

# Year of St Joseph

8 December 2020 - 8 December 2021



*In every difficulty  
apply to Joseph  
and you will never  
be disappointed*

Mary MacKillop (1906)



Statue of Saint Joseph presented to Saint Mary MacKillop by Pope Pius IX during her visit to Rome in 1873 and following the declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church



## An invitation to reflect

These prayers and reflections have been developed around the seven values at the heart of St Joseph's life identified by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter entitled "Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart)". They provide us with an opportunity to pause and reflect on St Joseph's life and to give thanks for his life and witness.

St Joseph's life is largely hidden from historical records. What is told of this man, however, highlights the importance of faithful listening to God's word spoken in the ordinary experiences of one's life and the need to respond with generosity and courage.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph pray you may be blessed with these values in abundance as you walk through the experiences of your life.

**Sr Monica Cavanagh**  
Congregational Leader

*St Joseph holding Jesus,  
Mission Bay Chapel,  
New Zealand*



# St Joseph - Deeply Loved

Today let us pray for all those parents and guardians who, with selfless love, commit their lives to protect, nurture and educate their families.

*In St Joseph's care I leave you.* Mary MacKillop (1873)

"(Joseph) employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work. He turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman (gift) of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home." Pope Francis

... 'Joseph's is a unique gift. Given the family structure of his day, only he could correspond with the invitation of God to "legitimise" the birth of Jesus and to provide the context in which the Word could be enfleshed'.

Mary Cresp rsj, *In the Spirit of Joseph*, p.10

**How does the spirit of Joseph encourage and support you in your living today?**

Mary MacKillop encourages us to

***'Apply to St Joseph with confidence in every difficulty and you will not be disappointed'*** Mary MacKillop (1906)

## Prayer

**Joseph, Beloved Father, you faced the numerous crises in your life with courage and resilience.**

**Be with parents and guardians as they deal with the challenges of raising families today.**

**Help us as we respond, each according to our own capacity.**

**Amen**

*St Joseph with Jesus, St Joseph's Convent, Goulburn*

*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*

# St Joseph – Tender and Loving

**“Listen! God’s call at this time is to be audacious ... raising our consciousness of love.”**

SOSJ General Chapter 2019

**With St Joseph as our guide, may we commit to loving tenderly and consciously, to being selfless and intentional in our relationships with the cosmos and with all people, especially those “excluded and made vulnerable.”**

SOSJ General Chapter 2019

“In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God. ... In the synagogue, during the praying of the Psalms, Joseph would surely have heard again and again that the God of Israel is a God of tender love who is good to all, whose ‘compassion is over all that he has made’ (*Psalm 145:9*).” Pope Francis

***Let us ask Joseph to obtain for us a generous devoted love for Jesus, a love that will make us like himself ... A love that, ... will make us delight in serving him in His poor, and His neglected little ones. ... And this love of Christ cannot exist in our hearts without enabling us to live in perfect charity and love.***

Mary MacKillop (1893)

**How do I show love for God’s creation and for God’s ‘neglected little ones’?**

**When have I experienced or provided tender loving?**

**In what ways does St Joseph inspire me to love and tenderness?**

## Prayer

**May the tender love with which Joseph embraced Jesus and Mary become a reality in our lives.**

**May it renew and support us in raising our consciousness of love through our respect for all creation and our loving concern for every person.**

**Amen**



*St Joseph with Jesus, Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney*

*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*

*St Joseph, Tender and Loving – pray for us*

# St Joseph - the Obedient One

**Pope Francis tells us that “Obedience made it possible for (Joseph) to surmount his difficulties...”**

Obedience involves listening and requires trust and confidence in God – the courage to do the will of God. Although being obedient can be challenging, Joseph was able to live out the will of God. As Pope Francis wrote: “Joseph did not hesitate to obey, regardless of the hardship involved ...”

***We see in St Joseph, a perfect mirror of confidence in God – a wonderful, unbounded confidence in our good God.***

Mary MacKillop (1893)

**Obedience requires us to listen, engage and be responsive to God. Joseph listened and responded to God’s voice spoken through angels in his dreams.**

**When and where do you hear God speaking in your life?**

**How can you have the obedience to live out God’s will in your life?**

***In silence, let us engage with God... “listen to the whisperings of God in your heart.”*** Mary MacKillop (1868)

**What is God telling you? What can you learn from Joseph in how to obediently respond to God?**

**Prayer**

**We pray like Joseph, “to hold ourselves in readiness for God’s will, whichever way things go.”** Mary MacKillop (1867)

**May we be blessed with patience, trust and courage to be obedient to our good God, as we use our gifts in the service of God’s mission.**

**Amen**

*St Joseph with Jesus, North Sydney*

*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, Tender and Loving – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Obedient One – pray for us*

# St Joseph - the Accepting One

Joseph's lived experience of God's love led him to accept very difficult situations. Relationships, rather than the letter of the law guided him in making loving and courageous decisions.

"The nobility of Joseph's heart is such that what he learned from the law, he made dependent on charity. The spiritual path that he traces for us is not one that explains but accepts." Pope Francis

***Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them bravely, remembering whom you are trying to follow.*** Mary MacKillop (1909)

Imitating Joseph's discerning heart, and his tender care of Mary and Jesus, we will open ourselves to a new tenderness among ourselves and in our relationships.

## Prayer

Joseph we honour you;  
 In your unconditional love  
 and protection of Mary...  
 In your courageous trust  
 in God's provident care...  
 In your silent listening to the  
 whisperings of God in your heart...  
 In your acceptance of the  
 mysterious action of God in your life  
 In your nurturing love  
 for Mary and Jesus...  
 In your fatherly instruction of Jesus  
 in the ways of wisdom, love, mercy  
 and forgiveness.

