

# St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father

A KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS DOCUMENTARY FILM



Knights of  
Columbus®

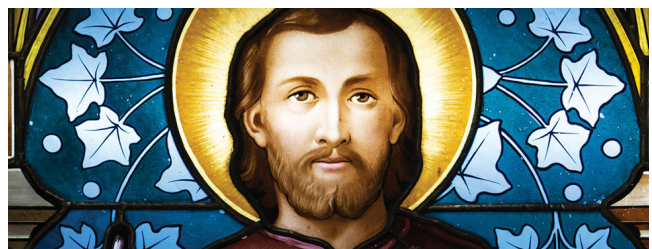
Facts & Discussion Guide





## Did you know?

- Joseph is the foster father of Jesus, the husband of Mary.
- Mary and Joseph are revealed as the first disciples to believe in Christ through their act of faith.
- In faith, he freely surrendered his entire life to the mystery of the Incarnation. He did just as the Lord instructed him. He didn't hesitate, negotiate, or waver.
- Joseph is known as "the just man" of the Gospel, at the time one of the highest compliments a person could receive.
- "In his choice of Joseph as foster father of his Son, God the Father chose the man who, by grace, would be most like himself." Therefore, Joseph has rightly been described as the human image of God the Father. (*St. Joseph: Our Father in Faith*, by Father Frederick L. Miller, from *Building the Domestic Church Series*, Catholic Information Service.)
- The leading scholarly view is that Joseph was most likely just a few years older than Mary (therefore a young adult).
- Historians believe Joseph died before Jesus entered public ministry.
- On Dec. 8, 1870, Blessed Pope Pius IX named St. Joseph the patron of the universal Church.
- In 1955, Pope Pius XII instituted the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker to be celebrated annually on May 1, giving honor to St. Joseph and asserting the dignity of work.
- In convoking the Second Vatican Council, St. Pope John XXIII entrusted it to St. Joseph and named him its special patron.
- St. Pope John Paul II has noted that St. Joseph's example "transcends all individual states of life and serves as a model for the entire Christian community, whatever the condition and duties of each of its members may be."
- On Dec. 8, 2020, Pope Francis published an apostolic letter, *Patris Corde*, in which he officially launched the special, never-before acclaimed "Year of St. Joseph."
- "After Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently (in papal texts, Church teaching etc.) than Joseph, her spouse." – *Patris Corde*.
- St. Louis Guanella called attention to St. Joseph as the patron of a happy death, that is, a death in the company of Jesus and Mary.
- St. Joseph is also patron saint of families, fathers, expectant mothers, travelers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general.
- St. Joseph's Feast Days are March 19 (for Joseph the Husband of Mary) and May 1 (for Joseph the Worker).





# Events of Joseph's Life



*Joseph was so open to God's word that it even came to him as he slept. Four times, the angel of the Lord spoke to St. Joseph in his sleep.*



*Joseph's mission was not easy. He faced numerous, unexpected challenges: Mary's pregnancy, Herod's slaughtering of the innocents, the journey to Egypt and return. Each time, Joseph summoned the courage to face the unknown. He decided to do the hard work to which God had called him.*

The angel greets Joseph as "Son of David." Through Joseph's lineage, Jesus is descendent of King David.

Living and working in Nazareth, Joseph was engaged to wed Mary when he learned that she was with child through the Holy Spirit.

A man of honor and wanting to spare her the effects of such an inconceivable act, Joseph decides to quietly divorce her.

Joseph then receives a vision — a message from an angel: "Joseph, Son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins."

Close to giving birth, Mary accompanies Joseph to Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's ancestors, to fulfill his duty to participate in the census called by Rome.

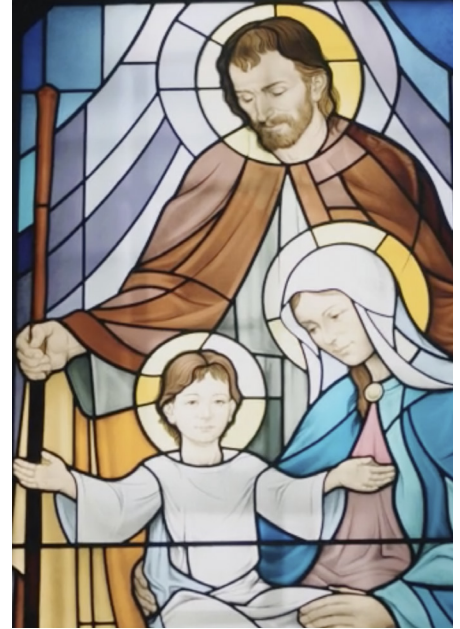
Joseph welcomes the Son of God, the son of Mary of Nazareth, in Bethlehem, in a lowly stable reserved for animals.

