YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH
DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE
ADORE.          OBEY.          SERVE.
AUGUST 2020 - MAY 2021
As we enter the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, I too would like to “go to Joseph” by inaugurating a Year of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Lafayette, beginning August 16, 2020 and concluding May 1, 2021. It is my desire that in the difficult times we find ourselves today, we might go to St. Joseph for his help and protection and learn from his example how to become better disciples.

St. Joseph is a man of deep prayer. In addition to his liturgical and family prayer, Joseph is a model of personal prayer. His complete surrender to the will of God in silence can only be explained from a deep interior life. In this Year of St. Joseph, we go to Joseph to learn commitment to daily personal and family prayer.

St. Joseph is a “doer of the word” (cf. James 1:23). No words of Joseph are recorded in the Bible. We are simply told that Joseph heard, rose, and did what God asked. The way of Joseph is the way of listening in prayer and doing in action. During the Year of St. Joseph, let us go to Joseph and learn how to surrender ourselves to God’s loving plan for us. Let us, like him, listen attentively in prayer and then with God’s grace rise and become doers of the word.

St. Joseph is the provider for the Holy Family. The Son of God labored alongside St. Joseph with hammer and chisel. In such fashion work was redeemed and its dignity elevated. With confidence then we can go to Joseph for help in finding work to obtain an honest living. Like St. Joseph let us spend time with our young, teaching them how to work, and giving them an appreciation for its redemptive value.

It is my fervent hope that during this Year of St. Joseph every Catholic in the Diocese of Lafayette may fervently and confidently “Go to Joseph” for his intercession, his protection, and his example.

With every good wish, I am
Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel
Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.
Bishop of Lafayette
As almighty God appointed Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, over all the land of Egypt to save grain for the people, so when the fullness of time had come and he was about to send to earth his only-begotten Son, the Savior of the world, he chose another Joseph, of whom the first had been the type, and he made him the lord and chief of his household and possessions, the guardian of his choicest treasures.

Indeed, he had as his spouse the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom was born by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord, who deigned to be reputed in the sight of men as the son of Joseph, and was subject to him.

Him whom countless kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw but conversed with, and embraced in paternal affection, and kissed. He most diligently reared him whom the faithful were to receive as the bread that came down from heaven whereby they might obtain eternal life.

Because of this sublime dignity which God conferred on his most faithful servant, the Church has always most highly honored and praised blessed Joseph next to his spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble.

Accordingly, our Most Holy Sovereign, Pope Pius IX, in order to entrust himself and all the faithful to the Patriarch St. Joseph’s most powerful patronage, has solemnly declared him Patron of the Catholic Church.

On December 8, 1870, the Sacred Congregation of Rites promulgated the above decree, which communicated the decision of Pope Pius IX to declare St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church.
WHY ST. JOSEPH?

In the Gospel of Luke, we encounter the person of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and a wealthy man (19:1-10). As Jesus passes through Jericho, Zacchaeus tries to catch sight of him. The only problem is that there’s a large crowd surrounding Christ and Zacchaeus is short in stature. His diminutive size doesn’t stop him, though. He runs ahead of the crowd and climbs a sycamore tree. Now he can see Jesus, and Jesus can see him. Zacchaeus needed a leg up, and he found it in the sycamore.

As Christians, we find a “leg up” in lots of different places. Our ultimate help is God, but he provides lots of other helps, too: the help of the Word, the help of the sacraments, the help of our fellow disciples, and, one that we sometimes overlook, the help of the saints.

Why the saints?

On the feast days of saints, the Church reminds us: “By their way of life, Father, you offer us an example, by communion with them you give us companionship, by their intercession, sure support” (Roman Missal). The saints give us a leg up by being our models, helpers, and friends.

Models

By the example of their holiness, the saints remind us that sanctity is possible for everyone. Holiness is not reserved to a select few but is the task of every Christian.

Helpers

These holy friends are frequently invoked for assistance. The Church declares that we rely on the saints’ constant intercession in God’s presence for unfailing help. St. Therese proclaims, “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth.”

Friends

The saints are companions. Alive in Christ, this great cloud of witnesses stands ready to get to know us, to be in conversation with us, to challenge, support, and console us.

St. JOSEPH occupies a special place among the saints.

