



St. Joseph

In Brief:

“If we really believe, we will pray to God every day. It will be important to pray to Jesus, speak to Him, ask for His help. We

will enjoy and be fed by meditating on His mysteries. We will do what He said and have a spirit of self-sacrifice. Our priorities will be to seek, listen, struggle, search, find, do, go beyond the commonplace...If we are unwilling to go beyond our elementary level of faith, it will begin to slip away, and it will become easy to accept this and reject that.”

-The Virtue Driven Life
Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R.

Sacred Scripture:

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

St. Paul said, “Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith.”
(Hebrews 12:1-2).

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH: **FAITH**

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

“Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that He has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because He is truth itself. By faith ‘man freely commits his entire self to God.’ For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God’s will. ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ Living faith ‘works through charity’” (CCC 1814)

Note: Theological means that this gift comes from God and leads us back to God.

What is this virtue?

Faith is a gift from God that enables us to believe the truths revealed by Him about Himself that are contained in Sacred Tradition (the teachings handed on from Christ) and Sacred Scripture. We could never know these truths about God on our own, since they transcend the power of human reason. We receive the supernatural gift of faith in Baptism.

- Faith is a grace, a power which enables us to believe and accept the truth. Faith is a supernatural virtue infused by God into the soul.
- Faith involves our willingness to cooperate with what God asks; it is not a blind leap but does involve taking “risks”, stepping out in trust to follow God’s will while always keeping our eyes on Christ.
- Believing is possible only by God’s grace and is a free human act.
- We believe in God because what He has revealed is the Truth.
- We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is Himself God.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit because He is God.
- Faith is always in accordance with reason since it is God who infuses faith into the soul and bestows the light of reason on the human mind.
- We cannot understand all that we are called to believe. However, “faith seeks understanding” to know and love God in a deeper way.

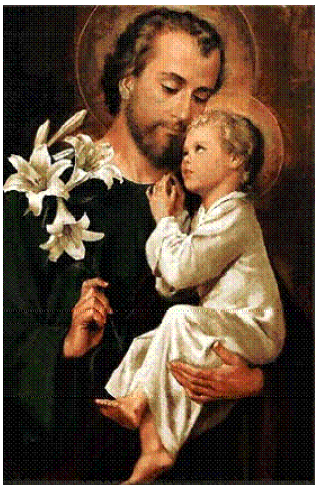
Why do we need the virtue of faith?

- Faith makes us capable of living as God’s children and of inheriting eternal life. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Rom 11:6).
- Faith disposes us to live in relationship with Jesus Christ. Christ is the only One who can save us; we need to cling to Him by faith.
- Faith indicates the right moral behavior to be a disciple of Christ.
- Through faith, we recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- Faith makes us living members of the Catholic Church.
- Faith is a constant and firm support, even in the most difficult times.
- Faith helps us to know the existence of God’s mercy.
- Faith enables us to see Christ in those around us, above all, the poor.
- When we need the gift of faith, the most important thing we can do is ask for it: “The Lord hears the cry of the poor” (Psalm 34:6).

Saint Joseph

“He set himself to protect with a mighty love and a daily solicitude his spouse and the Divine Infant; regularly by his work he earned what was necessary for the one and the other for nourishment and clothing; he guarded from death the Child threatened by a monarch’s jealousy, and found for Him a refuge; in the miseries of the journey and in the bitternesses of exile he was ever the companion, the assistance, and the upholder of the Virgin and of Jesus.”

Venerable Pope Leo XIII
QUAMQUAM PLURIES
 ENCYCLICAL OF
 POPE LEO XIII
 ON DEVOTION TO
 SAINT JOSEPH



FAST FACTS

Also Known As:

Chaste Spouse of Mary
 Foster-father of Jesus
 Patron Saint of Carpenters
 Joseph the Worker
 Patron of the Universal Church
 Patron of a Happy Death

Feast Day:

March 19
 May 1 (Joseph the Workman)

His Life

- Joseph was a just man.
- Joseph descended from the royal lineage of David.
- Joseph was betrothed to Mary – they did not live together but were already bound by the Jewish laws of marriage.
- An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him about the child Mary was carrying. The angel told Joseph to complete the legal wedding rite and to assume legal paternity and name the child, Jesus.
- Joseph traveled with Mary to Bethlehem to be enrolled for a census.
- Joseph was told in a dream to flee with Jesus and Mary into Egypt.
- Another angel told Joseph when it was safe to travel back to his home.
- In a fourth dream Joseph was guided by an angel to settle in Nazareth.
- Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple.
- Joseph searched for Jesus when Jesus was 12 years old after Jesus stayed behind to be in His Father’s house during a visit to the Holy City.
- Joseph was a carpenter and he taught his trade to Jesus.
- Joseph was a man of humble means. When Jesus was circumcised, Joseph’s sacrifice at the Temple was two turtledoves. This was allowed for those who could not afford to sacrifice a lamb.
- Joseph took his family to Jerusalem every year for the Passover. This was difficult for a working man.

How is Joseph a model of Faith?

- He had a total openness to God’s will in his life.
- He was obedient to whatever God asked of him.
- He believed that God spoke to him through an angel on at least four occasions.
- He accepted the responsibility to protect the virginity of Mary and to guard the Redeemer with unquestioning faith in God’s commands.
- Tradition tells us that he died in the presence of Jesus and Mary, and therefore is the patron of a happy death.

Practices to foster the growth of this virtue:

Please Note: There are two understandings of “faith”-- faith *by which* we believe: the power to believe that faith is a gift from God and the Faith *which* we believe: those truths which we believe expressed in the Creed.

