

December 27, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

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One hundred fifty years ago, December 8, 1870, Blessed Pope Pius IX Solemnly declared Saint Joseph to be the patron of the universal church. Now, 150 years later, Pope Francis seized the opportunity to declare a year dedicated to Saint Joseph. The year lasts from December 8, 2020 through December 8, 2021. I hope you get a chance to read *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis' decree inaugurating this special year. It will inform and inspire with St. Joseph's virtues, and his role in the lives of Jesus and Mary. I was particularly moved by the description of Saint Joseph as the shadow of the Heavenly Father in Jesus life:

*The Polish writer Jan Dobraczyński, in his book *The Shadow of the Father*, tells the story of Saint Joseph's life in the form of a novel. He uses the evocative image of a shadow to define Joseph. In his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father: he watched over him and protected him, never leaving him to go his own way. We can think of Moses' words to Israel: "In the wilderness... you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as one carries a child, all the way that you travelled" (Deut 1:31). In a similar way, Joseph acted as a father for his whole life (Patris Corde, 7).*

There are opportunities to gain plenary indulgences throughout this special year. In addition to the normal conditions (receiving sacramental Confession and Holy Communion, praying for the intentions of the Holy Father, and being detached from all sin), one can perform the following works:

- Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the our father, or take part in a Spiritual Retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph.
- The indulgence can also be obtained by those who, following St. Joseph's example, will perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy.
- Everyone who entrusts their daily activity to the protection of St. Joseph, and every faithful who invokes the intercession of St. Joseph so that those seeking work can find dignifying work can also obtain the plenary indulgence. On 1 May 1955, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, "with the intent that the dignity of work be recognized by all, and that it inspires social life and laws, based on the fair distribution of rights and duties."
- The plenary indulgence is also granted to the faithful who will recite the Litany to St. Joseph, or any other prayer to St. Joseph proper to the other liturgical traditions, for the persecuted Church *ad intra* and *ad extra*, and for the relief of all Christians suffering all forms of persecution. Because, the decree notes, "the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt shows us that God is there where man is in danger, where man suffers, where he runs away, where he experiences rejection and abandonment."
- Recite any legitimately approved prayer or act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, for example, "To you, O blessed Joseph" especially on "March 19th, on May 1st, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, on the 19th of each month and every Wednesday, a day dedicated to the memory of the Saint according to the Latin tradition."
- Amid the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis, the gift of the plenary indulgence is also extended to the

sick, the elderly, the dying and all those who for legitimate reasons are unable to leave their homes. They too can obtain the plenary indulgences if they are detached from any sin and have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions and recite an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, offering to God the pains and hardships of their lives.

A Blessed Solemnity of Mary the Mother God, and a Blessed New Year to you!

In cordibus Iesu et Mariae,

Father Poggemeyer