In the Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Feast of St. Joseph, the Church recalls how St. Joseph watched over the beginnings of the mysteries of human salvation in the life of Christ. Christ wills to repeat those very same mysteries in our lives. In us, Christ wills to be born, to die, to rise, and to ascend to the Father’s right hand. St. Joseph, who faithfully cared for the beginnings of these mysteries, faithfully cares for us as these mysteries are perpetuated in our hearts, homes, and communities.

During this year, we as a diocese resolve to go to Joseph, whose witness, friendship, and intercession will help us attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13). O guardian of Jesus, be our guardian, too!
ADORATION is the natural expression of one’s poverty before God. As Christ once told Catherine of Siena, “You are she who is not and I am He who is.” Indeed, the one who fashioned the cosmos, whose inner thoughts are revealed in the grandeur of nature, whose vast providence guides history, whose personal love knows every hair on the head of his children - that one is worthy of all honor. We are because of He who is.

However, this majestic God, always evident in creation, was not fully evident as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To reveal what was once concealed required the advent of Christ. Yet not to the powerful did the God-man manifest himself, but rather to Joseph of Galilee.

Indeed, under the hidden nature of dreams and a birth under the dark of night, the brilliance of this once-hidden God was gifted to Joseph. Joseph’s response was adoration.

One doesn’t have to look far to grasp this great truth. The one who “knitted me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13) was known first by Joseph in the womb of Mary. Before mortal eye was laid on the Son in the madness of the crowds, Joseph looked upon his redeemer in the sanctuary of his home. Before the lepers were cleansed, the new wine drunk, or the woman at the well satisfied, it was Joseph whose soul first drank from the wellspring of life. For this reason, Joseph is the model of the virtue of religion, that act by which man gives proper honor to God.

Thus, we “go to Joseph” not primarily for his own sake but precisely so that he may bring us to adore his Son. Before his public ministry, Joseph guards and protects Christ, but it is now no longer his mission to keep Christ hidden. The adoration he enjoyed in Nazareth is to be shared by us all. May we not miss out on this great gift.

**Put Into Practice**

† Attend Mass and Holy Hour on First Wednesdays

† Make a pilgrimage to one of the St. Joseph parishes (See page 10-11)

† Pray the Litany of St. Joseph (See page 9)

“In this Year of St. Joseph, we go to Joseph to learn commitment to daily personal and family prayer.”

– Bishop Deshotel
Humility is the foundation of our spiritual lives and the prerequisite for obedience. Contrary to popular understanding, however, humility is not thinking less of oneself, but rather a true estimation of who you are: God's very good creation. A soul that is not humble is a soul that is not in line with this truth. Joseph, the “righteous man” who acts “quietly” (Mt 1:19) and boasts no recorded word in the New Testament, is a model of humility. St. Joseph’s humility is rooted in his awareness of who he is before God; this self-awareness overflows into his deeds, especially his obedience.

Indeed, that which we do flows from who we are. In prayer, God gave order to Joseph's soul, and this interior harmony naturally flowed into the outward observance of God's will when it was manifested. Four times Joseph encounters God's will in dreams.

Four times Joseph hears invitations: “rise”, “take”, “flee” and “be not afraid.” And with little explanation, Joseph humbly obeys these unfathomable commands.

Joseph’s four dreams and his four acts of obedience reveal his vocation as something communicated and given, not fashioned by himself. Humility prepared Joseph to hear and to receive that which was revealed by his Lord. In the same ordinary way, we must be ready to receive our vocation, too.

As Christians, we are each called to holiness in a particular state of life, whether that be marriage, consecrated life, or holy orders. These calls are most often revealed through the ordinary. Unlike Mary’s unmistakable meeting or the glory of the Lord shining around the shepherds (Lk 2:9), Joseph’s prompts were less grand and more commonplace. In fact, God interacted with Joseph while he slept—the most common of human activities. Joseph’s experience is not far from our own. Indeed, God chooses to work through intermediaries—creation, people, sacraments and inspirations. It is the humble, listening, and obedient person who is disposed to recognize, listen, and finally act upon God’s will. May God imbue us with these very same dispositions in answering his call and in living out our vocations.

