

Alter Christus

*“As an **alter Christus** (another Christ) the priest is in Christ, for Christ and with Christ... Because he belongs to Christ, the priest is radically at the service of all people: he is the minister of their salvation” (Pope Benedict XVI)*

Monthly bulletin dedicated to all the Priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

March: Daily Devotions to St Joseph

By Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Introduction

These short but fervent devotions to St. Joseph, arranged for each day in the month have been taken from the writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori. Every line bears testimony to the respect, confidence and love which St. Alphonsus felt for the foster father of Jesus.

PRAYER FOR EACH DAY

Read the reflection proper to the day and then close each day with the follow prayer:

Most holy patriarch, St. Joseph, I rejoice at the great dignity to which thou hast been raised in being made foster father of the Son of God, endowed with authority to command Him Whom heaven and earth obey.

My holy patron, since Jesus Himself respected and served thee as His father,

I, too, wish to enrol myself in thy service. I choose thee, after Mary, for my principal advocate and protector. I promise to honour thee every day with some special devotion, and each day I will place myself under thy protection.

As thou didst enjoy the sweet company of Jesus and Mary during thy life on earth, grant that I may ever live close to them and never be separated from God by losing His grace. And as thou wert assisted by Jesus and Mary at the hour of thy death, so grant me protection at the hour of my death, that, dying

in thy presence and that of Jesus and Mary, I may one day go to thank thee in paradise, and in thy company praise and love God for all eternity. Amen.

****St. Joseph, patron of the universal Church, protect us. Protect our Holy Father, the Pope, and our Mother, Holy Church.***

FIRST DAY

God, because of the great love He bears us, and His great desire to see us saved, has given us among other means

Author: Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

Bishop, Doctor of the Church, and the founder of the Redemptorist Congregation. He was born on September 27, 1696, near Naples, Italy. Educated at the University of Naples, Alphonsus received his doctorate at the age of sixteen. By age nineteen he was practicing law, but he saw the transitory nature of the secular world, and after a brief time, retreated from the law courts and his fame. Visiting the local Hospital for Incurables on August 28, 1723, he had a vision and was told to consecrate his life solely to God. In response, Alphonsus dedicated himself to the religious life, even while suffering persecution from his family. He finally agreed to become a priest but to live at home as a member of a group of secular missionaries. He was ordained on December 21, 1726. Alphonsus founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer on November 9, 1732. Alphonsus was preaching missions in the rural areas and writing. He refused to become the bishop of Palermo but in 1762 had to accept the papal command to accept the see of St. Agatha of the Goths near Naples. For thirteen years Alphonsus fed the poor, instructed families, reorganized the seminary and religious houses, taught theology, and wrote. His austerities were rigorous. He died peacefully on August 1, 1787. He was beatified in 1816 and canonized in 1839. In 1871, Alphonsus was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX. His writings on moral, theological, and ascetic matters had great impact and have survived through the years, especially his Moral Theology and his Glories of Mary.

of salvation the practice of devotion to the saints. It is His will that they, who are His friends, should intercede for us, and by their merits and prayers obtain graces for us which we ourselves do not deserve.

But everyone must know that, after the Mother of God, St. Joseph is, of all the saints, the one dearest to God. He has, therefore, great power with Him and can obtain graces for His devout clients. Let us then frequently say: ****St. Joseph, give me the greatest confidence in thy powerful intercession.***

SECOND DAY

We should, indeed, honour St. Joseph, since the Son of God Himself was graciously pleased to honour him by calling him father. 'Christ, says Origen,

'gave to Joseph the honour due to a parent. The Holy Scriptures speak of him as the father of Jesus. 'His father and mother were marvelling at the things spoken concerning Him (Luke 2:33). Mary also used this name: 'in sorrow thy father and I have been seeking thee (Luke 2:48). If, then, the King of Kings was pleased to raise Joseph to so high a dignity, it is right and obligatory on our part to endeavour to honour him as much as we can.

****St. Joseph, I consecrate myself to thy service forever. Protect me all the days of my life.***

THIRD DAY

The example of Jesus Christ, Who wished to honour St. Joseph so much,



and to be subject to him on earth, ought to inflame all with a fervent devotion toward this great saint. Since the Eternal Father shared His own authority with St. Joseph, Jesus always regarded him as a father, and respected and obeyed him for thirty years. St. Luke says He 'was subject to them (Luke 2:51). These words mean that during all this time the sole occupation of the Redeemer was to obey Mary and Joseph. To St. Joseph, as head of the little family, belonged the office of commanding, and to Jesus as a subject, the duty of obedience. Hence, a learned author has justly said: 'Men should pay great honour to him whom the King of Kings wished to raise to such a height.

