



Rejoice in the Lord **By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.** **Archbishop of Newark**

March 19, 2021 / Vol. 2, No. 13



St. Joseph is a man for all seasons, but his intercession and example are especially needed in troubled times

Each year on March 19, the Church invites us to celebrate with joy the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus. This year, we have a special reason to honor the “righteous man” who 150 years ago was named Patron of the Church by Blessed Pope Pius IX.

As I hope you know, our own Pope Francis has proclaimed a Year of St. Joseph from December 2020, until December 8, 2021. This gives our annual feast in honor of St. Joseph even greater meaning and festivity. In this spirit, I recently announced that on Friday, March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Catholics in the Archdiocese of Newark are dispensed from the obligation to abstain from eating meat (see announcement below).

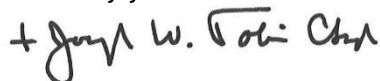
In my newsletter dated January 8, 2021, I offered some reflections based on the Holy Father’s beautiful apostolic letter *Patris Corde* (With A Father’s Heart). Allow me to share with you now a brief summary of my remarks. Selections, and a link to the full text of Pope Francis’s letter, can be found below.

- There are many reasons why this new year warrants the special patronage of Joseph, the righteous man who quietly obeyed the instructions given to him by God’s messenger on at least four occasions. By reading carefully the Holy Father’s Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde* (With a Father’s Heart), we can see the wisdom of this decision. St. Joseph is a man for all seasons, but his intercession and example are especially needed in troubled times like these.
- The Year of Saint Joseph is a time to heal the deep wounds in our society by calling attention to the dignity and human rights of every man, woman and child. It’s a time to rebuild our economy according to principles and policies that truly serve our people. Finally, this year is a time for building bridges and reconciling our differences as individuals, families and communities who have too long been divided—politically, economically and socially.
- May this great saint, the Patron of the Catholic Church, be close to us this year and always as we work to imitate his virtues and incorporate into our lives his tender, obedient and creatively courageous spirituality. St. Joseph, pray for us.

It shouldn't surprise anyone to learn that I have a strong personal devotion to St. Joseph, my namesake. His silent strength, his fidelity to God's will, his loving care for Mary and his paternal presence in Jesus' formative years have always inspired me. I pray to St. Joseph for guidance and encouragement as I struggle to be a good man, an attentive listener to the Word of God and a faithful servant of the people I'm called to serve as a spiritual father.

With great joy, I wish you all a Happy St. Joseph's Day! May this gentle and holy man help us all to grow closer to Jesus, and to each other, as we seek to discover and do God's will in our daily lives. St. Joseph, Patron of the Church, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

Dispensation from the obligation to abstain from meat on Friday, March 19, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph March 2, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ: One of the obligations imposed upon all of us during the season of Lent is the observance of abstinence from eating meat on all Fridays of Lent, as well as on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday. The law on abstinence binds all those who have attained the age of fourteen.

Every year our Lenten austerity is interrupted by one or two solemnities, feast days of the highest rank that celebrate a mystery of faith such as the Trinity, an event in the life of Jesus, his mother Mary, or another important saint. The Solemnity of Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is commemorated on March 19th and, this year, that celebration falls on a Friday. What is more, last December, Pope Francis announced a special "Year of St. Joseph" to be celebrated from December 8, 2020, to December 8, 2021.



Some of the faithful have asked me to dispense the Archdiocese from abstinence from meat on Friday, March 19, 2021. I am happy to grant that dispensation to all as part of the celebration of this Solemnity during the Year of St. Joseph. A most fitting way to celebrate the Solemnity is a festive meal with your household and a gift to one of our food pantries or soup kitchens to ensure that the poor will eat as well.

Seven Characteristics of St. Joseph

From *Patris Corde (With A Father's Heart)*

By Pope Francis

Characteristic #1. A beloved father. Pope Francis writes that: “The greatness of St. Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus.” We know that Joseph was a good carpenter, a responsible citizen and a righteous man. But his greatness is found in his relationships not in his ambition or achievements. Joseph is a witness to the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and courage. He shows us how we should live in a world that too often encourages us to live only for ourselves often at the expense of those who are weaker and more vulnerable than we are.

