to prayer. In the midst of busy routines, the hidden images remind us that we are nearing Good Friday.

When Easter arrives and the images are unveiled, the joy feels greater precisely because of the temporary absence. The beauty was not gone — it was waiting. In this way, veiling teaches us a profound truth: through sacrifice and hiddenness comes resurrection and glory.



Featured Saints of March



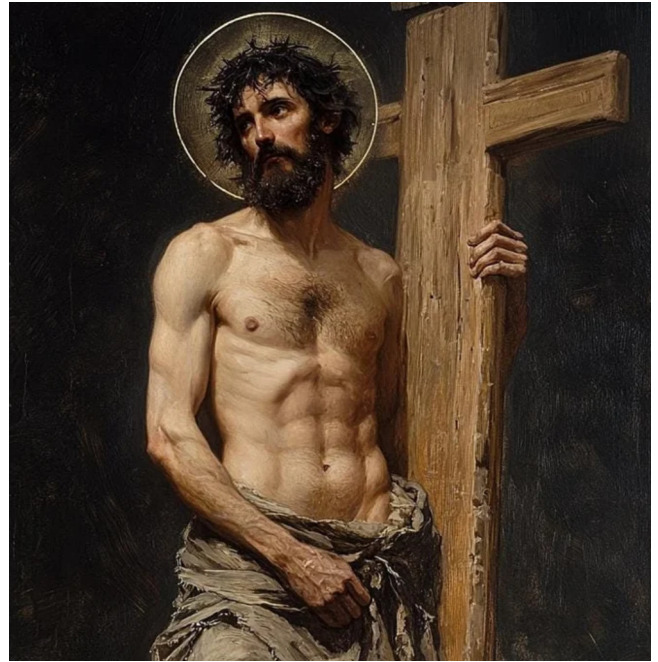
St. Catherine of Sweden

Feast Day: March 24th
Patron of: women who have suffered a miscarriage or abortion

Saint Catherine of Sweden (1331-1381), also known as St. Catherine of Vadstena, was the daughter of St. Bridget of Sweden and grew up in a deeply devout noble family. Married at a young age, she and her husband mutually chose to live in continence, dedicating their marriage to God. After her husband's death, Catherine joined her mother in Rome, assisting her in works of charity, pilgrimage, and the promotion of her spiritual revelations. She became her mother's faithful companion and supporter, helping lay the foundation for what would become the Bridgettine Order.

Following St. Bridget's death, Catherine returned to Sweden and became abbess of the Abbey of Vadstena, guiding the community with wisdom, prayer, and fidelity during a time of turmoil in the Church. She was known for her purity, devotion to the Passion of Christ, and steadfast loyalty to her vocation. A pious legend holds that her mother nearly lost her during pregnancy but, through prayer, Catherine was preserved — a tradition that later led to her being invoked as a patroness of women suffering miscarriage and those seeking healing after abortion. Though never formally canonized through the standard papal process, she has long been venerated as a saint, remembered for her quiet strength, filial devotion, and perseverance in holiness.

Ways to celebrate: pray for daughters, mothers, and those discerning marriage or religious life; read about the Bridgettine Order; incorporate a simple Swedish-inspired meal or baked treat in honor of her homeland.



St. Dismas

Feast Day: March 25th
Patron of: prisoners (especially those condemned to death), funeral directors, and repentant thieves

Saint Dismas, known as the "Good Thief," was the repentant criminal crucified beside Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke, while the other thief mocked Christ, Dismas acknowledged his own guilt and defended Jesus, saying, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus responded with extraordinary mercy: "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Several legends attempt to fill in the hidden years of his life. One ancient tradition claims that Dismas was part of a band of robbers who encountered the Holy Family during their flight into Egypt. According to this story — which is pious legend, not historical fact — Dismas prevented his companions from harming Mary and Joseph and the Child Jesus, showing mercy that foreshadowed his later repentance. Other traditions suggest he may have lived a life of crime born from poverty and hardship, though the Gospels remain silent on his early life.