- Pray the Act of Faith each morning.
Act of Faith
O my God, I firmly believe that Thou are one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that thy Divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou has revealed them, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.
Amen.
- Ask the Lord what act of faith He would like you to make.
- Make acts of faith. For example: Tell Jesus in your prayer that you believe that He is the Son of God. Recite the Apostles’ and Nicene Creed with awareness and belief.
- Name some people from the Bible or Saints who lived by faith.
- Read a book about a Saint and report to the class how this person lived out their faith in God.
- As a class, read about a saint and together discuss how this person lived out their faith in God.
- Why is Abraham called “the father of all who believe”? (See Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] Paragraphs 145-147).
- How does Mary model for us the obedience of faith? (See CCC 148-149).
- Using the “Praying with Scripture” (*Lectio Divina*) prayer worksheet, take ten minutes to pray with a Scripture passage.
Luke 1:26-38 Mary said yes to God to be the Mother of the Savior
Matthew 1:18-25 An angel appears to Joseph telling him that Mary has conceived a Son.
Matthew 2:1-15 An angel appears to Joseph warning him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt.
Matthew 2:19-23 An angel appears to Joseph telling him to return to Nazareth.
Luke 8:22-25 Jesus asked the Apostles in calming the storm: “Where is your faith?”
Mark 5:21-43 Jesus said to the woman that He healed: “Daughter, your faith has saved you.”
Matthew 9:1-8 Jesus healed the paralytic due the faith of his friends.
Matthew 9:27-31 Jesus healed two blind men due to their faith.
John 20:19-29 Thomas would not believe that Jesus was alive until he could see for himself.
- Each week, memorize a Scripture passage that relates to faith.
- Think of someone who is ‘faith-filled.’ What does this person say or do that indicates that he/she is full of faith?
- How would someone know you are a person of faith and that you put your faith into action?
- Our faith assures us of life after death. What does that mean and what determines your final end?
- What shakes our faith?
- Discuss how the first Commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it. (See CCC 2086-2087)
- Pose the question for discussion: How do we grow in faith? (See CCC 94, 162)
- Pose the question for discussion: How do we lose faith? (See CCC 164, 2087-2088)
- Explain what it means to have a “firm faith.”

- Explain what it means to have “complete faith.”
- What is the Mystery of Faith?
- What are the effects of faith? (See Index in the Catechism of the Catholic Church under the listing – Faith.
- True greatness comes from doing the will of God. Name one action that you have done or are doing to follow God’s will.
- Prayer to Saint Joseph:

Prayer to St. Joseph the Worker

O Glorious St. Joseph, model of all those who are devoted to labor, obtain for me the grace to work conscientiously, putting the call of duty above my selfish interests, to work with gratitude and joy, considering it an honor to employ and develop by means of labor the gifts received from God, to work with order, peace, moderation, and patience, without shrinking from weariness and difficulties, to work above all with purity of intention and detachment from self, as Jesus worked at Nazareth under the direction of your guidance and skill. All for Jesus, all through Mary, all after your example, O Patriarch, St. Joseph. Amen

- Read a Scripture passage on faith. Re-read the passage and pick a word or phrase that stood out for you.

Ephesians 2:1-10	We are saved through faith by grace; it is not from us, but is a gift from God.
Hebrews 11:1-39	We are given the Hall of Fame about those people of the Old Testament who lived by faith.
Col 1:21-23	We must be steadfast in our faith.
1 Timothy 6:11-12	We must strive to sustain and live our faith.
James 2:14-26	Faith must be living and active, and manifest itself in works of charity.

“Faith apart from works is dead.” James 2:26.

Additional Resources:

Pre-School through Third Grade

- *Book of Saints, Super Heroes of God, Part 8*, Lovaski, Father Lawrence, S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp, 1993.
- *Little Book of Saints, Volume 1*, Muldoon, Kathleen M., Pauline Books and Media
- *Teach Me About Saints, discussions and activities for young children*, Plum, Paul S. and Joam E, Odell, Catherine M., Our Sunday Visitor, www.osv.com or (800) 348-2440.
- *Glory Stories, Volume III: From an Angel in a Dream, The Story of Saint Joseph*, with workbook, Catholic World Mission, www.catholicworldmission.org or (203) 287-6314.

Fourth Grade through Eighth Grade

- *Saints for Young Readers for Every Day, Volume 2*, Wallace, Susan Helen, Pauline Books and Media, 1995 (1 page)
- *Glory Stories, Volume III: From an Angel in a Dream, The Story of Saint Joseph*, with workbook, Catholic World Mission, www.catholicworldmission.org or (203) 287-6314.

Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade

- *Guardian of the Redeemer*, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, www.vatican.va, click English, type in the Search box: Guardian of the Redeemer Apostolic Exhortation.
- *A Manual of Practical Devotion to St. Joseph*, Patrignani, Father S.J., The Catholic Company at www.catholiccompany.com or (866) 522-8465.
- *Not Your Average Joe, The Real St. Joseph and the Tools for Real Manhood in the Home, the Church and the World*, Sarkisian, Rick, Ph.D, Ignatius Press, (800) 651-1531.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
 - *Man's Response to God*, paragraphs 142-143
 - *The Obedience of Faith*, paragraphs 144-149
 - *To Believe in God Alone*, paragraphs 150-152
 - *The Characteristics of Faith*, paragraphs 153-165
 - *The Faith of the Church*, paragraphs 168-169
 - *The Language of Faith*, paragraphs 170-171
 - *Only One Faith*, paragraphs 172-175
 - *Theological Virtue of Faith*, paragraphs 1812-1816
- *The Virtue Driven Life*, Groeschel, Father Benedict J, C.F.R.
- *The Many Faces of Virtue*, DeMarco, Donald, 2000
- *The Heart of Virtue*, DeMarco, Donald, 1996
- *Back to Virtue*, Kreeft, Peter, 1986