

Parish Novena in Honor of.....

St. Joseph



*St. Joseph's Catholic
Church*

*1813 Oakdale Road
Modesto, California 95355*

Meditations

First Day—March 11th

The man nearest to Jesus was his foster-father, Joseph the carpenter. John the Baptist saw Christ briefly near the Jordan and knew that his work as Precursor was over. The Apostles lived and worked with Christ during the brief days of His public life. But Joseph presided over the events of Christ's infancy, provided for him and sheltered him and was of all the men of earth, the one at whose hands Jesus received the most in service, love and unselfish devotion. Born of a royal line, Joseph was a carpenter. That trade he passed on to his foster son, Jesus. Joseph was destined to immortal honors of the Church, yet no spoken word of his is recorded in Scripture. Still the Church with good reason cries out to St. Joseph, her patron. We remember the tender-hearted father and faithful guardian of Jesus.

Second Day—March 12th

There is always a reason for the choices God makes. Of all the men throughout history, God chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary and the protector of the Savior. St. Joseph's youth was one of stainless virtue. His young manhood was marked by deep religious faith and a burning desire to see the Savior of Israel. His life was one of honest work and humility that fitted him for his part in the hidden life of the Savior. Little did he dream as he visited the synagogue on the Sabbath that someday, he would be the protector of the Messiah. Little did he understand that the trade of a carpenter that he was learning would be the means by which he would provide food and clothing for the Christ and would be the trade he would teach the creator of the universe. With the virtue of an honest man, he gave his full devotion and strength to the tasks before him. In this ordinary way, he readied himself for the extraordinary assignment that God would give him.

Third Day—March 13th

Tradition has it that Joseph had taken the vow of virginity, thus renouncing the right of marriage. He was stainless among men and pure in the sight of God. But God chose Joseph, the just man, for the delicate mission of sheltering Mary's virginity while at the same time being her loyal spouse and guardian of the Incarnate Son of God. Legend tells us that Joseph was selected by a miracle: the barren rod he held in his hand blossomed with lilies. Perhaps, but surely his soul was bright with joy when he knew that God had given him the Rose of Sharon, the loveliest flower among all flowers in God's garden to be his bride. He accepted her and his new responsibility to keep her safe and happy and in her company to carry out whatever plans God had for their future. St Joseph and Mary were married and established the holy house of Nazareth.

Fourth Day—March 14th

Wedded to the loveliest of brides, entering marriage with strong ideals and a trust in God's provident care, Joseph had a right to expect love and security that comes with consecrated marriage. While marriage for him was the beginning of a high honor, it was also the beginning of new pain. While it added to his royal dignity, it was also the occasion of poverty, patience, exile, obscurity, confusion and wonderment. For at once he found that his virgin bride was with child. What could this possibly mean? He wanted to think her stainless, but what of this clear evidence? He was confused and bewildered. And while it was distasteful to a man of his simple reticence, the law of his people demanded that he put her away. Since Mary herself did nothing to enlighten him (for she was committed by God to secrecy) his confusion gave way to grave doubt, and then to a firm, honorable resolve to take action. What a period of suffering and suspense this must have been to Joseph. In His own good time, God would reveal the wonders of the Incarnation of His Divine Son. But to prepare his soul for so great a miracle, God chose to cleanse his heart in suffering.

Fifth Day—March 15th

Pain and patience in the service of Christ and His Mother soon turn to joy. The visit of the angel brought an end to Joseph's problems. The Child whom the lovely Mary carried was the Son of the Most High. He had no earthly father, for God Himself was His Father. The Holy Spirit had created the wonder in Mary's body. Over Joseph came the realization of what his marriage meant. He among all men of earth was to be the guardian of the Mother of the Savior. Upon him would rest the responsibility to protect the Christ Child, to provide His home, to watch over His childhood, to lead Him into the safe maturity that would be a prelude to His public life. The home? Joseph had only the house of a carpenter to offer. The food of the Son of God would be plain. The clothes He wore would be those of a laborer's child. But Joseph silently vowed that the Christ should never want for a heart to love Him, for hands to serve Him, for feet to run His errands, for a back to shoulder whatever weight God would let him bear. Joseph and Mary smiled upon each other and together waited for the coming of the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Sixth Day—March 16th

To us Christmas is a day of uninterrupted joy. To Joseph it was a day of the brightest light and the deepest shadows: a blazing sky and a chilly cave, the presence of angels and the cold shoulder of the villagers; faith and sorrow; intense joy for the Infant and grief that he could only provide a stable and straw for the mother and baby. The story of Joseph and Christmas is dearly familiar to us. It was decreed that they leave the comforts of home and journey to Bethlehem. The doors of the crowded inns were slammed in his face. He quested through the night until he found the cave and prepared it for his bride and the coming Child. His was the joy of hearing the song of the angels and watching the procession of the first adorers. His was the pain of seeing Mary shiver in the cold darkness and of remembering that they had been forced to leave in Nazareth the cradle that he had made with such loving care. He was the first sentry in the court of the new king. He was His first Man-at-Arms, His first Prime Minister, His Treasurer, and the faithful disciple of the Master who had just to speak His first word.

