

## The Year of St. Joseph

Pope Francis has proclaimed a special “Year of St. Joseph.” It began on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2020 and lasts until the same feast on December 8, 2021. This recognition is in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St. Joseph as a Patron of the Universal Church. In his Apostolic Letter, *Patris corde* (With a Father’s Heart), Pope Francis describes St. Joseph as “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence” playing “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

Written in the throes of the pandemic, Pope Francis said this period of global uncertainty has helped us see the importance of “ordinary” people, far from the

spotlight, exercising patience and offering hope every day. In his observation, he said these people resemble St. Joseph, doing the work of God the Father without question or complaint.

Marking observations such as the Year of St. Joseph at home with your family gives you a common thread to support your Catholic faith and create new traditions to share. The Apostolic Penitentiary issued a decree granting special indulgences for the duration of the Year of St. Joseph.

This allows all of the faithful the opportunity through plenary indulgence to commit themselves “with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St. Joseph,



head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today.”

The plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the Pope’s intentions) to Christians who wish to participate in the Year of St. Joseph as indicated by the Apostolic Penitentiary:

- The plenary indulgence is granted to those who will meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord’s Prayer or take part in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph. “St. Joseph, an authentic man of faith, invites us”, the decree reads, “to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God’s will.”
- The indulgence can also be obtained by those who, following St. Joseph’s example, will perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy. St. Joseph “encourages us to rediscover the value of silence, prudence and loyalty in carrying out our duties,” the decree notes.
- The recitation of the Holy Rosary in families and among engaged couples is another way of obtaining indulgences, so “all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same

atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family.”

- 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 “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.”

The feast day of St. Joseph is March 19. With his feast day in mind, you and your family can honor the husband of Mary and the earthly father of Jesus as you together pray to him for help in your daily lives. NCEA has resources for the [Year of St. Joseph](#) on the website.

