

## Holly Delucchi Photographs



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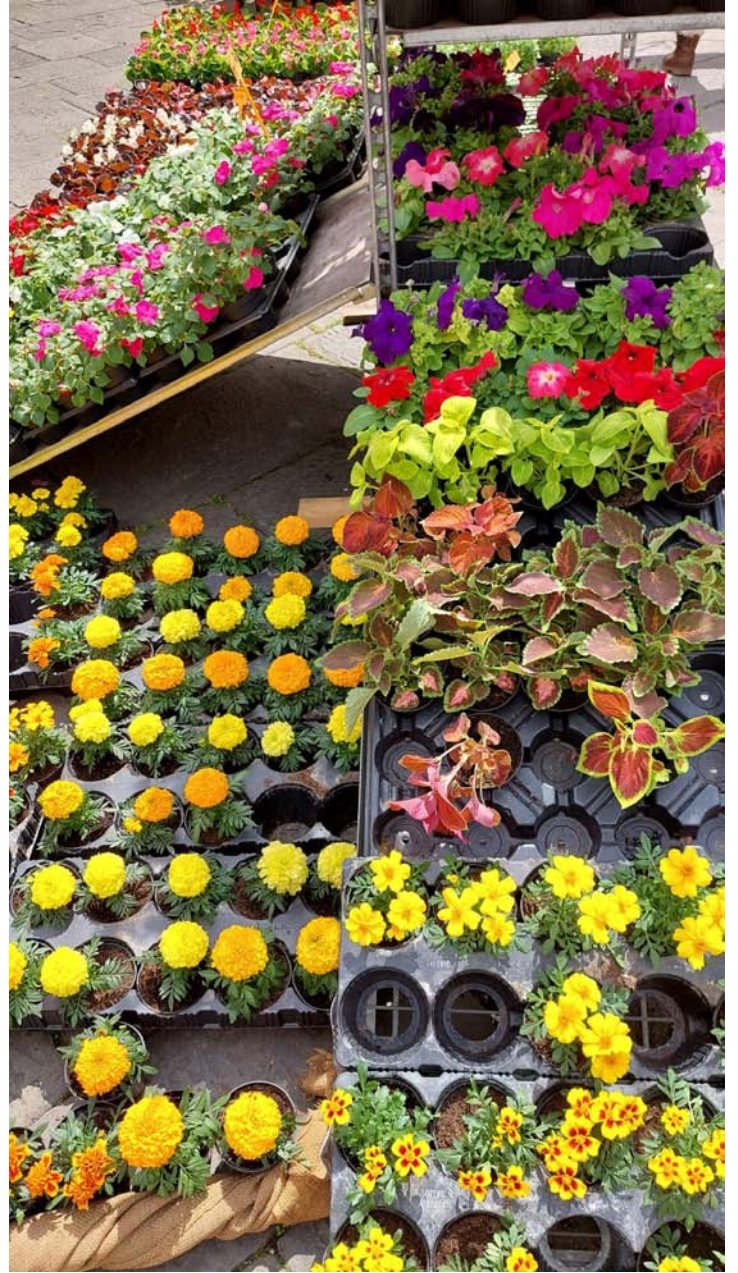
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## Frank Russo Photographs



