

Prayer to St. Joseph
Feast Days: March 19 or May 1

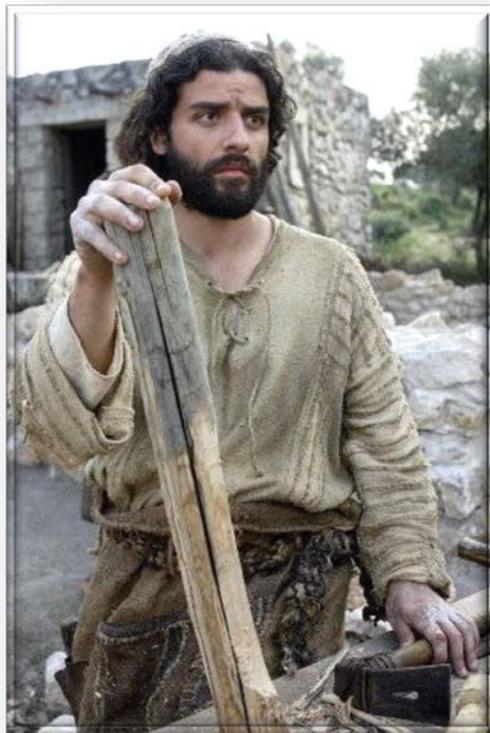
Background: Catholic Online (http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4) gives an excellent summary of St. Joseph. Reviewing the content provides an appropriate setting for this prayer. All that we know about the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus comes from the Scriptures, and this source sheds a thorough light on St. Joseph patron of the Universal Church.

Call to Prayer: We gather to celebrate and proclaim St. Joseph. His life reveals a man of many talents and dispositions. Of regal lineage, Joseph experienced the common realities of his home town Nazareth. He was law abiding and insightful about how it applied to people. Compassionate and caring, Joseph was, by trade a carpenter, and knew the creative joy of providing for his wife and child. He was a just man who lived the Jewish law but knew how to cherish a deep respect for just how that law applied to life. He was resourceful in exile, faithful to life's duties and undoubtedly passed into eternity in the comforting care of his wife and loving son. We turn to St. Joseph, whose selfless service in each of his assigned roles, inspires us and motivates us as we pray.

Opening Song: "Everyday God" Album: Restless is the Heart by Bernadette Farrell

Publisher: OCP (Note: A power point of various pictures of St. Joseph can be obtained from Sister Maryann Bremke at mbremke@cppsdayton.org. This can be shown on computer, on overhead screen or on a TV.)

Earth's creator,
 Everyday God
Loving Maker
 O Jesus
You who shaped us
 O Spirit
Recreate us
 Come be with us
In your presence,
 Everyday God
We are gathered
 O Jesus
You have called us
 O Spirit
To restore us,
 Come be with us
Life of all lives,
 Everyday God
Love of all loves
 O Jesus,
Hope of all hopes,
 O Spirit
Light of all lights,
 Come, be with us.
In our resting...
 in our rising...
 in our hoping...
 in our waiting...



In our dreaming...
 in our daring...
 in our searching...
 in our sharing
God of laughter...
God of sorrow...
 home and shelter...
 strong and patient...
Way of freedom...
Star of morning...
Timeless healer...
Flame eternal...
Word of gladness...
Word of mercy...
Word of friendship...
Word of challenge...
Gentle father...
faithful brother...
tender sister...
loving mother...
Our beginning...
our unfolding...
our enduring...
 journey's ending...
Alleluia
Now and always...
Alleluia
Through all ages...

Antiphon and Psalm

All: *Antiphon:* In the hills of Nazareth, in silent and hidden ways, Joseph, spouse of Mary and foster father of Jesus, fulfilled God's plan and grew strong in faith.

Psalm 121

Left side: I lift up my eyes to the hills.
from whence comes my help.
My help comes from you, O God,
who made heaven and earth.

Right side: You will not let my foot stumble,
you, who preserve me, will not sleep.
Behold, you who keep Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

Left side: You, O God, are our keeper;
you are our shade.
The sun shall not smite us by day,
nor the moon by night.

Right side: You will guard us from all evil;
you will preserve our lives.
You will protect our goings and comings
both now and forever.

Left side: Glory to you, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit,

Right side: As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

All: Repeat antiphon (above)

Reading: People's Companion to the Breviary (for March 19th, p. 543)



Contemporary Christians might find their way back to what is best in them if the individuality of this man [Joseph], their patron, were again producing more stature in them ... A nation needs men and women of lifelong performance of duty, of clearheaded loyalty, of discipline of heart and body. A nation needs men and women who know that true greatness is achieved only in selfless service to the greater and holy duty that is imposed upon each life ... A nation needs men and women who do not lose confidence in God's grace, even when they have to seek it as lost, as Joseph once sought the divine child. Such individuals are urgently needed in every situation and in every class ... Joseph lives ... for the communion of saints is near and the seeming distance is only appearance ... We, however, will experience the blessing of his protection if we, with God's grace, open our heart and our life to his spirit and the quiet power of his intercession.

(Period of Silence)

Karl Rahner, The Great Church Year, pp. 326-27

Common Reflection:

Meditation Chant: "Shelter Me" on CD, I Open to You, by Joyce Rupp; Ave Maria Press. According to jacket description: "A prayerful chant to companion our prayer: "Shelter Me." This simple, evocative melody is easily sung along with the CD. Hopefully, the rich text expresses movements within our hearts that prayerfully ask God to be near, to shelter and protect us, to guide and direct us to be women and men who live Gospel lives."

Petitions and Summary Prayer:

Leader: O God, you direct the life of our Community through the guidance of the Holy Spirit; St. Joseph is guardian and protector to us and so we pray:

Leader: Joseph, you were called upon to protect and care for Mary and Jesus ... All: **we ask that you keep us from injury as we carry out God's will in our lives through our various ministries.**

Leader: Joseph, you cared for your family in Egypt, an occupied land ... All: **we ask that you help our nation's leaders to act courageously in finding an equitable solution to the immigration problems in our country; we ask you to keep lawmakers mindful of the human needs of so many people away from their homelands.**

Leader: Joseph, you worked as a carpenter to provide for your wife and son ... All: **we ask that you direct and guide those who are responsible for creating jobs for the unemployed, and that you help families who struggle with so little income.**

Leader: Joseph, you died knowing the love of Jesus and Mary ... All: **we ask for the grace to die in similar peace and, through your intercession, we ask a lasting peace for all those who have died.**

Leader: Joseph, you entered the mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary ... All: **we ask that you help each one of us to enter into the mystery of hope so that we become risk-takers as we live our charism into the future.**

Leader: Let us pray:

All: O God, you gave Joseph the awesome joy of joining Mary in caring for the child, Jesus. Through Joseph's intercession grant us the grace to remain always close to Jesus, to be protective of the *little ones*, to be concerned about the poor and the marginalized and to live our charism through our various ministries. Help us, as Joseph did, to live justly and walk humbly with our God. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son, who lives with you, Source of all Being, and with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Song: "O Joseph, Mighty Patron"

#959 in We Celebrate

World Library Publications

O Joseph mighty patron, Your love and strength bestow
Upon a pilgrim people Who are the Church below.
You were the Father's image, Great prince of David's line
Obtain for us God's blessing That we may be God's sign.

Great Saint, you cherished Mary, Who loved and cared for you;
You taught and nurtured Jesus, O teach us to be true,
True to the Church he founded, Until we form above
A family united In bonds of lasting love.



Prepared by Sister Maryann Bremke, C.P.P.S.