****St. Joseph, by the obedience which Jesus rendered to thee, make me always obedient to the will of God.***

FOURTH DAY

St. Bernardine of Siena says that we should be persuaded that Our Lord, Who respected St. Joseph on earth as His father, will refuse Him nothing in heaven; but on the contrary, will most abundantly grant His petitions. Jesus Himself advised St. Margaret of Cortona to cherish a special devotion to St. Joseph, and never to allow a day

to pass without rendering some homage to him as His foster father. Let us not, then, fail to recommend ourselves each day to St. Joseph and to ask him for graces.

****St. Joseph, make me faithful in invoking you daily.***

FIFTH DAY

All the faithful should be devoted to St. Joseph in order to obtain the grace of a good death, and this for three reasons. 1. Because Jesus Christ loved him not only as a friend, but as a father, and, therefore, his intercession is more powerful than that of the other saints. 2. Because Our Lord, in return for having saved Him from Herod, has given St. Joseph the special privilege of protecting the dying against the snares of the devil. 3. Because St. Joseph, who died in the company of Jesus and Mary, is the model of a holy death and can obtain this grace for his clients.

****St. Joseph, obtain for me that, like thee, I may die in the arms of Jesus and Mary.***

SIXTH DAY

According to St. John Damascene: 'God gave St. Joseph the love, the care,

and the authority of a father over Jesus. He gave him the affection of a father that he might guard Him with great love; the solicitude of a father, that he might watch over Him with care; and the authority of a father that he might feel sure that he would be obeyed in all that he arranged concerning this Son.

**St. Joseph, be always a father to us; and grant that we may be always thy faithful children.*

SEVENTH DAY

When God, destines anyone for a particular office, He gives him the graces that fit him for it. Therefore, since God chose St. Joseph to fill the office of father over the person of the Incarnate Word, we must certainly believe that he conferred upon him all the sanctity which belonged to such an office.

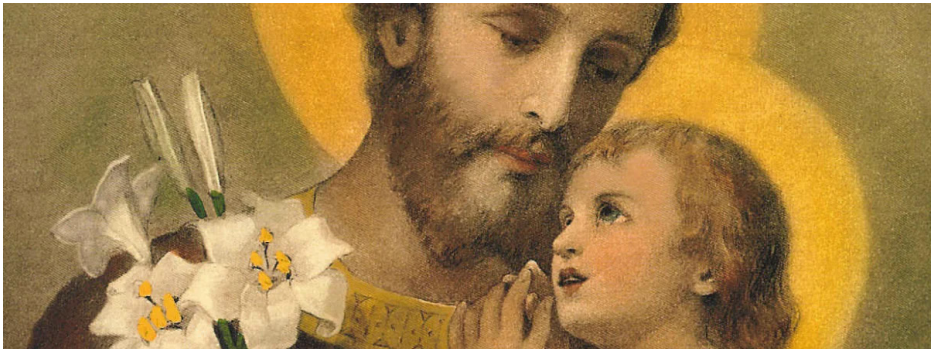
Gerson says that among other privileges Joseph had three which were

special to him. 1. That he was sanctified in his mother's womb, as were Jeremias and St. John the Baptist. 2. That he was at the same time confirmed in grace. 3. That he was always exempt from the inclinations of concupiscence—a privilege with which St. Joseph by the merit of his purity, favours his devout clients by delivering them from carnal appetites.

**St. Joseph, shining light of chastity, preserve the angelic virtue in me.*

EIGHTH DAY

In the Gospels St. Joseph is called 'just'. What is meant by a just man? St. Peter Chrysologus says: 'It means a perfect man—one who possesses all virtues. Joseph was already holy before his marriage; but how much must his sanctity have increased after his union with the Blessed Virgin? The example of his holy spouse sufficed to sanctify him;



and since Mary is the dispenser of all the graces which God grants to men, in what profusion must she not have showered them down upon her spouse, who she loved so much and by whom she was so tenderly loved!

****St. Joseph, increase my devotion to Mary.***

NINTH DAY

The two disciples, going to Emmaus were inflamed with divine love by the few moments which they spent in company with our Saviour, and by His words. What flames of holy love must not, then, have been enkindled in the heart of St. Joseph, who for thirty years conversed with Jesus Christ, and listened to His words of eternal life; who observed the perfect example which Jesus gave of humility and patience, and saw the promptness with which He obeyed and helped him in his labours, and all that was needed for the household!

