



Year of St. Joseph

Dear Parish Family,

It is striking how Pope Francis highlights in the figure of Saint Joseph his paternity. “With the heart of a father, so Joseph loved Jesus” (Patris Corde, 1), is the beginning of the Apostolic Letter with which he proclaimed an entire year dedicated to St. Joseph in the Church, with special blessings and indulgences. In his brief Letter, the Pope goes through the different aspects of his fatherhood: a beloved Father, a tender and loving Father, an obedient Father, an accepting Father, a creatively courageous Father, a working Father, and a Father in the shadows.

With this he has touched upon a sore spot: the absence of the father in our society is one of the greatest difficulties of our time. A society without a father. A family without a father. A certain feminism has cornered him, and the father has symbolically evaporated. What remains of him is a minor and unhappy figure: a peer of the children, and domestic collaborator of the mother of his children. No one would be surprised that if Our Lord were to tell the parable of the Prodigal Son today, perhaps he would more likely speak of the father who left home because he could not find himself. Are not the children of today the ones who see their father leaving home?

Yes, a year dedicated to St. Joseph can help us to reconstruct the symbolic figure of what it means to be a father, to beget as a father. Because the father is, it is true, the one who opens a future to the child, who accompanies him or her in it. But he can do so because he reminds the child of the greatness of his or her origin, and the greatness of the hope in which he or she was conceived. A hope that is not only human but is the hope of the Father, with a capital “F”, the One who is the Source of all fatherhood.

This year it is fathers who are called to play a special role in the celebration of the Year of St. Joseph, with which we celebrate the 150th anniversary of his proclamation as Patron of the Church. For this reason, we will propose various activities in the parish so that you may rediscover the greatness of your vocation, with the confidence that you, fathers, will know how to encourage one another in following some of these proposals. Of course, everybody is invited to participate in these prayerful activities.

- Praying a family Rosary in the church, with the mysteries of St. Joseph, once a week at a time that suits your family, during the month before the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19th. After the Rosary, the parents can design a creative activity to do together as a family. This Rosary has a plenary indulgence, and you can apply it to the deceased members of your family.
- Reading the Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos*, on St. Joseph, by Pope John Paul II (see the box at left), or the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* by Pope Francis, or one of the books that we have available for you in the Gift Shop.
- Participating in the triduum of preparation for the Solemnity of St. Joseph, which will take place on March 16, 17 and 18 at 7:00 pm in the parish.
- Participating in the Solemn Mass of St. Joseph on Friday, March 19 at 7:00 pm.
- Placing in your home an image of St. Joseph, several are available in the Anna Martin Gift Shop.
- Participating in the Mass dedicated to St. Joseph the Worker on May 1st, followed by the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Yes, God gave to St. Joseph the care of his family so that he would watch over Mary’s Son as a father. Joseph gave himself to his family with a singular gift of himself. And now we ask him to take care of our families, the small domestic church, so that in them fathers may reveal the Father to their children, opening a future for them, and accompanying them on their way.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Noriega".

Fr. José Noriega, DCJM
Pastor