Over time, devotion to him grew, especially among prisoners and those seeking repentance at the end of life. He is honored as the patron saint of prisoners, the dying, and all who feel beyond hope. His life reminds us that it is never too late to turn to Jesus with trust and humility.

Ways to celebrate: pray for prisoners, offer acts of mercy, go to Confession, or meditate on Christ's Passion, especially the Gospel account of the Crucifixion.

CATHOLIC CRAFT IDEAS

Resurrection Garden Holy Week Craft: Fill a shallow dish, small pot, or disposable aluminum pan with soil. Form a small mound on one side and place a small cup or hollowed-out section into the mound to represent the tomb. Lay a flat stone in front to serve as the rolling stone. Use small twigs and twine to create three crosses beside the tomb. Sprinkle grass seed over the soil a day or so before Holy Week begins, then place in a warm or sunny location so it will begin to sprout by Easter.



Use the garden as a prayer focal point. On Good Friday, reflect near the crosses. On Holy Saturday, leave the tomb closed and spend a moment in quiet. On Easter Sunday, roll the stone away and place a small white cloth or figure of the risen Christ near the empty tomb.

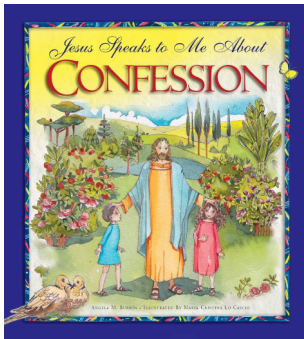
SUGGESTED RESOURCES



Holy Saturday: An Animation by Full of Eyes

This animated reflection on Holy Saturday visually explores the silence and mystery between Christ's death and Resurrection,

helping viewers enter the stillness of this unique day in the liturgical year. Scan the QR code to watch.



Jesus Speaks to Me About Confession by Angela Burrin

A gentle, Scripture-based introduction to the Sacrament of Reconciliation written especially for children. The book draws heavily from the Bible, highlighting prefigurements of confession throughout salvation history and helping young readers see how God's mercy has always been part of His plan. It also includes an age-appropriate examination of conscience

for kids, making it an excellent resource for First Confession preparation and helping children approach the sacrament with understanding, confidence, and peace.



Examination of Conscience: A Complete Guide by Focus.org

A helpful online resource that brings together a variety of Catholic examinations of conscience to aid believers in preparing

for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The list includes reflections tailored to different focuses — such as Catholic Social Teaching, Christian duties, virtues, and different states of life like singles, married couples, parents, and seniors — allowing people to choose the versions that help them reflect most deeply on their thoughts, actions, and relationship with God before going to confession.

Project Rachel

A Catholic ministry of healing and hope for those who have been affected by abortion. Offered through dioceses

across the country, it provides confidential support, counseling referrals, and spiritual guidance for women and men who are seeking forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation with God. Through compassionate care, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and ongoing accompaniment, Project Rachel reminds those who are hurting that God's mercy is greater than any sin and that healing is always possible.

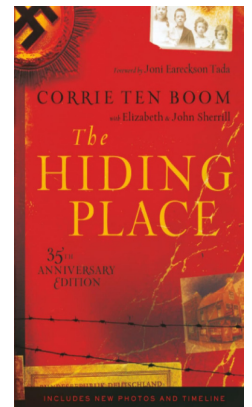


project rachel



The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom

A powerful true story of faith, courage, and forgiveness during one of history's darkest times. Corrie and her family, devout Christians in Nazi-occupied Holland, risked their lives to hide Jewish refugees in a secret room of their home — “the hiding place.” After being discovered and sent to concentration camps, Corrie witnessed both profound suffering and the sustaining power of God's presence. Her story is a moving testimony to trusting Christ in hardship and choosing forgiveness even after unimaginable injustice.



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