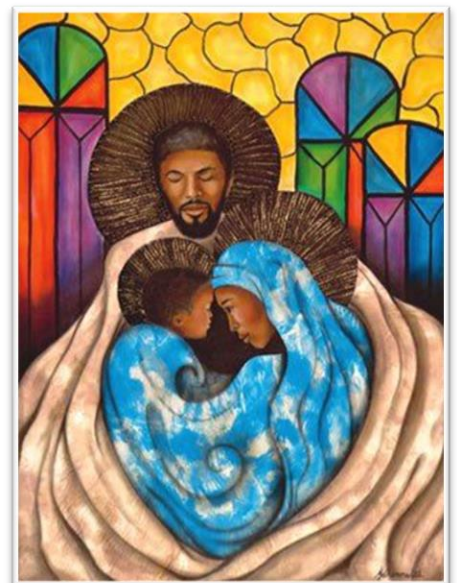


Characteristic #2. A tender and loving father. Pope Francis tells us that “In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God.” Tenderness is a concept that Pope Francis uses frequently to describe God’s merciful love for all of us, His children. St. Joseph reflects the fatherhood of God—just as Mary represents the fullest possible expression of God’s maternal care for His creation. There is nothing harsh or indifferent in the portrait of St. Joseph we have been given by the evangelists, especially Matthew and Luke. At the same time, there is nothing inappropriately “soft” or weak in Joseph’s character.

Characteristic #3. An obedient father. Pope Francis writes: “In every situation, Joseph declared his own ‘fiat,’ like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.” In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus tells us to pray “Thy will be done,” to be obedient to our Father in heaven and, by extension, to all who have legitimate authority over us. St. Joseph always said ‘yes’ to God’s will no matter how confusing or unreasonable it seemed at the time.

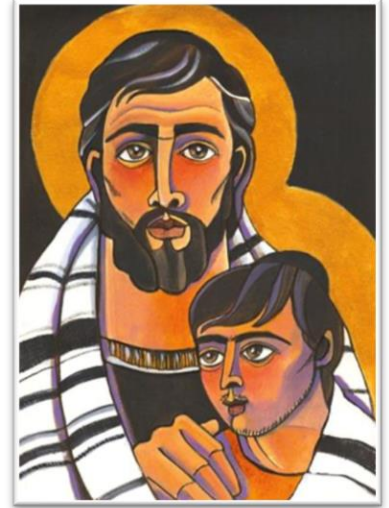
Characteristic #4. An accepting father. Pope Francis observes that: “Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence toward women is so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man.” Joseph’s acceptance of Mary, and of his supportive role in the history of our salvation, has much to say to us today. Acceptance doesn’t come easily to us who are often “set in our ways.” Joseph shows us how to respect, and care for, those who are different from us in any way.

Characteristic #5. A creatively courageous father. Pope Francis says that “Joseph was the true ‘miracle’ by which God saved the child and his mother. God acted by trusting in Joseph’s creative courage.” Joseph’s courage in the face of scandal, murderous threats and the displacement of his family is a sign of his confidence in God and his determination to protect his family come what may. Pope Francis



speaks about the “creative courage” of St. Joseph because in every threatening circumstance he was required to improvise and to make the best of the situation he found himself in.

Characteristic #6. A working father. Pope Francis reminds us that “St. Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one’s own labor.” Given the difficulties we face today with joblessness and a severely challenged economy, St. Joseph “the worker” is an important reminder that work is essentially connected to human dignity.



Characteristic #7. A father in the shadows. Pope Francis writes that: “Being a father entails introducing children to life and reality. Not holding them back, being overprotective or possessive, but rather making them capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities.” Joseph was not an “absent father,” but he was also not controlling or overprotective. Today we need St. Joseph’s example more than ever as fathers in our society struggle to overcome stereotypes and establish themselves as strong but sensitive models for their children.

For the complete text of the Holy Father’s Apostolic letter, visit www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html

Why the Catholic Church opposes the Reproductive Freedom Act

On Oct. 5, 2020, the Catholic bishops of the state of New Jersey published a statement that conveyed our “strongest possible opposition” to the proposed Reproductive Freedom Act. At that time, we urged all Catholics and all people of goodwill to reject this proposed legislative initiative in our state and to contact their state legislators to express vigorous opposition to its passage. I would like to outline in simple, straightforward terms why we take this strong stand.

As our statement last October made clear, the Catholic Church believes and teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death. That is why we oppose all threats to human life and dignity evident in contemporary society, including abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide and capital punishment. We join with Pope Francis in noting that the right to life of the unborn “is the most fundamental right. This is not first a religious issue; it is a human rights issue.” (Pope Francis to American Catholic Bishops, USCCB Region IX, January 16, 2020).

