

ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

# MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH FAMILY MISSIONARY RESOURCE

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, declared a year dedicated to *Saint Joseph* from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021. This was to honor the 150th Anniversary of the Saint's Proclamation as Patron of the Universal Church. Pope Francis established this year of Saint Joseph, so *"every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will."*



## MISSION RESOURCES TO CELEBRATE THIS SPECIAL YEAR

### FOR CHILDREN 6-TO-12-YEARS OLD:

- † Introduction to Resource and Mission News [[Page 2](#)]
- † Sleeping Saint Joseph Activity [[Page 3](#)]
- † Sleeping Saint Joseph Continued [[Page 4](#)]
- † Saint Joseph Litany [[Page 5](#)]
- † Mission Saint Spotlight: Saint Joseph [[Page 6](#)]
- † Mission Focus: Namesakes of Saint Joseph in the *Missions* [[Page 7](#)]
- † Saint Joseph Prayer Page for Mission Corner [[Page 8](#)]

### FOR TEENS:

- † You can read Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter about the Year of Saint Joseph [HERE](#) and more details from the Vatican [HERE](#).

**FREE Saint Joseph Mission Prayer Card for your family and friends—  
order your own on our website at [phillymissions.org](http://phillymissions.org)**

## Solemnity of Saint Joseph Celebrated on March 19, 2021

A **Solemnity** in the Catholic Church is the celebration of a Feast Day of highest importance. It can be an observance of a mystery of our faith such as the Trinity, an event in the life of Jesus and Mary or a memorial of an important Saint, like Saint Joseph. Its celebration begins the evening before the Feast Day and in the Mass, the Gloria and Creed are said.

As Missionaries, we ask Saint Joseph to intercede for us. Saint Joseph teaches us about the value of silent contemplation, an essential aspect of prayer. There are no recorded words of Saint Joseph in the Gospel. His silence is considered an active listening to the will of God. Perhaps, in this **Year of Saint Joseph**, make time for your family to pray to him daily, asking for his help in listening to follow God's will. **Following the lead of Saint Joseph, we can ask him to teach us how to follow Jesus with abandon, giving Him all that we are. Saint Joseph, whose heart was united with the hearts of Jesus and Mary, can guide us in growing in holiness personally, as a family, as a nation and as a Church.**



Place you and your family, throughout this year, under Joseph's protection and patronage, in imitation of Jesus and Mary. Let us emulate Saint Joseph with hearts overflowing with love for God.

### A Message for Families During the Year of Saint Joseph

The Church observes the passage of time through its liturgical calendar - which includes Feasts, such as Easter and Christmas, and seasons, such as Lent and Advent. Popes can also set aside time for the Church to reflect more deeply on a specific aspect of Catholic teaching or belief. The Year of Faith, Year of the Eucharist and Jubilee Year of Mercy are recent years' themes by Popes.

2021 has become one of these special years! As it marks the 150th anniversary of Saint Joseph's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church, the Holy See as declared it the **Year of Saint Joseph**. He explains that the pandemic has heightened his desire to reflect on Saint Joseph, as so many people during the pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as Saint Joseph quietly safeguarded Mary and Jesus. The Pope also desired to highlight Saint Joseph's role as a father serving his family with charity and humility, adding, "Our world today needs fathers."

**This resource will provide ways for you and your family to learn more about Saint Joseph, not only as Jesus' earthly Father and a Saint, but as a Missionary. Use the resource to bring your family grow closer together in prayer and in sacrifice for the Missions, during this Special Year.**

A gift of special indulgences are also granted for the Year of Saint Joseph below. you can find them below, and encourage family members to take part in these indulgences with you.

