

Novena to conclude THE YEAR of ST. JOSEPH

A novena is nine days of prayer focused on a particular theme. This novena to St. Joseph is a fitting conclusion to the Year of St. Joseph declared by Pope Francis for the Universal Church and celebrated by the Diocese of La Crosse. Each day, you will reflect on a particular title given to St. Joseph. Parishes, families and individuals are encouraged to begin on Monday, Nov. 29 and conclude on Tuesday, Dec. 7, with the consecration to be made on Wednesday, Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the closing of the Year of St. Joseph. As you pray, begin with the reflection, consider what intention(s) you would like to offer and conclude with the Memorare to St. Joseph.

DAY ONE—Spouse of the Mother of God

Reflection: As the Venerable Fulton Sheen wrote, no husband has ever cherished his wife more than St. Joseph cherished his beloved bride, Mary. With a heart completely open to God, he received the abundant graces he needed for such a virginal, spousal love. May husbands (and wives) turn to him for the graces they need for loving, faith-filled marriages.

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY TWO—Guardian of the Redeemer

Reflection: God the Father chose St. Joseph to be the foster father and “guardian” of Jesus. One example that portrays the difficulties and trials that Joseph underwent to guard Jesus and Mary was their long journey fleeing to Egypt to escape death by Herod’s soldiers. They came to a land that was totally unfamiliar to them, seeking to earn a living in a country in which they did not speak the language. St. Joseph is your guardian, too. You can ask for his help as his role is to watch over you and protect you.

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY THREE—Pillar of Families

Reflection: St. Joseph made his family his priority. Nothing swayed him from his devotion to his wife, Mary. He adopted Mary’s “yes” to the Lord as his own “yes” and led his family in living out this promise to God. He was an earthly father to Jesus, holding him, comforting him, giving Jesus, in his human nature, the security of a true father-son relationship. How do we live out Joseph’s model of always making our own family our first priority? How can we take a step deeper into being the pillar God calls us to be for our family?

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph



DAY FOUR—Model of Workers

Reflection: St. Joseph saw his work as a service to his family. God gave Joseph skills in carpentry and Joseph used those skills to provide for his family and serve others. Perhaps the most important thing Joseph did as a worker was to hand those skills down to Jesus, who also became a carpenter. St. Joseph, the model of workers, is an encouragement to us to see our work as a way to serve God by serving His children. How does our work glorify God? How do we pass down to others the gifts God has given us?

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY FIVE—Comforter of the Afflicted

Reflection: Just as St. Joseph comforted Mary during their arduous journey to Bethlehem and their flight into Egypt, he stands ready to comfort anyone who is ill or struggling, afflicted in any way. Who are the afflicted in my family, my community, my country and the world? Will I offer my time and prayers for them? Can I join my own sufferings with theirs and ask St. Joseph for his intercession?

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY SIX—Patron of the Dying

Reflection: St. Joseph is patron of the dying. He died a blessed and happy death because Jesus and Mary were at his side. St. Joseph was a just man and lived his life loving and serving Jesus and Mary, through being obedient to God's will. "Go to Joseph" as your spiritual father, who will lead you to Jesus throughout your life and, in a particular way, at the hour of your death.

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY SEVEN—Terror of Demons

Reflection: In his book, *Consecration to St. Joseph*, Father Donald Calloway writes, "after the Virgin Mary, demons fear St. Joseph more than any other saint." In their work, exorcists invoke his name with dramatic effects. St. Joseph's humble obedience and purity shatter the proud and vulgar designs of the evil one. Let us invoke his powerful help, especially in moments of temptation.

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY EIGHT—Patron of the Diocese of La Crosse

Reflection: The Church is a family and each of us is saved within a family—none of us attains heaven by ourselves. For those of us in the Diocese of La Crosse, St. Joseph stands as a special model of faith, courage and holiness. We thank God for giving us this especially strong patron and, as we follow his example, we can live life to the fullest as we strive for heaven.

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

DAY NINE—Patron of the Universal Church

Reflection: The Church is the household of God, within which we, his children, are saved. The father of this household, the patron who guides and protects it—and even helps provide it with Jesus, the Bread of Life—is St. Joseph. As he was a faithful father to Christ and his incarnate body, he remains a faithful father to Christ's Mystical Body—and to each of the baptized who are a part of it.

Prayer: Memorare to St. Joseph

MEMORARE TO ST. JOSEPH

Remember, O most pure spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, my noble protector, St. Joseph, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I come to you, my spiritual father, and fervently commend myself to you. Despise not my petitions, O Guardian of the Redeemer, but in your goodness hear and answer me. Amen.

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO ST. JOSEPH

*To be prayed on Wednesday, Dec. 8
(or even daily):*

O Glorious Patriarch and Patron of the Church!
O Virgin Spouse of the Virgin Mother of God!
O Guardian and Virginal Father of the Word Incarnate!
In the presence of Jesus and Mary, I choose you this day to be my father, my guardian, and my protector.

O great St. Joseph, whom God has made the Head of the Holy Family, accept me, I beseech you, though utterly unworthy, to be a member of your "Holy House." Present me to your Immaculate Spouse; ask her also

to adopt me as her child. With her, pray that I may constantly think of Jesus, and serve him faithfully to the end of my life.

O Terror of Demons, increase in me virtue, protect me from the evil one, and help me not to offend God in any way.

O my Spiritual Father, I hereby consecrate myself to you. In faithful imitation of Jesus and Mary, I place myself and all my concerns under your care and protection. To you, after Jesus and Mary, I consecrate my body and soul, with all their faculties, my spiritual growth, my home, and all my affairs and undertakings. Forsake me not, but adopt me as a servant and child of the Holy Family. Watch over me at all times, but especially at the hour of my death. Console and strengthen me with the presence of Jesus and Mary so that, with you, I may praise and adore the Holy Trinity for all eternity. Amen. †