After Jesus' birth, "when the Magi departed," an angel spoke yet again to Joseph in a dream, saying: "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." (Matthew 2: 13). Joseph acted — doing as he was told.



## The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 2, elaborates:

<sup>19</sup>“When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup>and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup>He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup>But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazorean.”



“As St. Joseph’s apprentice in his carpenter’s shop, Jesus surely learned the skills of the trade from Joseph. Jesus must have spoken like St. Joseph. He must have walked like St. Joseph. He must have emulated the gestures and expressions of St. Joseph.” (St. Joseph: Our Father in Faith, by Father Frederick L. Miller, from Building the Domestic Church Series, Catholic Information Service).

Joseph, living with Jesus and Mary in Nazareth; working in his carpenter’s shop with Jesus, is the model of contemplative prayer — that is, prayer directly initiated and carried forward by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. During the years of Jesus’ hidden life in Nazareth, Mary and Joseph experienced and, no doubt, entered into Jesus’ relationship with His heavenly Father. With Mary, Joseph witnessed Jesus advance in wisdom and age and favor before God and man (Luke 2:52), and continuously pondered all of these things in his heart. Ibid.



The Evangelists do not record one word spoken by Joseph. This is why Mother Agnes, mother superior of Sisters of Life, comments:

*“That’s the only word we can know he said. He, after all, was the father of the Word. And he knew that the definitive Word had come into the world. So I believe that the reason we don’t have record of his language, and of what he might have said, was because he gave to us the one Word: Jesus Christ.”*

Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him — their firstborn — to the Lord. Joseph offers two pigeons in the Temple as sacrifice for the purification of Mary after her childbirth and for the presentation and redemption ceremonies performed for baby Jesus.

When Jesus was 12 years old, Joseph and Mary spend three long days searching for their son — only to find him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. “And all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.” (Luke 2:47). The Gospel writer goes on to say that his parents did not understand what he responds to them: “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

Luke continues: “He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.” And, in Luke 2:52: “The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.” This very good outcome is surely aided by the guidance, love and spiritual accompaniment of Joseph.

Mary’s faith gave the Son of God flesh and blood, thereby integrating him into our human history; through Joseph’s faith, Mary’s child became Son of David, the Messiah of Israel, integrated into the saving history of the Chosen People.







# Prayers

## For the Year of St. Joseph

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.

## Act of Consecration to St. Joseph

O dearest St. Joseph, I consecrate myself to your honor and give myself to you, that you may always be my father, my protector and my guide in the way of salvation.

Obtain for me a greater purity of heart and fervent love of the interior life.

After your example may I do all my actions for the greater glory of God, in union with the Divine Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

O Blessed St. Joseph, pray for me, that I may share in the peace and joy of your holy death.

Amen.

## Memorare to St. Joseph

Remember, O most chaste spouse of the Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who implored your help and sought your intercession was left unassisted. Full of confidence in your power I fly unto you and beg your protection. Despise not O Guardian of the Redeemer my humble supplication, but in your bounty, hear and answer me.

Amen.

## Pope Francis' Prayer to St. Joseph

*Pope Francis explains in Patris Corde that he has prayed this prayer, taken from a 19th century French prayerbook, every day for the last 40 years.*

Glorious patriarch, St. Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection, the serious and troubling situations, that I commend to you that they may have a happy outcome. My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain. And since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.

Amen.

## Short prayer by St. André Bessette

St. Joseph, if you were in my place, what would you want done for you? Please do it for me!

Amen.

## Brother André of Montreal

One of the greatest promoters of devotion to St. Joseph in recent history, St. André Bessette is the very humble visionary behind St. Joseph's Oratory, Canada's largest Church and the preeminent international center of devotion to St. Joseph.





