

Grace Notes for Friday, March 12, 2021

Dear Friends,

This weekend we celebrate “Laetare Sunday”, the fourth Sunday in Lent; Laetare is the Latin imperative form of the verb, rejoice, in recognition of the first word of the Entrance Antiphon of the Mass: “Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her, Be joyful all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast”. It was traditionally a day when the rigours of Lent were relaxed to celebrate weddings (otherwise banned in Lent) and to visit one’s mother. It is still called Mothering Sunday (equivalent to our Mothers’ Day) in many parts of Europe where, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, mothers, abbesses and all those representative of motherhood, were honoured; some also made pilgrimages to their “mother church” or cathedral on this day. In many parishes, the colour of vestments and draperies this weekend, will be rose in recognition of a papal custom of sending golden roses to Catholic monarchs.

You may also note that the Gospel Acclamation for Sunday – unless your parish is celebrating the Second Scrutiny of the RCIA – is the verse often waved on banners at rallies: John 3:16. Do you know what that is?

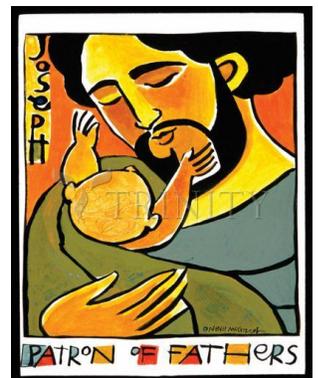


The coming week also provides other opportunities for celebration in St Patrick’s Day (March 17th) and the Feast of the Patron Saint of Canada, St Joseph, on March 19th. Although never formally canonised, St Patrick is recognised as a late fourth/early fifth century bishop and missionary, considered responsible for the conversion of Ireland to Christianity. A common tradition holds that he used the humble shamrock to explain the Trinity to the people.



St Joseph was chosen as the patron saint of Canada by Père Joseph Le Caron, one of the first Recollect Franciscan missionaries in 1624. He was confirmed as Canada’s patron by Pope Urban VIII in 1637. St Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal is was the home of St-André Bessette, better known as Brother André, a lay brother of the Congregation of the Holy Cross to whom is attributed many miraculous oil healings associated with his pious devotion to Saint Joseph. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NV8abhD6Vk>

Pope Francis has declared this the year of Saint Joseph and gives us even more reason to keep him in our devotions. Here are a number of resources which may help you remember him on Friday and all year. <https://yearofstjoseph.org/devotions/prayers/> <https://www.saint-joseph.org/en/spirituality/saint-joseph/prayers-to-saint-joseph/>



Br. Mickey McGrath,



Pope Francis states:

Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds I have recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. It expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph:

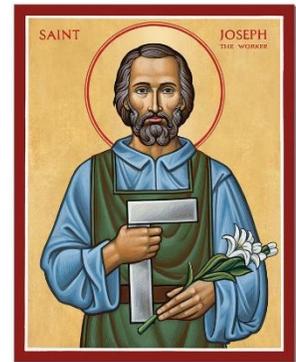
Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that I commend to you, that they may have a happy outcome.

My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power. Amen.

Pope Francis concludes his apostolic letter with this prayer to St. Joseph:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.



A Child's Prayer to Saint Joseph

St. Joseph, watch over me and care for me just as you cared for the child Jesus;
and by your help, may I come to know your Son,
and so grow in strength and wisdom and the favour of God.
Amen

(from <https://teachingcatholickids.com/st-joseph-saints-for-kids/>)

If you need any more encouragement to celebrate, you may want to indulge in the traditional Italian dessert for this day, Zeppole di San Giuseppe. They are made from a very slightly sweetened choux (puff) pastry. They are filled and topped with crema pasticcera – kind of creamy custard, dusted with icing sugar and topped with more crema pasticcera and a cherry.



Jewish children are helped to find the scriptures sweet by linking their study to honey; we can certainly find similar enticements!

Wishing you a happy and holy fourth week of Lent,

With every blessing,

Gillian