

One Family in Mission

Called to Evangelize



Formation



Hospitality



Prayer



Service

Office of Parish Stewardship Annual 2021

Pope Francis has declared 2021 to be a year of St. Joseph! The Office of Parish Stewardship has created a special **ONE FAMILY IN MISSION** newsletter in honor of St. Joseph. We hope this newsletter will help deepen your devotion to the Foster-Father of Jesus and Spouse of Mary.

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Called to Evangelize

During the pandemic, many of us who have tuned into livestreamed Masses from around the world likely were surprised more than once by the celebration of the feasts of “local” Saints with whom we are unfamiliar.

Although we might not recognize his name as spoken in non-English local languages, one Saint claimed by the entire Catholic Church, with his universal feast celebrated on March 19th, is the foster father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the spouse of the Immaculate Virgin Mother: The Glorious St. Joseph.

Clearly, thanks to his feast, we know that the Church, as a whole, honors St. Joseph, but there are also many ways any one of us ordinary members of the “One Family in Mission” can practice a devotion to St. Joseph.

Perhaps we have baptized a male or female child with the first or middle name in St. Joseph’s honor or have chosen the name for ourselves in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Maybe we celebrate his Feast Day with great gusto, at home, in our parishes, and in our communities. or participated in street fairs and processions. We may have learned from our grandparents or religious education formators to pray to him for a happy death for ourselves (when the time comes) or for a terminally ill loved one. Sometimes, in a pious/non-superstitious way, we may have prayed to him for the favor of a profitable sale for our house or the finding of a holy spouse.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the native-born American saint to whom we dedicated our earlier January newsletter, had great devotion to St. Joseph— *even more than sixty years before he was named patron of the universal Church.* Consider these devotion-revealing



names: Valley of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, and St. Joseph's Academy...

In considering her naming of the Emmitsburg land where she ministered, the religious women's community she founded, the first U.S. Catholic school she started, and the first U.S. Catholic orphanage, as well as in considering that she choose to have the first Mass celebrated on St. Joseph's March 19th feast day in the chapel she had named after him, the question arises: why did our great Saint Mother Seton feel so drawn to St. Joseph?

To answer that question, we turned to Ms. Lisa Donahue, researcher at the Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg for assistance. Here are some insights about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's devotion to St. Joseph which Ms. Donahue graciously shared with us, based on her knowledge of and access to the Saint's writings and biographical information.

At times during her growing-up years, the physical and emotional distance St. Elizabeth Ann Seton experienced with her father, a dedicated medical doctor, left her yearning for a steady fatherly presence, starting even before his death (which came in Elizabeth's adulthood). In St. Joseph, Elizabeth found a model head of the family, and an intercessory father to whom she could confidently entrust the protection of those young and old "family members" she mothered in her multiple roles as single parent, religious order foundress, and minister to the poor, sick, and orphaned.

Even so, to fully understand St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's devotion to St. Joseph, Ms. Donahue explained that our Saint's trust in St. Joseph's faithful intercession really must be seen, not in isolation, but rather in the context of his appointed—and well-fulfilled--role as the earthly protector of Jesus and Mary. Quite simply, St. Elizabeth's devotion to St. Joseph must be seen through the lens of her devotion to the entire Holy Family, of which St. Joseph was appointed by God to be the earthly head of the faith-filled household, what we would call today the "domestic church."

Fortunately for us, Ms. Donahue, whose duties at the Seton Shrine include co-hosting Mother Seton-related inspirational podcasts, has shared with us a link to one of her most recent podcasts, which Providentially explores the relationship between St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the Holy Family, which we encourage you to enjoy accessing at the end of this article.

Throughout this year dedicated to the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph's proclaimed role as patron of the **Universal Church**, let us consider our "One Family in Mission" in light of our **individual domestic churches**. Thanks to Ms. Donahue's insights about Mother Seton's devotion to the Holy Family, let us remember to regularly call upon Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to help us make our homes the best missionary grounds they can be. Let us commit ourselves to being faith-filled parents—fathers like St. Joseph and mothers like Our Lady, even when we find ourselves, as did Mother Seton, to be single parents.

As we find strength, joy, and solace in celebrating St. Joseph's 150th year as the patron of the Universal Church, may he be for us, as he was for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the father who protects every member of our families, at every stage of our lives—from

conception to natural death.

And so, as “One Family in Mission,” we unite two intercessory petitions from St. Joseph’s traditional litany, acknowledging his patronage of families, saying...

St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family and Pillar of Families, pray for us.

Finally, in addition to experiencing Ms. Donahue’s podcast connecting this year’s twin celebrations of the 200th anniversary of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton’s entrance in Heaven with the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph’s declared Patronage of the Universal Church, please accept our invitation-- *throughout the days, weeks, and months ahead*--to take quiet time to read and to reflect on the celebration of St. Joseph’s patronage via Pope Francis’ Apostolic letter and our own Shepherd Bishop John O. Barres’ Pastoral letter, using the links that follow.

Ms. Lisa Donahue’s Seton Shrine “Friends & Followers” podcast: “The Holy Family”:

<https://share.transistor.fm/s/7b9877e8>

Pope Francis’ Apostolic letter “Patris Corde”:

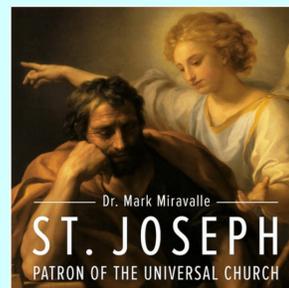
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html

Bishop Barres’ pastoral letter “Go to Joseph!”:

<https://www.stjosephpastoralletter.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/z-Go-To-Joseph-English.pdf>

Formed Stewardship Content

Each month, our office suggests Stewardship content from Formed.org that will help you grow in the faith! If you are not signed up with Formed.org, check with your parish to see if they have a subscription. This month, we recommend:



St. Joseph: Patron of the Universal Church by Mark Miravalle



