

## Decree

### **The Gift of Special Indulgences Is Granted on the occasion of the Year of St. Joseph, called by Pope Francis to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church**

The Gift of Special Indulgences Is Granted on the occasion of the Year of St. Joseph, called by Pope Francis to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.

Today is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the decree *Quemadmodum Deus*, with which Blessed Pius IX, moved by the grave and mournful circumstances in which a Church was harassed by the hostility of men, declared Saint Joseph Patron of the Catholic Church.

In order to perpetuate the dedication of the entire Church to the powerful patronage of the Guardian of Jesus, Pope Francis has established that, from today, the anniversary of the decree of proclamation as well as the day consecrated to the Immaculate Virgin and Spouse of the Chaste Joseph, until December 8, 2021, a special Year of St. Joseph will be celebrated, in which each of the faithful, following his example, may be enabled to strengthen daily his life of faith in the total fulfillment of the will of God.

All the faithful will thus have the opportunity to commit themselves, with prayers and good works, to obtain with the help of St. Joseph, Head of the celestial Family of Nazareth, consolation and relief from the grave human and social tribulations which are afflicting the contemporary world.

The devotion to the Guardian of the Redeemer has been amply developed throughout the history of the Church, which not only attributes to him one of the most elevated devotions after the Mother of God, his Spouse, but also has conferred on him multiple patronages.

The Magisterium of the Church continues to discover ancient and new grandeurs in this treasure which is Saint Joseph, as the steward of the house in the Gospel of Matthew “who withdraws from his storehouse treasures new and old” (Mt. 13:52).

For the perfect following of the end pursued, of great benefit will be the gift of Indulgences which the Apostolic Penitentiary, by means of the present decree sent out in conformity with the will of Pope Francis, graciously enlarged during the Year of Saint Joseph.

A *Plenary Indulgence* under the normal conditions (Sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father) is granted to the faithful who, with complete detachment from any sin, will participate in the Year of St. Joseph on the occasions and in the ways indicated by this Apostolic Penitentiary.

- a. Saint Joseph, authentic man of faith, invites us to rediscover the filial rapport with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and respond with profound discernment to the will of God. The Plenary Indulgence is granted to those who mediate for at least 30 minutes on the prayer of the *Our Father*, or who participate in a spiritual retreat of at least one day which includes a meditation on Saint Joseph;
- b. The Gospel attributes to Saint Joseph the title “just man” (cf., Mt. 1:19): he, the guardian of “the intimate secret which lies precisely in the depths of the heart and the soul”<sup>1</sup>, depository of the mystery of God and therefore patron of the internal forum, spurs us to rediscover the value of silence, of prudence, and of fidelity to the accomplishment of one’s own duties. The virtue of justice practiced in exemplary manner by Joseph is full adhesion to the Divine Law, which is the law of mercy, “because it is the very mercy of God that brings true justice to fulfillment.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore those who, after the example of Saint Joseph, perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy may equally receive the gift of the *Plenary Indulgence*;
- c. The principal aspect of the vocation of Joseph was that of being the Guardian of the Holy Family of Nazareth, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and legal father of Jesus. In order that all Christian families may be inspired to recreate the same climate of intimate communion, of love, and of prayer which lived in

the Holy Family, the *Plenary Indulgence* is granted for the recitation of the Holy Rosary in the family and between engaged couples.

- d. On May 1, 1955 the Servant of God Pius XII instituted the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, “with the intention *that among all will be recognized the dignity of work, and that this may inspire social life and laws, founded on the equal repartition of rights and duties.*”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the *Plenary Indulgence* may be granted to whomever shall entrust daily his own activity to the protection of Saint Joseph and to each of the faithful who shall invoke with prayer the intercession of the Artisan of Nazareth, so that those in search of work may find an occupation and that the work of all may be more dignified.
- e. The flight of the Holy Family into Egypt “shows us that God is there where man is in peril, where man suffers, where he flees, where he experiences rejection and abandonment.”<sup>4</sup> The *Plenary Indulgence* is granted to the faithful who shall recite the Litany of Saint Joseph (for the Latin tradition), or the Akathist to Saint Joseph, either entirely or at least some part (for the Byzantine tradition), or any other prayer to Saint Joseph, proper to other liturgical traditions, for the Church persecuted *ad intra* and *ad extra* and for the relief of all Christians who suffer every form of persecution.

Saint Teresa of Avila recognized in Saint Joseph the protector for all the circumstances of life: “To other Saints it seems that God has granted to help in this or that necessity, while I have experienced that the glorious Saint Joseph extends his patronage to all.”<sup>5</sup> More recently, Saint John Paul II emphasized that the figure of Saint Joseph has acquired “a renewed significance for the Church in our day in light of the Third Christian Millennium.”<sup>6</sup>

To reaffirm the universality of the patronage of Saint Joseph over the Church, in addition to the aforementioned occasions the Apostolic Penitentiary grants the *Plenary Indulgence* to the faithful who shall recite any legitimately approved prayer or act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph, for example, “To Thee, O Blessed Joseph”, especially on March 19 or May 1, on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, on the Sunday of Saint Joseph (according to the Byzantine Tradition), the 19<sup>th</sup> of every month and every Wednesday, the day dedicated to the memory of the Saint according to the Latin tradition.

In the current context of health emergency, the gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* is particularly extended to the aged, the sick, to the dying and to all those who for legitimate reasons may find it impossible to leave their homes, who with a soul detached from all sin whatever and with the intention to fulfill, as soon as possible, the three ordinary conditions, in their own house or wherever the impediment holds them, will recite an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, Comfort of the Sick and Patron of a Happy Death, offering to God with trust their sorrows and the discomforts of their own lives.

So that the flowing of Divine Grace through the power of the Keys may be pastorally facilitated, this Penitentiary ardently prays that all priests who have been entrusted with the appropriate faculties will offer themselves with an available and generous soul for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and administer often Holy Communion to the sick.

The present Decree is valid for the Year of Saint Joseph, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

*Given at Rome, from the seat of the Apostolic Penitentiary, the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020.*

Mauro Card. Piacenza  
Major Penitentiary

Krzysztof Nykiel  
Regent

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- <sup>1</sup> Pius XI, *Discourse on the occasion of the proclamation of the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Emilia de Vialar*, in "L'Osservatore Romano", anno LXXV, n.67, 20-21 March 1935, 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Francis, [General Audience](#) (3 February 2016)
- <sup>3</sup> Pius XII, [Discourse on the Occasion of Saint Joseph the Worker](#) (1 May 1955), in *Discourses and Radio Messages of His Holiness Pius XII*, XVII, 71-76.
- <sup>4</sup> Francis, [Angelus](#) (29 December 2013).
- <sup>5</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Life*, VI, 6
- <sup>6</sup> John Paul II, [Apostolic Exhortation Redemptoris Custos on the Person and Mission of Saint Joseph in the Life of Christ and of the Church](#) (15 August 1989), 32.