- + *Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Our Father*
- + *Participate in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on Saint Joseph*
- + *Perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy*
- + *Recite the Holy Rosary in families and between the husband and wife*
- + *Entrust their work daily to the protection of Saint Joseph and to all believers who invoke with their prayers his intercession*
- + *Pray the litany of Saint Joseph some other prayer to Saint Joseph, typical of the other liturgical traditions, for the persecuted Church and for the relief of all persecuted Christians*
- + *Pray any lawfully approved prayer or act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph, for example "To you oh blessed Joseph," especially on: March 19th-Solemnity of Saint Joseph, May 1st-Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, December 26th - Feast of the Holy Family, the 19th day of every month or every Wednesday*



## Sleeping Saint Joseph Activity

**God loves sleep.** *He made it!* So much that as humans, approximately one-third of our life is spent asleep! As we learned in Genesis, even God needed sleep, and He **RESTED** on the 7th day after creating the heavens and the earth. *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* Matthew 11:28

God is a Father, just like our parents were happy when we finally went down for a nap when we were babies, He too is delighted when we get our rest.

**In the life and mission of Saint Joseph, God chose to speak to him as he slept. On FOUR occasions, God communicated, through an angel to Saint Joseph, very important messages in his dreams.**

Recently, *Sleeping Saint Joseph* has become a popular devotion in the Church. It involves writing your intention on a piece of paper and slipping it under a statue of the sleeping Saint Joseph. In doing this, a person is asking this great intercessor to bring their intention to God.

**PRAYER ACTIVITY:** Use your Bible to read about the different times that God spoke to Saint Joseph in his sleep. Find this information from the different Bible verses below. Color your very own *Sleeping Saint Joseph* on the next page. Place the image next to your bedside and use a pencil to write down intentions you have for Saint Joseph. You can also use your creativity and make your own version of a Sleeping Saint Joseph using everyday materials, like socks and paper rolls, etc. with buttons and string.

*Matthew 2:13*

*Matthew 1:20*

*Matthew 2:19*

*Matthew 2:22*

*“Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the church! Yes! We know that he can do that.*

*So when I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath Saint Joseph, so that he can dream about it. In other words I tell him: Pray for this problem!”*

*Pope Francis encourage us, “Do not forget Saint Joseph who sleeps! Jesus slept with the protection of Joseph.”*

*-Pope Francis, on his Sleeping Saint Joseph Devotion*



# Sleeping St. Joseph



## *Prayer to Sleeping Saint Joseph*

*Oh, Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God,  
I place in you all my interest and desires.*

*Oh, Saint Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession. Obtain for me, from your Divine Son, all spiritual blessings,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord, so that having engaged here below your heavenly power,  
I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving Father.*

*Oh, Saint Joseph, I never weary of contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms;  
I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart.*

*Press Him close in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.*

*Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, pray for me and my loved ones.  
Amen.*



## Saint Joseph

**Saint Joseph is our spiritual Father.** By following his examples, you entrust yourself into his care so that he can help you acquire his virtues and become holy. He was obedient to God's commands and is a **Model for Missionaries.**



Saint Joseph reminds us of the dignity of work. Although there is little known about the father of Jesus, we do know that he was a carpenter, a working man, for the skeptical Nazarenes ask about Jesus, *"Is this not the carpenter's son?"* Matthew 13:55

Saint Joseph was a gracious man, especially at his work; one that never asked for payment, but pleasantly accepted anything that was provided. This shows a great respect and faith in God, as he believed God would provide for him and the Holy Family. An example of this is in the gifts presented by the Magi to Jesus. They helped provide for them during their long trip, when there was nothing else available.

This doesn't mean that Saint Joseph did not work hard – he knew he was responsible for the Son of God and his Mother! Joseph labored, both physically and spiritually to be the human father of God. Missionaries feel akin to Saint Joseph, as they must also work hard to bring the Word of God to others, help to take care of their needs, all the while, trusting in God's providence.

When an Angel came to tell Saint Joseph that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. In Egypt, knowing no one and surrounded by people who believed in many gods, he found ways to support his family. He was a living example of his faith and brought this to others. He and the Holy Family were one of God's **first Missionaries**. Missionaries following God's command, leave their family, friends and life behind, to serve and to bring the Good News of Jesus to others.

Saint Joseph, just like Missionaries around the world today, also shows us how to protect and provide for others. *This was true throughout his entire life!* From the beginning, he safeguarded Mary's reputation preserving her life, he protected Jesus from Herod and he continued to guard, to defend and keep holy watch over the Child Jesus and his mother, Mary.