“During the Year of St. Joseph, let us go to Joseph and learn how to surrender ourselves to God’s loving plan for us. Let us, like him, listen attentively in prayer and then with God’s grace rise and become doers of the word.”

– Bishop Deshotel

Put Into Practice

+ Attend a Parish Mission (See page 10-11).
+ Discern your vocation. Pray for vocations.
In the opening pages of the Bible - the opening pages of the human story - man was established as a worker. Genesis 2:15 records that man was “settled” in the garden “to cultivate and care for it.” Though man is a part of God’s creation, he was placed over it and given responsibility for it. This unique vocation of man is integral to God’s design - albeit, a design which precedes the fall from grace and the toil which Original Sin brings to human activity. Nevertheless, man’s work remains valuable and man himself remains a worker.

St. Joseph was certainly a worker (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). In silence and integrity Joseph labored by the sweat of his brow. That said, it is not by mere exertion that his work was profitable. Rather, “St. Joseph’s sanctification of work derives from his contemplative attitude” (Marie-Dominique Philippe, The Mystery of Joseph, 51).

Labor, whether intellectual or manual, that is fixated on sheer production for human glory remains on the human level. Joseph’s work is different; it transcended the material because it was done not for its own sake but in light of God’s will, in a spirit of sincerity, humility and detachment. In this way, Joseph reveals the authentic value of work.

Yet Joseph did not work alone. Alongside his son, Joseph is able to participate in Jesus’ transformation of human labor. That which was distorted by man is remade by Jesus and becomes not just an act of creation but of redemption. Accordingly, the extent to which we offer and unite the toil of our work to Christ’s dying and rising, that is the extent to which we participate in Christ’s act of redemption. In this great mystery, Joseph, who works for Christ and with Christ, is our model. Where he went first, we are called to follow.

We are all invited to sanctify our work for and with Christ. Exercising the mind and body for the good, “work is an expression of man’s full humanity” (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 263). May we then be fully human, working for the things of earth, and also sowing for the Spirit (Gal 6:8).

Through contemplation and prayer, Joseph directed all his work to God and in this way made his work a pleasing sacrifice.

Put Into Practice

Pray to St. Joseph before and after work.
Participate in a St. Joseph Work Day at your parish.
Support the works of Christ through the Bishop’s Services Appeal.

“The Son of God labored alongside St. Joseph with hammer and chisel. In such fashion work was redeemed and its dignity elevated. With confidence then we can go to Joseph for help in finding work to obtain an honest living. Like St. Joseph let us spend time with our young, teaching them how to work, and giving them an appreciation for its redemptive value.”

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INDULGENCES for the Year of St. Joseph

On January 21 and April 16, 2020, Bishop Deshotel petitioned the Apostolic Penitentiary to grant a **Plenary Indulgence to those who visit any of the 13 churches in the Diocese of Lafayette dedicated to St. Joseph.** This request is awaiting final approval.

In the meantime, the faithful are encouraged to avail themselves of ordinary means for obtaining a plenary indulgence, including adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for at least one half hour, the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, recitation of the Marian rosary, or the devout reading or listening to the Sacred Scriptures for at least one half hour (Manual of Indulgences). These works assume the fulfillment of the other requirements for receiving a plenary indulgence (see “What are the requirements for receiving the Year of St. Joseph plenary indulgence” in the column to the left.)

**What is an indulgence?**

The Church defines an indulgence as “a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”

**Remission of temporal punishment due already forgiven sins?**

The above definition distinguishes between two effects of sin – guilt and punishment. When we sin, we bring upon ourselves guilt, because we have knowingly and freely committed an act against God’s will, and punishment, because our sins offend God and destroy or weaken our relationship with him. In his death and resurrection Jesus Christ once and for all forgives our guilt and pays our punishment. While the punishment due our sins has been paid once and for all by Christ, he desires us to cooperate with him in paying that punishment. This cooperation can occur through indulgences. In God’s plan, we receive these once-and-for-all gifts of Christ through his Body, the Church. The Church does not act without Christ, and Christ has chosen not to act without the Church.

