



Year of St. Joseph: What Catholics Need to Know

On December 10, 2020 Pope Francis announced a Year of St. Joseph, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church. Pope Francis said the coronavirus pandemic has heightened his desire to reflect on St. Joseph, as so many people during the pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as St. Joseph quietly protected and cared for Mary and Jesus. He also said he wanted to highlight St. Joseph's role as a father who served his family with charity and humility, adding, "Our world today needs fathers". The year began Dec. 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec. 8, 2021. Special indulgences during the Year of St. Joseph can be received through fifteen different prayers and actions, including praying for the unemployed, entrusting one's daily work to St. Joseph, performing a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, or meditating for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer. The ways to gain an indulgence in the year of St. Joseph are:

- 1) Participate in a spiritual retreat for at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph.
- 2) Pray for St. Joseph's intercession for the unemployed that they might find dignifying work.
- 3) Recite the Litany of St. Joseph for persecuted Christians.
- 4) Entrust one's daily work and activity to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker.
- 5) Follow St. Joseph's example in performing a corporal work of mercy. These include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the imprisoned, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.
- 6) Perform one of the spiritual works of mercy, such as comforting the sorrowful, counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries, and praying for the living and the dead.
- 7) Pray the rosary together with one's family in order that "all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family."
- 8) Engaged couples can also receive an indulgence from praying the rosary together.
- 9) Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, because St. Joseph "invites us to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God's will."
- 10) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on St. Joseph Sunday, the Sunday after Christmas in the Byzantine Catholic tradition.
- 11) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph on March 19 with an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph.
- 12) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on the 19th of any month.
- 13) Honor Joseph with an act of piety or approved prayer on a Wednesday, the day traditionally dedicated to St. Joseph.
- 14) Pray to St. Joseph on the Feast of the Holy Family on Dec. 27.
- 15) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 with an act of piety or prayer.

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On December 10, 2020 Pope Francis announced a Year of St. Joseph, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church. He said he was establishing the year so that "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will." In making his declaration, Pope Francis noted that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1870. Pope Francis said the coronavirus pandemic has heightened his desire to reflect on St. Joseph, as so many

people during the pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as St. Joseph quietly protected and cared for Mary and Jesus. He also said he wanted to highlight St. Joseph's role as a father who served his family with charity and humility, adding, "Our world today needs fathers."

The year began Dec. 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec. 8, 2021. As Catholics pray and reflect on the life of St. Joseph throughout the coming year, they also have opportunities to gain a plenary indulgence, or remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. An indulgence can be applied to oneself or to a soul in Purgatory.

An indulgence requires a specific act, defined by the Church, as well as sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayer for the pope's intentions, and full detachment from sin.

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