Seventh Day—March 17th

Compared to the powerful and important Herod, Joseph was in the eyes of his time, a nobody. Yet as this faithful carpenter and saint made smooth the ways of his Lord, worked for His comfort, and knelt to adore Him, Herod plotted the destruction of this Child whom he looked upon as a possible rival for his throne. Herod had tried to turn the Magi into messengers of death, but these wise men had a warning from God, through the star-lighted night, found their way to the king. Failing this, Herod sent his soldiers out to kill the Child and end the threat to his brief and pitiful power. Another visit of an angel and Joseph is moving through the night, leading the donkey that carried the sacred burden of Mother and Child. Eyes alert for danger, staff gripped tightly against possible threat, feet tirelessly striding forward, a few coins in his purse, his locked shop left behind him, Joseph travels the glorious and ignominious road to exile. But God had chosen well when He chose the protector of Mother and Son. The journey was safe, the exile was comfortable, and the return happy and secure. We remember Joseph, the guardian of Jesus and of Mary in danger and in exile.

Eighth Day—March 18th

Wonderful things have happened in the long history of mankind, but none have been more wonderful than what occurred in the little house and shop of Joseph in Nazareth. The earnings of a laborer provide the food for the creator of heaven and earth. Into the little carpenter shop comes the young Jesus, apprenticed to a trade. Joseph guides the hands that guided the course of the stars; he teaches the maker of the sun, stars and planets the craft of making tables and chairs for the peasants and yokes for the oxen. The Trinity looks down to the lovely trinity of earth—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, beautifully mirrored in Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Modern Christian homes receive their design and pattern from this model. Modern Catholic marriage is here given its lovely example. Childhood learns obedience as the young Jesus obeys the commands of his parents. The hearts of Mary and Joseph create a union close and dear and intimate and utterly beautiful; together they live and think and plan and work for the Child, who has been given into their keeping. Theirs was a beautiful family. We remember the happiness of Joseph in Nazareth.

Ninth Day—March 19th—Feast of St. Joseph

Death in the days before Christ was often frightening, often terrible. It was left for Joseph to show us for the first time, the perfect way to die. Graciously God let him know that his work was done. Jesus was almost ready to enter His public life; in that the humble carpenter would play no part. He obeyed the voice of God in death as he had obeyed that voice in life. But for him the voice had no terrors. As Joseph lay on his bed, Jesus and Mary were close to him. His head rested on the virgin breast of his untouched bride. His hand rested in the firm grasp of his foster Son. Jesus was speaking gratefully of what Joseph had done for Him. Mary was saying a loving thank-you. His thoughts were being lifted up and up toward Heaven that lay ahead and the glory that comes to those who have done their simple duty well. Jesus and Mary followed their beloved protector to the grave. In his place in glory the whole Church has sought him, called him its faithful guardian, and known that from his powerful intercession the many favors past counting fall upon the world of men and women, whom he regards as his beloved sons and daughters.

We remember and honor St. Joseph, the patron of the Church, and the patron of our parish.



Novena Prayer

O Glorious St. Joseph,
chosen by God to be the foster father of
Jesus, spouse of the Mother of God,
and head of the Holy Family:
with full confidence I implore at this moment
your powerful intercession for each member
of our parish family
which is entrusted to your watchful care.
O most loving guardian of the Holy Family,
defend all your children and keep us far
from every error and sinful influence.
O most mighty protector, be gracious to us
and from heaven assist us in our daily
struggles and moments of temptation.
As you once rescued the Child Jesus from danger,
so now protect us
from the power of Satan and from all harm.
O most compassionate St. Joseph,
obtain for us the grace to live devoutly
and to die rejoicing with the Holy Name
of Jesus in our hearts and on our lips. Amen.



Litany of St. Joseph

Lord have mercy,	<i>Lord have mercy.</i>
Christ have mercy,	<i>Christ have mercy.</i>
Lord have mercy,	<i>Lord have mercy.</i>
Christ hear us,	<i>Christ, gracious hear us.</i>
God the Father of Heaven,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
God the Holy Spirit,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Holy Trinity, one God,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Holy Mary,	<i>pray for us.</i>
St. Joseph,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Noble son of the House of David,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Light of Patriarchs,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Husband of the Mother of God,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Guardian of the Virgin,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Foster father of the Son of God,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Faithful guardian of Christ,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Head of the Holy family,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Joseph, chaste and just,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Joseph, prudent and brave,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Pattern of patience,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Model of workers,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Example to parents,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Guardian of virgins,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Pillar of family life,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Comfort of the troubled,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Hope of the sick,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Patron of the dying,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Terror of evil spirits,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Protector of the Church,	<i>pray for us.</i>

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

God made him master of His household,
And gave him charge of all his possessions.

Let Us Pray:

O God, in your ineffable providence you were pleased to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of your most holy Mother; grant, we beg you, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom on earth we venerate as our Protector: You who live and reign forever and ever.