**What are the requirements for receiving the Year of St. Joseph Plenary Indulgence?**

1. Visit one of the St. Joseph churches in our diocese (see pages 10-11).
2. Be baptized and in a state of grace
3. Have the general intention of gaining the indulgence
4. Receive Holy Communion, on the same day if possible
5. Worthily receive the Sacrament of Confession within 20 days (before or after) of performing the indulgenced act, although preferably immediately before or after
6. Manifest his/her communion with the Church by praying for the Pope’s intentions with (1) the Apostles Creed, (2) the “Our Father,” one “Hail Mary.”
7. Be free from all attachments to sin, including venial sin

**For whom may an indulgence be offered?**

Indulgences may be applied to oneself or to another deceased person, but not to another still alive.
PRAYERS  to St. Joseph

Prayer to St. Joseph
To you, O blessed Joseph, we turn in our affliction, and with hearts filled with confidence, we place ourselves under your protection. By that charity with which you were united to the Virgin Mary, and by that fatherly love with which you cherished the Child Jesus, we beseech you, and humbly pray that you would look graciously upon the Church, born from the wounds of Christ, and help us in our need. Defend, O watchful Guardian, these chosen brothers and sisters of Christ. Keep from us, O loving Father, all error and corruption. Help us, O brave man of justice, to resist the powers of darkness. And even as of old you rescued the Child Jesus from threats upon His life, so now defend His Holy Church from the snare of all our enemies and from the deadly power of sin. Shelter us in your care, that, following your example and strengthened by your help, we may live a holy life, enjoy a happy death, and attain at last the everlasting joy of Heaven. Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph for the Family & the Home
Saint Joseph, protect our home. Pour forth from heaven blessings on our family. Remain in our midst. Help us to live in love and harmony, in peace and joy. May the wholesome fear of God strengthen us that virtue may adorn what we do and our way may lead to heaven. To you this day I give the key to our dwelling place. Lock out all things that could do us harm. Lock my home and my loved ones with me in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. This I beg of you, that our days may be like your days in the holy home at Nazareth. Amen.

Litany to St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, hear us.  
Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.  
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.  
God, the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.  
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.  
Holy Mary, pray for us.  
Saint Joseph, pray for us.

“Pray for us” follows each title invocation:

Illustrious son of David, Light of Patriarchs, Spouse of the Mother of God, Chaste guardian of the Virgin, Foster-father of the Son of God, Watchful defender of Christ, Head of the Holy Family,

Joseph most just, Joseph most chaste, Joseph most prudent, Joseph most valiant, Joseph most obedient, Joseph most faithful,

Mirror of patience, Lover of poverty, Model of all who labor, Glory of family life, Guardian of virgins, Pillar of families, Solace of the afflicted, Hope of the sick, Patron of the dying, Terror of demons, Protector of the Church, pray for us.

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord. Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord. Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

V. He made him lord over his house,  
R. And the ruler of all his possessions.

Let us pray.

O God, who in your ineffable providence chose blessed Joseph to be the spouse of your most holy Mother, grant that we may merit to have as our advocate in heaven him whom we revere as our protector on earth. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.
St. Joseph Church | Broussard
By Appointment
337-837-6318

St. Joseph Church | Cecilia
By Appointment
337-667-6344

St. Joseph Church | Centerville
By Appointment
Mission: Feb. 11, 2021, 6p
337-836-5659

St. Joseph Church | Maurice
TH-F 3:30p-6p
337-893-5428

St. Joseph Church | Milton
M-F 7a-5p
Mission: Nov. 4, 2020, 5:30p
337-856-5997

St. Joseph Church | Parks
By Appointment
Mission: March 19, 2021, 6p
337-845-4168

St. Joseph Church | Plaisance
By Appointment
337-826-3395

St. Joseph Church | Rayne
M-TH 8a-4p; F 8a-12p
Mission: Jan. 14, 2021, 6p
337-334-2193

St. Joseph Church | Ville Platte
By Appointment
Mission: Aug. 22, 2020, 6p
337-363-2989

PILGRIMAGE

Thirteen churches in the Diocese of Lafayette are dedicated to St. Joseph.
In the **Year of St. Joseph**, the faithful are encouraged to **Pilgrimage** to one of the St. Joseph churches to receive a plenary indulgence (following “What are the requirements to receive the Year of St. Joseph plenary indulgence?” on page 8). Use each church site’s special St. Joseph stamp (below) to mark the progress on your pilgrimage.
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