Our opposition to the proposed Reproductive Freedom Act is based on our absolute commitment to human life and dignity. The Catholic Church stands with all who advocate for civil rights and racial equality. We strongly support the right to quality healthcare for women and men in all regions of our state, regardless of their economic, social or religious status. We especially want to advocate for those in our communities who are poor or on the margins of our society.

For these reasons, we cannot support provisions of the proposed Reproductive Freedom Act that threaten the life of unborn children or remove existing laws and regulations that are intended to protect the life and health of mothers. For instance, if passed as written, clauses in sections 2 and 3 of the Reproductive Freedom Act would codify a proposal by the State Board of Medical Examiners to amend certain rules for surgeries and procedures. We believe this would, in certain situations, allow non-physicians such as physician assistants and certified midwives to perform abortions in non-hospital settings any time throughout the nine months of pregnancy.

Finally, we cannot support any legislation that would eliminate New Jersey's longstanding legal tradition that protects the freedom of conscience of healthcare workers who do not want to perform or assist with abortions because doing so would violate their most fundamental beliefs as individuals and as healthcare providers. Based on my review, the absence of any language in the Act to protect this clause means that one could challenge, in court, a medical professional's decision not to perform an abortion for moral, religious, or ethical reasons.

Our opposition to this proposed legislation can be summarized in the following terms:

- Abortion is not healthcare, and we vigorously oppose all attempts to create a false equivalency between the taking of innocent human life and the “reproductive health” of women in our society.
- Justice demands that civil rights and racial equality must be guaranteed for all members of our society, especially for the most vulnerable members of our society, our unborn children. While section 2 of the proposed Act addresses the issue of barriers to healthcare faced by women of color, immigrants, and other disenfranchised and minority populations, it is not necessary to support this legislation to achieve civil rights and racial equality for women in our state. In fact, we believe that the proposed Reproductive Freedom Act does a particular disservice to women of color who are poor or socially disadvantaged because it denies them legal protections against what I personally view as unscrupulous policies or “services” that threaten human life and the dignity of mothers and their children.

The Catholic Church in New Jersey stands with all women and men regardless of race, religion, social or economic status in advocating for universal access to excellent healthcare. We also join with our fellow citizens in demanding that justice be guaranteed for all members of our communities, no matter what their past background or current circumstances are.

We oppose the proposed Reproductive Freedom Act because we believe it is not the right way to safeguard the health and dignity of women and children, who are entitled to the best protection and care that our society can offer. We invite all members of our community to join us in letting state legislators and other public officials know that we continue to oppose this legislation in the strongest possible terms.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

(As published on NJ.com, March 16, 2021: www.nj.com/opinion/2021/03/cardinal-tobin-why-the-catholic-church-opposes-the-reproductive-freedom-act-opinion.html)

A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope



After Mary, the Mother of God, no saint is mentioned more frequently in the papal magisterium than Joseph, her spouse. Recent popes have all called our attention to the man behind the scenes in the infancy narratives, the “Patron the Catholic Church,” the “Guardian of the Redeemer,” the “Patron of Workers,” and the “Patron of a Happy Death.” His presence is significant. His silence is profound...

My desire to [write about St. Joseph] increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone...

How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all...

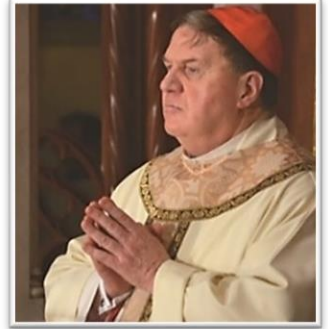
Each of us can discover in Joseph—the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence—an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble.

Selections from *Patris Corde* (From a Father’s Heart) by Pope Francis, December 8, 2020. For the complete text of the Holy Father’s Apostolic letter, visit www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html

My Prayer for You

Let us once again make our prayer to St. Joseph in the words of Pope Francis:

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.



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

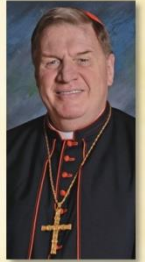
HOLY WEEK



Liturgies celebrated *via livestream* with
Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

March 28	Palm Sunday	10:00 am
April 1	Holy Thursday*	7:30 pm
April 2	Good Friday	3:00 pm
April 3	Easter Vigil*	8:30 pm

**Bilingual (Spanish & English) liturgy*



**Join us via livestream at
[YouTube.com/SacredHeartCathedralBasilica](https://www.youtube.com/SacredHeartCathedralBasilica)**

For a complete listing of parish livestreams, visit
www.rcan.org/parish-mass-livestreams-and-more