We know Joseph loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. Not only did he leave his home to protect Jesus, but upon his return settled in the obscure town of Nazareth out of fear for his life. When Jesus remained in the Temple, we are told Joseph and Mary, searched with great anxiety for three days for him. Luke 2:48

Missionaries provide protection for children and their families who live in poverty. **Will you be Missionary like Saint Joseph and help assist children and their families in need in the Missions?**

**Feast Day:** March 19th  
**Patron of:** the Universal Church, unborn children, fathers, workers, travelers, immigrants and a happy death.

**INTERESTING FACT:** Did you know that Saint Joseph has no quotes in the Bible? Usually, Missionary Saints are known for preaching and evangelizing, but he proves, just like the Patroness of Missionaries, Saint Thérèse, that being quiet in prayer is also a great way of *being Missionary*.

## Mission Focus: Mission Groups Inspired by Saint Joseph

Saint Joseph shows us how to protect and provide for others. He guarded Mary's life and reputation, he protected Jesus from Herod, and each and every day lovingly kept holy watch over the child Jesus and his mother, Mary.

All over the world. Missionaries are providing the same love, help and protection as Saint Joseph to those in need. You, too, can be a giver of protection for children and people in Mission lands, who live in poverty. This year, we are called to pray and sacrifice for these Missionaries and Mission Groups that are inspired by Saint Joseph serving all over the world.



From the remote village of Bintulu in Malaysia, where there are only two small rooms for 70 children, to the small town of L'Asile in Haiti, where teachers may go without pay for weeks, as families can't even afford food let alone tuition, your help this Lent will give to children who seek to learn and know that God loves them. An offering of \$50 helps provide the children with what may be their only meal that day for one week—**\$10 buys textbooks for 2 children.**

Will you imitate Saint Joseph and offer a sacrifice for Missionary Sisters? You can help Sisters like those who feed the hungry and tend to the sick and abandoned elderly located 11,500 feet high in the South Andes Mountains.

The majority of the people in the area make a living as farmers and herdsman and are unable to help care for these vulnerable adults. Family members have had to make a heartbreaking decision to leave them behind in search for employment. Consequently, the elderly live in run-down adobe homes with no electricity or indoor water sources.

**Show your Saint Joseph side and help Religious Missionary Sisters construct a residence with a soup kitchen and rooms. *Just \$20 provides blankets for the residents.***



### WILL YOU . . .

- Give \$1 to help buy a text book for a child?
- Give \$5 to support Sisters who are building a soup kitchen?
- Give \$10 to help pay school fees for a child in the Missions?



## **Saint Joseph Prayer Corner**

Saint Joseph teaches us about the value of silent contemplation, an essential aspect of prayer. There are no recorded words of Saint Joseph in the Gospel. His silence can be considered an active listening to the will of God. He continues to be an example of following the will of God in humble, simple ways.

**Add this page to a Mission Prayer corner during the *Year of Saint Joseph*. Say a prayer each morning for the Missionaries who serve people in foreign lands.**

**Sister Ann Thomas writes to the Missionary Childhood Association on behalf of Saint Joseph's Home for Children in southern India:**

*"We are very happy to tell you that we have received the amount of \$2,000 at Saint Joseph's Home for Children from the Missionary Childhood Association [MCA]!"*

Sister Ann Thomas, who runs the school, appreciated the generosity of all the children in the US

through MCA for the home located in a small village in southern India. Most in the area, which is surrounded by dense forests, cannot read or write. Many are unskilled laborers, unable to make enough to care for their families. *"Our home reaches out to the needy children here,"* explains Sister Ann, *"In this way the poor parents are helped through the education of their children."*

**Some 90 children receive help at this boarding school, providing for lodging, good medical care, clothing and books — *about \$25 per child!***



For the **Year of Saint Joseph**, find the Saint Joseph statue in your Christmas Nativity [*creche*]. Place Saint Joseph in a visible place in your home, where your family spends time. Say a prayer each time you pass his statue for a person in need in the world. Add his statue to your Mission prayer corner with this page, perhaps your sleeping Saint Joseph picture and his prayer.

