

St Joseph – the Worker



In 1955 Pope [Pius XII](#) established the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 as a counter-celebration to the communists' [May Day](#).

On May 1 2020, Pope Francis prayed: “Today, on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker and the day dedicated to workers, **let us pray for all workers, so that no one might be without work and all might be paid a just wage. May they benefit from the dignity of work and the beauty of rest.**”

In an Apostolic Letter entitled [Patris corde](#) (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis **describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.**

The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis proclaimed a special **“Year of St Joseph,”** beginning on the Solemnity

of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021.

The Holy Father wrote [Patris corde](#) against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, **he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph,** “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

A creatively courageous father, example of love *Patris corde* highlights “the creative courage” of St. Joseph, which “emerges **especially in the way we deal with difficulties.**” **“The carpenter of Nazareth,” explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence.**” He had to deal with “the concrete problems” his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants.

In this sense, **St. Joseph is “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.”** As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot “be other than the guardian of the Church,” of her motherhood, and of the Body of Christ. “Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is ‘the child’ whom Joseph continues to protect.” From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, “we must learn... to love the Church and the poor” (5).

Pope Francis finishes his Apostolic letter with this, “we need only ask Saint Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion”.

Let us now make our prayer to him:

PRAYER: Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

(Taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary.)

