

From the Pastor

January 31, 2021

The Fourth Sunday of the Time Throughout the Year (Ordinary Time)

Septuagesima Sunday

THE SEVEN SUNDAYS OF ST. JOSEPH IN THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH

Pope Francis has proclaimed this year of 2021, this year of such disorder and fear due to the worldwide pandemic, the **YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH**. From his tenderest years, Jorge Bergoglio has exemplified a deep love for St. Joseph. It was part of his rich and deep Argentinian heritage and fostered by his family and the Society of Jesus which formed his religious character. It was no surprise then, that after his election as Pope Francis he chose the Solemnity of St. Joseph as the Day of his installation as Pope of Rome, March 19, 2013. One of his first acts was to insert the name of St. Joseph into all the Eucharistic Prayers (previously, it had only been in the Roman Canon). And now, to mark the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church by Blessed Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1870, Pope Francis has proclaimed that from December 8, 2020 until December 8, 2021, the Year of St. Joseph will be observed by the Catholic Church in every land and nation. Quoting the words of Pharaoh of old, the Pope bids us all to: ***GO TO JOSEPH***. As you know, these words are above the altar of St. Joseph in our beautiful Church. The Pope has enriched this year with many indulgences.

As a parish, we have just completed celebrating the wondrous feast of Our Lord's Holy Incarnation. Beginning at the end of November, for four weeks we prepared for Christmas through prayer and eager expectation. Each week we saw the Light of the Advent Wreath grow brighter and brighter until on Christmas Day we beheld the Light of the World, a Light which no darkness will ever extinguish. On Christmas morning we beheld His glory as we knelt with the humble shepherds at the Christmas manger. I was so happy to see so many of you good parishioners, from the young toddlers to the elderly kneeling on the red cushion so close to the Holy Infant and being drawn into the beauty of His gaze. And, as we know, nature itself assisted us as the light returned and grows brighter each day.

Then we moved on to the Wondrous cycle of the Epiphany. Our Lord's Light shone for all the world to see as in the persons of the three Kings *all the nations of the world came to adore Him*. Our Lord's Light shone even in the depth of the sea as he entered the waters of the Jordan, not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters

Himself. And on the bank of the Jordan the Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity was made manifest for the first time on this earth, when, the father's voice was heard, *This is my Beloved Son* and *The Holy Spirit hovered over Him as a dove*.

Now that we have completed this cycle of Christmas we step back and in adoration, joy, and thanksgiving behold the human instruments through which this grace of the Redemption, planned from before Time began, was accomplished. Our Blessed Mother was the ladder by which God descended to our earth. Today let us all look to St. Joseph, our father and lord.

Very often we may see paintings and images of St. Joseph which depict him as elderly. This depiction, while well intentioned, is far from accurate. At the time of Our Lord's birth St. Joseph would have been about 19 years old, in the full vigor of manhood and strength. After all, God Our Lord would never have entrusted His Divine Son to the care of one who would not have been physically capable of fulfilling his mission as Guardian of the Redeemer. We understand why pious artists would have depicted St. Joseph as elderly – it would have been to emphasize the perpetual virginity of Our Blessed Mother. But we must always remember that Holy Purity is not a virtue not only for the elderly, but for the young also. Holy Purity in fact leads to one always being young of heart and filled with physical strength and strength of will. *I will go unto the altar of God; the God who gives joy to my youth!*

St. Joseph was not physically the father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but in every way, other than the physical, he was a father to Our Lord. The way Our Lord held the hammer, the way he planed the wood, the way he finished off a cabinet – these all reflected the influence of St. Joseph. I once remember asking a contractor why he hammered the crown molding in a certain way that I had never seen before. He did not give me a lengthy or complicated answer. He simply said, *because that is the way my master taught me*. And Our Lord would have done his work as his master and guardian, St. Joseph, taught Him.

St. Joseph has always been the intercessor and protector of Christians. Blessed Pope Pius IX proclaimed him the Protector of the Universal Church. Pope Saint John XXIII placed his name in the Roman Canon and the present Holy Father, Pope Francis, placed his name in all the Eucharistic prayers of the Church. The Little Sisters of the Poor, with whom I lived for 13 years, had such confidence in St. Joseph that they would simply write on a piece of paper what it was they needed to care for their dear old people, and place the note under the statue of St. Joseph, and he would always grant their prayer, whether it was a spiritual need, or a material need.

Whenever storms approached, they placed the statue of St. Joseph in the window looking out. We now follow that custom at the rectory, and I would recommend that practice to all of you.

To many of the saints God has given the grace to assist us in various ways. But St. Joseph assists and protects us in every way. In my 40 years as a priest, he has helped me in innumerable ways, particularly at the time of his feast day, March 19th. Each Wednesday is dedicated to St. Joseph and the entire month of March is dedicated to him.

I write of St. Joseph today because today begins the Devotion of the Seven Sundays of St. Joseph. On the seven Sundays preceding his feast (usually beginning at the last Sunday of January or the first Sunday of February) we should honor St. Joseph by mediating upon the seven joys and seven sorrows of his life.

And so, dear parishioners, as your pastor I cannot recommend more highly that you bring to St. Joseph all your needs. You, dear parents, pray to him for your children. You, dear fathers, and husbands, ask St. Joseph to help you to raise your sons to be strong and manly Christian gentlemen. I have placed the Capital Campaign under his protection and patronage and thus I have full confidence that we shall go forth together in this new chapter of our parish history.

O Glorious St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Mother of God, and Guardian of the Redeemer, protect us!

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus Mary and Joseph, Assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, May I breathe forth my soul in peace with You!

ST. BLAISE

The Feast of St. Blaise is kept every year on February 3rd. St. Blaise is one among that group of saints who are called the Fourteen Holy Helpers. These fourteen saints are invoked with special confidence because they have proved themselves to be of great assistance to the Christian faithful.

St. Blaise was an Armenian Bishop of the 3rd century who was also a physician. He gave his life for Our Lord under the Diocletian persecution. During the time of his imprisonment before his execution one of his sympathetic guards allowed many believers to visit him in prison. Two were a mother and her son who

was suffering terribly from throat ailments. When the holy bishop made the sign of the cross over the boy, he was cured. Since then, it is a venerable tradition to seek the blessing of throats on St. Blaise feast day. Here at St. Paul's the throats will be blessed on Wednesday February 3rd after the 9.00AM Mass and again after the three Masses on the weekend of February 6th and 7th. (4.00PM Saturday; 8.30AM and 10.30AM Sunday).

FINANCES

This year has been a year when so many of our parishioners and fellow citizens have known economic hardship. Many have lost employment while others have seen their businesses collapse. Our parish has not been immune to these difficulties. Due to the shut down of the Churches and then the limitations of attendance at Holy Mass our offertory collections have been much less than we have anticipated and for which we have budgeted. In addition, our two major fundraisers (the Gala Casino Night and the Golf Outing) could not be held this past year. As a result, we have finished the last fiscal year in the red and we have been unable to meet our goal in the Catholic ministries Appeal. May I ask that you keep these matters in mind when you consider your charitable donations. Perhaps some would even consider making a bequest to the parish which saw their marriage, the baptism of their children, the weddings of their daughters and sons, and the burial of their parents. How comforting would it not be to see in print the words: *in lieu of flowers please donate to the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Brookville, NY.*

In my next letter I will speak of the upcoming season of Lent and how it will be observed in these times of COVID-19. You may have noticed the traditional name for this Sunday, which is *Septuagesima*, meaning seventy. We are merely nine weeks away from that most glorious day of Our Lord's holy Resurrection.

In Jesus and Marry,
Monsignor James F. Pereda