



St. Joseph

Statue – St. Joseph’s Community Care, La Crosse, WI

### In Brief:

#### ON CHRISTIAN FAITH

“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. A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. Supernatural means that it is above our nature.*

### *What is the supernatural virtue of faith?*

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 this supernatural gift from God 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 it 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,” spurring us on to know and love God in a deeper way.

### *Why do we need the supernatural 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 helps us to know the right moral behavior to be a disciple of Christ.
- Through faith, we recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- Faith allows us to be 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” (*Psalms 34:6*).

## Faith

# 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



Statue: American College of Louvain, Louvain Belgium



Statue: Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, La Crosse, WI

### 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 married to Mary. However, according to the custom of their time, they were betrothed during the first year and they did not yet live together.
- An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him about the child Mary was carrying. The angel told Joseph 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 He 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 Christian Faith?*

- Joseph 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.
- Joseph 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 the supernatural virtue of faith

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Please Note: There are two different meanings of “faith.”

- 1) faith *by which* we believe: It is the power to believe and this power is a gift from God
- 2) the Faith *which* we believe: It is the truths of the Church given to us by God and expressed in the Creed.

- Pray the *Act of Faith* each morning.  
O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your 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 You have revealed them, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.
- Make acts of faith. For example: Tell Jesus in your prayer that you believe that He is the Son of God. Recite the *Apostles’* or the *Nicene Creed* with awareness and belief. Jesus, I believe that I am receiving You in Holy Communion. Thank You Jesus for forgiving my sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the Lord what act of faith He would like you to make.
- Name some people from the Bible who lived by faith. Examples:  
Abraham (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] paragraphs 145-147) Why is Abraham called “the father of all who believe”?  
Mary (See CCC 148-149). How does Mary model for us the obedience of faith?
- Read a book about a saint and report to the class how this person lived out their faith in God. Example: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Maximillian Kolbe, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
- As a class, read about a saint and together discuss how this person lived out their faith in God.
- 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 to 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 or aspiration that relates to faith. Examples:  
*Romans* 4:20-22 the faith of Abraham  
*Hebrews* 11:1 “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”  
*Mark* 9:24 Lord, “I believe; help my unbelief!”  
All for Thee most Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- Think of someone who is ‘faith-filled.’ What does this person say or do that indicates that he/she is full of faith?

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

- How would someone know you are a person of faith and that you put your faith into action? How you treat other people; that you keep your word by keeping your commitments and not breaking promises; how you respond to circumstances.
- Our faith assures us of life after death. What does that mean and what determines your final end? (See CCC 1021-1037)
- What shakes our faith? The permissiveness of the world, scandal, tragedies, liberal, secular media that portrays evil as good. (See CCC 309-314)
- 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)
- What is the Mystery of Faith? It is the true Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- What are the effects of faith? (See Index in the CCC 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. Examples: Doing the best that you can do on your homework; forgiving someone that has hurt you; on purpose, including someone who is left out.
- Prayer to Saint Joseph:  
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 a list of those people of the Old Testament who lived by faith.  
*Colossians* 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 is the acceptance of a truth on the authority of God**

“Faith is not, as too many believe, an emotional trust; it is not a belief that something will happen to you; it is not even a will to believe despite difficulties. Rather faith is the acceptance of a truth on the authority of God revealing. It therefore presupposes reason...Faith is related to reason as a telescope to the eye, which does not destroy vision, but opens new worlds hitherto closed to it.

We have the same eyes at night as we have in the day, but we cannot see at night  
because we lack normally the additional light of the sun.

Let two minds with exactly the same education, one without and the other with faith,  
look on a piece of unleavened bread in a monstrance. The one sees bread,  
the other adores the Eucharistic Lord. One sees more than the other  
because he has a light which the other lacks – the light of faith.”

*The Seven Virtues*, Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen,  
Garden City Books, pages 55 and 57

# Additional Resources on the supernatural virtue of faith

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## Pre-School through Third Grade

- *Book of Saints, Super Heroes of God, Part 8*, Lovasik, 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 Joan E, Odell, Catherine M., Our Sunday Visitor, [www.osv.com](http://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](http://www.catholicworldmission.org) or (203) 287-6314.
- *Saints Tell Their Stories*, Mitchell, Patricia and Lo Cascio, Maria Cristina; The Word Among Us Press, [www.wordamongus.org](http://www.wordamongus.org).
- *Book of Saints for Catholic Children*, 96 Illustrated Stories, Lord, Fr. Daniel, William J. Hirten Co.
- *Adventures from the Book of Virtues*, 3 DVDs based on the book by William J. Bennett, Ignatius Press.

## 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](http://www.catholicworldmission.org) or (203) 287-6314.
- *Best-Loved Saints*, Lovasik, Fr. Lawrence G. S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp.
- *Saint of the Day, Lives, Lessons, Feasts*, Foley, Leonard, O.F.M., McCloskey, Pat, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press.

## Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade

- *Best-Loved Saints*, Lovasik, Fr. Lawrence G. S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp.
- *Saint of the Day, Lives, Lessons, Feasts*, Foley, Leonard, O.F.M., McCloskey, Pat, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *Guardian of the Redeemer*, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, [www.vatican.va](http://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](http://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 Heart of Virtue*, DeMarco, Donald, 1996
- *Back to Virtue*, Kreeft, Peter, 1986