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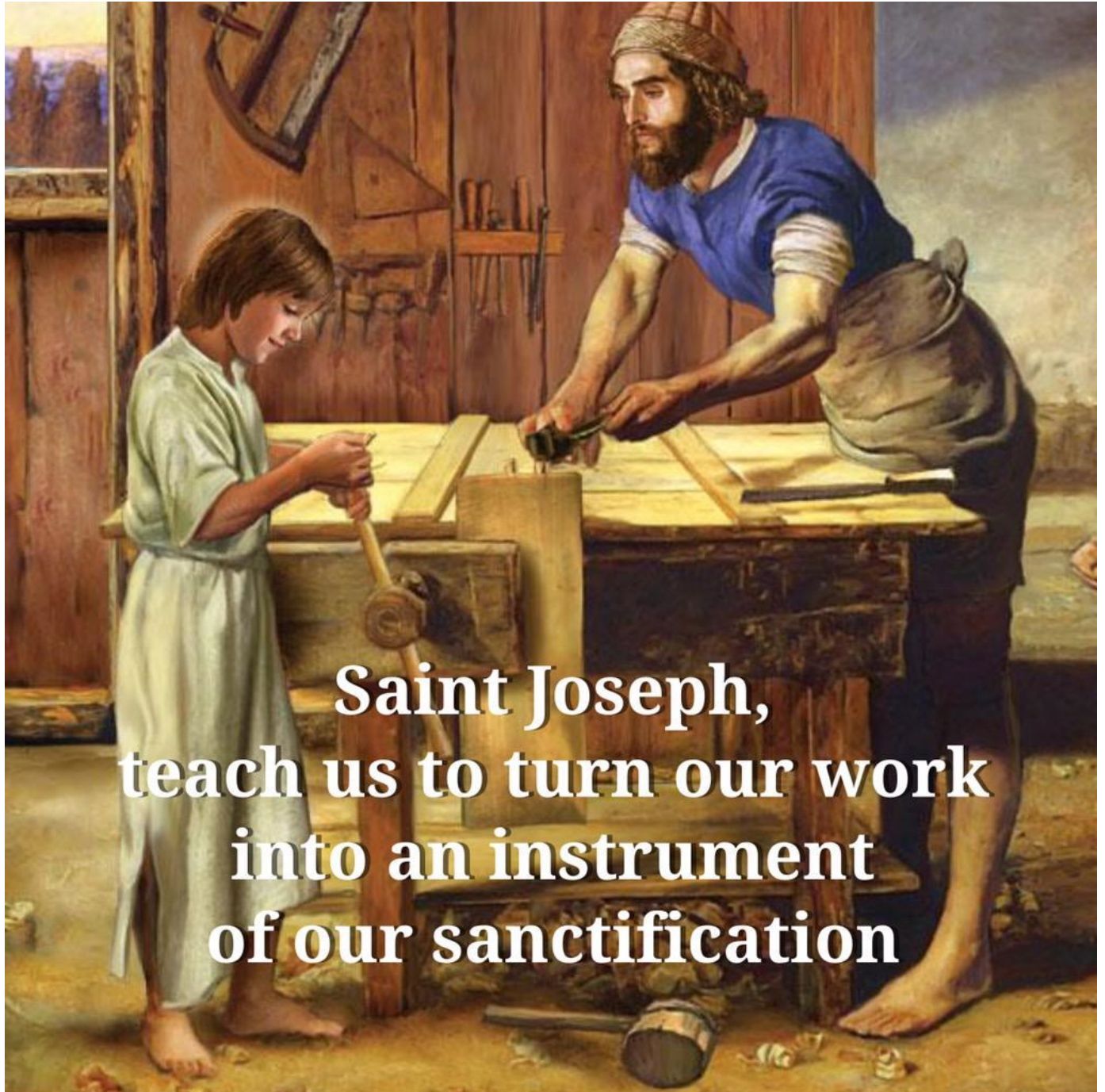


## Frank Russo Photographs



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## St. Joseph's Day & Father's Day March 19th



San Giuseppe, carpenter and husband to Mary, is celebrated on 1 May. But the name Giuseppe is celebrated on 19 March, as the "festa del papa" (**Father's Day**), very widespread in Italy.

In popular tradition the Gospel story of St. Joseph asking for shelter for his wife heavy with child and being rejected by everybody led on this festive day to the tradition of offering food and hospitality to the poorest. The table was blessed by the priest and the poor were served first.

Another tradition of celebrating San Giuseppe on 19 March began in **Sicily** in the Middle Ages during a terrible drought. People prayed San Giuseppe to help them, and rain came. In gratitude, huge banquet tables were prepared, and everybody was invited to eat as much as they wanted.

In many Italian localities the feast was often associated with bonfires and preparing *zeppole* (doughnuts) are inherited from pagan rural cults: 19 March marked the end of winter, and fires were made to burn all remains of previous harvests on the fields; youths, feeling the new spring air, jumped beyond the dying fires – and still today in Italy the tradition of eating the famous *zeppole* is everywhere, and it is a feast for children to prepare them with mothers and fathers.



Tradition has it that residents prayed to **St. Joseph** for rain. The rain came, and as such, their spring crops were spared from being destroyed, preventing a widespread famine for Sicily. It is widely believed that this is the reason the celebration is held in March.