## Questions for Discussion

1. What part of *St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father* was most impactful to you?
2. In what area of your life might you most wish to invoke St. Joseph's intercession or benefit from his example?
3. St. Joseph was able to hear God's voice when it mattered most in his life. Have you experienced this in your own life? Under what conditions do you feel most inclined to hear this same voice? Or, alternatively, what could you do in your life to increase your perception of that voice?
4. St. Joseph seems to have been a good listener. Consider your own listening skills and share one story/anecdote about the power of listening in your own life.
5. St. Joseph obeyed God in many ways. Consider how obedience plays a role in your own life – and share with the group.
6. Good, wholesome work is dignified and sacred. It responds to God's call for stewardship and reflects our privileged role in creation. What holds you back from participating fully in this holy work/activity?
7. Among many attributes, St. Joseph is known for his humility – accepting hiddenness and a humble existence. Think of a humble person in your life. How have they enriched your life?
8. Pope Francis speaks of the creative courage of St. Joseph – the courage to overcome the obstacles and difficulties that he faced. Our times demand creativity, boldness and imagination. Do you feel this call for creative courage in your own life? If so, how?
9. The film clearly makes the case for a renewed devotion to St. Joseph. Are there any activities or concrete ways in which you can make this happen in your own life?

“Creative courage” – a short, alliterative phrase used by Pope Francis in *Patris Corde*, was a key message in Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly's 2021 annual report address to fellow brothers of the Knights of Columbus.

“Let us summon the **creative courage** to fulfill the calling that our Lord has placed on our hearts. The work of the Knights of Columbus is only beginning – and we are the ones who will carry it forward.”







# Knights of Columbus®



On Oct. 10, 2021, St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father began a six-week run on ABC affiliates, after which it will be available on-demand at no cost to all at [kofc.org/stjoseph](http://kofc.org/stjoseph).

The launch of the 60-minute documentary coincides with the conclusion of the special Year of St. Joseph, called by Pope Francis to encourage each person to mold their life according to the example of St. Joseph and to go to him for the grace of all graces: our conversion.



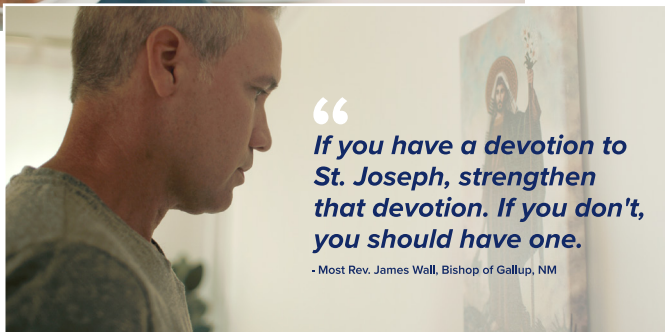
Using carefully-woven reenactments, interviews with scholars and the inspiring witness of contemporary people with a devotion to St. Joseph, the documentary offers viewers a rare opportunity to learn about Jesus' foster father from a historical perspective and the extent to which a devotion to him can be life changing.



**“Jesus.”**

**One word, one name is enough.**

Hear what Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, S.V., of the Sisters of Life, has to say about Joseph's life and legacy in *St. Joseph: Our Spiritual Father*, a new film from the Knights of Columbus.



**“If you have a devotion to St. Joseph, strengthen that devotion. If you don't, you should have one.”**

- Most Rev. James Wall, Bishop of Gallup, NM

## Knights of Columbus

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Conn., founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into one of the world's leading international charitable organizations, with 2 million members in more than 16,000 local councils.

During the past year, Knights around the world donated more than 47 million service hours and \$150 million for worthy causes in their communities. The Knights of Columbus also offers extensive life insurance products to members and their families and currently has more than \$116 billion of life insurance policies in force. In addition, the Knights provides investment services in accord with Catholic social teaching through Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, which holds nearly \$30 billion in assets under management.

Based on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Order remains committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes and to practicing faith in action through service to all in need.

Looking to live life to the fullest? Join our Catholic fraternal Order, today. Visit:

[kofc.org/joinus](http://kofc.org/joinus)

For additional information and resources, including short videos, visit [kofc.org/stjoseph](http://kofc.org/stjoseph)

