

ASCENDING LIFE-CANADA

Spiritual Resource Journal - March/April 2015

ST JOSEPH

PATRON SAINT OF CANADA

St Joseph, declared in 1870 by Pope Pius IX as the Patron Saint and protector of the Universal Church, is also the Patron Saint of the Americas, China, Croatia, Mexico, Korea, Austria, Belgium, Peru, the Philippines, Vietnam.

St Joseph is venerated and referred to in the year 800 as “nutritor Domini” (educator/guardian of the Lord), reflecting the status of St Joseph as patron of workers, Christian teachings and stress his qualities of patience, persistence, courage and hard work.

MARCH, THE MONTH OF ST JOSEPH

PRAYER

Glorious St Joseph, pattern of all who are devoted to toil, obtain for me the grace to toil, in the spirit of penance, in order to thereby atone for my many sins.

Pope Pius X

GOSPEL: Matthew 1.16, 18-21.24a

REFLECTION

Joseph, a conscientious observer of the Mosaic Law, wrestling with a moral dilemma of having a pregnant Mary as his betrothed, planned to spare Mary and her family from shame. Joseph having a deep faith in God, faced with a difficult decision, listening to and acting on God's word instead of obeying Mosaic Law—making him righteous. Throughout the Gospels, Saint Joseph remains silent, but his actions speak louder than words. He lives his life in service to Christ and the Blessed Mother, in perfect conformity to the will of God. Joseph a man of strength, chivalry, generosity, and tenderness, gave himself up in tender fatherhood to his given son, Jesus throughout his childhood, youth and into his adulthood. In doing so, St Joseph teaches us by his quiet example to be not afraid, to embrace difficulties and give of ourselves generously, trusting that God will bring us to a deeper and broader joy and serenity.

Let us ask St Joseph to pray for us, so that we too may live the lives that God wills us to live.

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

Saint Joseph: be always our protector, that your internal spirit of peace, silence, honest work, and prayer in the service of the Church give us life and happiness in union with your blessed Spouse, our Sweet and Immaculate Mother, in the strong and mild love to Jesus, Glorious and Immortal King of the centuries and the people. Amen

Pope John XXIII

Thought for the Month of March

God wants to “add” to each of us. He gave to Joseph, a life giving encounter with Jesus Christ, which is our true salvation. Because God treasures our free will, he invites us to accept Christ, to follow Him and to obey Him.

Let us respond, as did St Joseph to this invitation to make us instruments of His peace and presence to others!

LAETARE “REJOYCE” SUNDAY

**We are invited to see and to hear the melody of God’s Love.
With hope and love, we keep on singing.**

Brenda Merk Kildebrand

GOSPEL 3:14-21

LOOKING, LISTENING, LEARNING

Nicodemus looks at things he does not understand and seeks out Jesus, voices his questions and learns that Jesus is always ready to teach about the endlessness of God’s love, generosity and mercy.

May His love inspire and strengthen us for all eternity.

Let us rejoice in that love as we pause in our Lenten Journey to celebrate this Good News!

REFLECTION

Nicodemus comes to Jesus in the darkness of night, which hides evil and death and emerges in the light of Jesus, whose death gives an abundance of life eternally. The light bringing the “Good News”, that Jesus did not come to condemn the sinning world, but that the world might be saved by his death on the Cross.

Jesus invites us to come out of the darkness of hiding and sin and into the light of God’s love.

*Let us consider the choices we make, do we remain in the gloom of night,
or will we choose to come into the light of goodness, truth and faith?*

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

- 1. What is my image of God? Do I have trouble believing that God loves all the peoples of the world, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or way of life? In what way do I have difficulty believing that God loves me, regardless of my past or present sinfulness?**
- 2. How can I help others I meet to come into the light of faith, step by step, each day?**

FAITH IN ACTION

Revisit your Baptism. Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the people who brought you to baptism and for those he sent to journey with you in your Christian Life.

HYMN

**Softly, tenderly, Jesus is calling/calling you and me
See in the portals, he is waiting and watching/watching you and me.
O for the wonderful love he promised for you and me.
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon/pardon for you and me.
Come home/come home.**

PRAYER

God, Father of Infinite mercy, you do not consider our faults and failings, but reach out to us and to all people with compassion and love. Through the cross of your beloved Son, help us to recognize your gift and your victory, and to respond with faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Let us on this journey through Lent, balancing the realities of our human condition to sin, with God’s
*unlimited mercy through actions that lead us to and keep us in the Light of Jesus.***

April 2015

PALM SUNDAY
THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST
Truly, this Was the Son of God
Mark 14:1-15:47

Jesus faces the full impact of his humanity, as well as experiencing the questioning that is at the heart of every believer. He is overwhelmed!

Yet he continues to journey on his path in hope and in ultimate trust in his Father, who has been with him throughout his life and who will continue to be with him, no matter what the cost.

May we too be willing to have hope and trust when despair seems to overwhelm us!

THE MISSION OF JESUS

The proclamation of the Good News that God's reign is here and that the evil one will be defeated.

REFLECTION

The death of Jesus surprisingly, activates awareness, insight and hope from others such as the centurion, a Gentile and supposedly a non-believer, who proclaim with certainty that "truly this man was the Son of God".

Simon the Cyrene, the model disciple for Mark is willing to carry the cross for Jesus, the same discipleship that demands all to take up the challenge to follow Jesus. We too must take up the cross and walk whatever path is demanded of us, for example, serious illness or the death of a loved one. We too must be willing to have trust and hope, even when despair seems to overwhelm. We too must be willing to believe, even when we do not understand why something is happening.

Can we trust God to be faithful, to be attentive to our cry and to act on our behalf to accomplish nothing but good? Jesus walked the path before us. Do we dare to follow?

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. How does Mark's portrayal of Jesus model how we are to deal with our own suffering? How does the model fit our image of God and how God relates to us in our suffering?

THOUGHT TO PONDER

How are we connected to the cross? Are we linked to the cross only remotely or we intimately united with the cross and the healing salvation brought by Jesus?

INVITATION TO ACT

1. Pray the Stations of the Cross as a group. Allow your follow-up discussion to focus on God's presence and activity in the midst of suffering.
2. Consider uniting your suffering with the source of healing- the cross, and starting a ritual to touch your fingers to the cross and pray that uniting your pains with those of Christ will be a redemptive Holy Communion.

PRAYER

Loving and faithful Jesus, we thank you for the generous gift of self you have so willingly and totally sacrificed for us. You have modeled what it means to be truly human, accepting all that human living entails, even death. In plumbing the fullness of death, you continually trusted in your Father, relying on his love and fidelity. Help us to develop that same trust in God, to grow in the virtue of hope. Be with us as we face the constant deaths of daily existence, as well as when we plumb the fullness of our own death. Be our constant companion and guide. Lead us to continued life united with the Father and the Spirit.

We ask in continual trust and confidence, now and forever. Amen