Amen



*St Joseph, Mt St Joseph Whanganui, Aotearoa New Zealand*

*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, Tender and Loving – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Obedient One – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Accepting One – pray for us*

# St Joseph - the Creative and Courageous Believer and Guide

In this year of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis reminds us that 'God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan.'

God trusted Joseph to be creative and courageous to find solutions to protect Jesus and Mary his Mother. Jesus and Mary are the very definition of vulnerable and marginalised, they represent the 'least of us'. By protecting the Son and his Mother, Joseph was instrumental in the resurrection, his faith made him courageous enough to bring what he had and use it creatively.

'Let's face the crises affecting people, other species and Earth itself at this time with compassion and urgency.'

SOSJ General Chapter 2019

**May God grant you courage and wisdom in all you do and say.** Mary MacKillop (1875)

Courage challenges us to stretch ourselves to acknowledge our fears and to be undeterred from offering something that goes beyond our own immediate needs and comforts.

**How are you going to develop the strength to respond constructively and creatively to whatever life throws at you?**

**When you consider the poor and needy, the suffering and dying, the stranger, the prisoner - what do you see, feel or realise? Is there something more or different that can be done? Are you challenged to develop the determination to do it, and then carry through despite all obstacles?**

**Prayer**

**Through the example of Joseph,  
May we grow in courage  
and determination to help**

**The stranger**

**The poor and needy**

**The suffering and the dying.**

**Amen**

*St Joseph with Torah, St Francis' Church, Melbourne*



*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, Tender and Loving – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Obedient One – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Accepting One – pray for us*

*St Joseph, the Creative and Courageous Believer and Guide - pray for us*



# St Joseph - the Worker, Providing for All

**In this year of Saint Joseph we are reminded that 'Work is a means of participating in the work of salvation,...to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society....'** Pope Francis

Through Joseph, Jesus learnt the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to earn an honest living and to provide for his family. The troubles of our times from economic to spiritual, one is a call for all of us to realise the value of 'what we have and what we bring' and to work together and review our priorities.

'The presence of God does not consist of thinking of Him, but in a sense of His presence in every occupation.'

Julian Tenison Woods (1877)

Joseph instilled strength which gave order, peace and courage that help others complete their work.

**How do you exemplify fortitude in your life and work?**

**How does your faith in God assist you in your daily life?**

**Where can you assist others through your abilities?**



## Prayer

**Joseph guide us in our work.**

**Encourage our efforts to create a just, kind and inclusive society.**

**May we be open and respond freely and joyously to the urgings of your Spirit in our everyday lives.**

**Amen**

*St Joseph the Worker, North Sydney*



*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, Tender and Loving – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Obedient One – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Accepting One – pray for us*

*St Joseph, the Creative and Courageous Believer and Guide - pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Worker – Providing for all – pray for us*

# St Joseph - in the Shadows

Today let us pray for all those men and women who during this pandemic are serving in the shadows like Joseph to protect, care, heal and support the vulnerable.

Throughout Jesus' life he was constantly aware of the nurturing, protective and loving presence of Abba, Father. Joseph became for Jesus this earthly presence and so is often spoken of as 'Father in the Shadows.' Today he becomes a wonderful inspiration for all those men and women who generously 'take on the responsibility for the life of another' as if they were the parents.

## Pope Francis spoke of Joseph as a man of deep love.

'The logic of love is always the logic of freedom, and Joseph knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus.

Joseph found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift.

His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust.

## Joseph recognised the truth expressed by Pope Francis.

"Every child is the bearer of a unique mystery that can only be brought to light with the help of a father (mother, caregiver) who respects that child's freedom."

***'Joseph's noble heart never faltered, never was deterred by the most trying obstacles'***

Mary MacKillop (1893)

**In what ways does the witness of Joseph who ministered in the shadows challenge you to reflect the Presence of Love and the gift of self?**

## Prayer

Joseph, we turn in prayer to you.

Enable us to heed God's call to raise 'our consciousness of love and to seek new possibilities wherever we are that will heal, include and untether.'

Gift us with humility of heart and the wisdom of silence.

Amen

*St Joseph with Jesus, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide*

*St Joseph, Deeply Loved – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, Tender and Loving – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Obedient One – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Accepting One – pray for us*

*St Joseph, the Creative and Courageous Believer and Guide - pray for us*  
*St Joseph, the Worker – Providing for all – pray for us*  
*St Joseph, in the Shadows – pray for us*

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### Quotations and Extracts taken from:

Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart) Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the 150th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, 8 December 2020.

27th General Chapter Statement of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Fr Julian Tenison Woods, Book of Instructions, Archives of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Saint Mary MacKillop, Various Letters, Archives of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

### Images:

Photographs of Statues from across the Congregation:

- Pg 1 - St Joseph presented to Saint Mary MacKillop by Pope Pius IX during her visit to Rome in 1873 and following the declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, now in North Sydney, NSW
- Pg 3 - St Joseph holding Jesus, Mission Bay Chapel, Aotearoa New Zealand
- Pg 4 - St Joseph with Jesus, St Joseph's Convent, Goulburn, NSW
- Pg 5 - St Joseph with Jesus, Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, NSW
- Pg 6 - St Joseph with Jesus, North Sydney, NSW
- Pg 7 - St Joseph, Mt St Joseph Whanganui, Aotearoa New Zealand
- Pg 8 - St Joseph with Torah, St Francis' Church, Melbourne, VIC
- Pg 9 - St Joseph the worker, North Sydney, NSW
- Pg 10 - St Joseph with Jesus, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide



Sisters of Saint Joseph  
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