While **St. Joseph** and **Father's Day** are celebrated all over Italy, the feast of **St. Joseph** is more prominent in Southern Italy, particularly **Sicily**, where he is the Patron Saint,

**St. Joseph** is credited to have saved Sicily's residents during one of their many devastating droughts. Tradition has it that residents prayed to **St. Joseph** for rain. The rain came, and as such, their spring crops were spared from being destroyed, preventing a widespread famine for Sicily. It is widely believed that this is the reason the celebration is held in March.

A traditional "**altar**" or "**St. Joseph's Table**" is also popular in Italy. Placed in private homes, churches, social clubs and even cafes, creating a table for **St. Joseph** is commonplace. Many Italians brought that tradition with them to the States and while it is less common these days, it is something older Sicilians still take great pride in. The table is filled with gifts, both of food and sentimental ones, offered to the saint in thanksgiving for prayers answered.

Generally, a statue of **St. Joseph** is placed at the head of the table and is surrounded by gifts of various foods, citrus fruits, and of course, breads. On the feast day, an open house is held, inviting friends and family to join in the celebration of eating the gifts left on the table. Fava beans, one of the spared crops, represent good luck and abundance, so be sure to add them to your table on March 19.



As with anything in Italy, the menu for a **St. Joseph** celebration is rooted in tradition. Because the holiday falls during lent, meat is generally not eaten on the feast day. Foods containing breadcrumbs, or the "poor man's parmigiano" are enjoyed. **Joseph**, as you might know, was a carpenter, so breadcrumbs are eaten to resemble the sawdust left behind after a day's work in the carpenter's shop. Lemons, like fava beans, are said to bring good luck, particularly to the single ladies looking for a husband.

While fava beans, lemons, breads and seafood are frequently eaten on the feast day of **San Giuseppe** and are certainly delicious; my all-time favorite food to enjoy is the **Zeppole di San Giuseppe**. Found in any respectable Italian bakery, both in the States and in Italy, a **zeppola** is a pastry, almost resembling a cream puff, but fried, and tastier, if you ask me. After it's fried, the **zeppola** is cut in the middle and filled with various flavored creams or sweetened ricotta.

It's frequently topped with **Amarena**, a sour cherry preserve, and dusted with confectionary sugar. Delicious by itself or enjoyed with a cup of espresso, if you do nothing else this upcoming holiday, be sure to enjoy a **zeppola** in honor of **San Giuseppe** and say a little prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts you have been granted.



Happy Father's Day!

**St. Joseph's Day, celebrated on March 19th, holds deep significance for Italians, intertwining faith, tradition, and family. Let me shed light on the reasons behind this special celebration:**

**1. Honoring St. Joseph:**

- St. Joseph, husband to the Virgin Mary and earthly father to Jesus, is the central figure of this feast.
- His unwavering faith, devotion, and role as a protector resonate with Italian families.

**2. Father's Day Connection:**

- March 19th is not only St. Joseph's feast day but also **Italian Father's Day**.
- It's a day to honor fathers, grandfathers, and father figures.

**3. Onomastico:**

- If your name is **Joseph** or **Josephine**, you'll also celebrate your **onomastico** (name day).
- Italians mark these name days with family gatherings, friends, and sweet treats like cakes or pastries.

**4. Sicilian Tradition:**

- The celebration of St. Joseph is more prominent in **Southern Italy**, especially **Sicily**, where he is the **Patron Saint**.
- Legend has it that during a devastating drought, Sicilians prayed to St. Joseph for rain.
- Their prayers were answered, and the rain saved their spring crops from destruction, preventing widespread famine.
- This miraculous intervention is believed to be the reason why the feast is held in March.

**5. St. Joseph's Table:**

- A cherished tradition is the creation of a "**St. Joseph's Table**".
- These tables are set up in private homes, churches, social clubs, and cafes.
- They are adorned with gifts—both food and sentimental items—offered in thanksgiving to the saint.
- Fava beans, representing good luck and abundance, are a common feature on these tables.

**6. Menu and Symbolism:**

- Since St. Joseph's Day falls during Lent, meat is generally avoided.
- Foods containing breadcrumbs (akin to "poor man's parmigiano") are enjoyed.
- Breadcrumbs symbolize the sawdust left behind after a carpenter's work—fitting for St. Joseph, who was a carpenter.

**7. Lemons, believed to bring luck (especially to single ladies seeking husbands), are also part of the celebration.**