****St. Joseph, inflame us with the love of Jesus.***

TENTH DAY

St. Paul writes that in the next life Jesus Christ 'will render to every man

according to His works (Rom. 2:6). What great glory must we not suppose that He has bestowed upon St. Joseph, who served and loved Him so much while He lived on earth! Our Lord has promised a reward to him who gives a cup of cold water to the poor in His name. What, then, must be the reward of St. Joseph, who can say to Jesus Christ: 'I not only provided Thee with food, with a dwelling, and with clothes, but I saved Thee from death, delivering Thee from the hands of Herod.

****St. Joseph, increase our zeal for growing in holiness by the hope of eternal reward.***

ELEVENTH DAY

We must believe that the life of St. Joseph, spent in the presence of Jesus and Mary, was a continual prayer, abounding in acts of faith, confidence, love, resignation, and oblation. Since, then, the reward of the saints corresponds to their merits during life, consider how great must be the glory of St. Joseph in heaven. St. Augustine compares the other saints to the stars, but St. Joseph to the sun.

It is, then, very reasonable to suppose that St. Joseph, after Mary, surpasses all

the other saints in merit and glory. The Venerable Bernardine de Bustis says that when St. Joseph asks any grace for those who are devoted to him, his prayers have in a certain manner the force of a command with Jesus and Mary.

**St. Joseph, obtain for us a great spirit of prayer.*

TWELFTH DAY

To prove the power which St. Joseph possesses in paradise, St. Bernardine of Siena writes thus: 'We cannot doubt that Christ accords to St. Joseph, now that he is in heaven, even more perfectly the respect and reverence which He paid to him on earth. Our Lord, Who on earth revered St. Joseph as His father, will certainly deny him nothing that he asks in heaven. Let us then say to him with confidence:

**St. Joseph, powerful protector of souls, keep us from all sin.*

THIRTEENTH DAY

O great St. Joseph, since God has served thou, I also wish to enroll myself in thy service. I wish henceforth to serve thee, to honour and love thee. Take me under thy protection and dispose of me as thou pleasest. My holy St. Joseph, pray

to Jesus for me. Having obeyed all thy commands on earth, He will certainly never refuse anything thou ask of Him. Tell Him to pardon me the offences that I have committed against Him. Tell Him to detach me from creatures and from myself. Ask Him to inflame me with His holy love.

**St. Joseph, watch over us, thy children.*

FOURTEENTH DAY

Most holy patriarch, now that you are on a lofty throne in heaven near thy beloved Jesus, Who was subject to thee on earth, have pity on me, who am exposed to the attacks of so many enemies, to the evil spirits, and the passions that continually strive to rob me of the grace of God. Through the grace given to thee on earth of enjoying the continual society of Jesus and Mary, obtain for me the grace of living during the remaining days of my life united to God, by resisting the attacks of hell. Grant, too, that I may die with the love of Jesus and Mary in my heart so that I may be able one day to enjoy with thee, their company in the kingdom of heaven.

**St. Joseph, grant me a horror of sin and the grace to conquer my passions.*

FIFTEENTH DAY

St. Bernard, speaking of St. Joseph's power of dispensing graces to his devout servants, makes use of the following remarkable words: 'To some of the saints power is granted to succour us in particular necessities; but to St. Joseph power is granted to succour in all necessities, and to defend all those who, with devotion, have recourse to him. Let us then often say to him:

**St. Joseph, help us when we are in need.*

SIXTEENTH DAY

St. Teresa says: 'I do not remember to have asked any favour from St. Joseph which he did not grant. An account of the many graces which God has bestowed upon me, and of the dangers, corporal and spiritual, from which He has delivered me through this saint would excite wonder. The Lord appears to have given power to

the other saints to assist us in a single necessity; but experience shows that St. Joseph gives aid in all. The Lord gives us to understand that, as He was to be subject to St. Joseph on earth, so in heaven He does whatever the saint asks.

**St. Joseph, obtain for me the grace of perseverance in prayer.*

SEVENTEENTH DAY

St. Teresa also writes: 'I would wish to persuade all the world to be devoted to St. Joseph, because I have long experience of the great favours which he obtains from God. I have never known any soul especially devoted to him that did not always advance in virtue. I ask, for God's sake, that they who do not believe me will at least make a trial of

this devotion. I cannot believe that favours are not granted to St. Joseph in return for the help which he gave on earth to Jesus and Mary.

**St. Joseph, patron of the*



interior life, lead me to that perfection which God requires of me.

EIGHTEENTH DAY

Let us ask St. Joseph for the grace to love our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the particular grace which St. Joseph obtains for those who are devout to him—a tender love toward the Incarnate Word. The saint merited the power to bestow this grace upon his servants by the great love which he himself bore toward Jesus while he lived on earth.

**St. Joseph, make me love Jesus with all my heart.*

NINETEENTH DAY

When Jesus lived in this world in the house of St. Joseph, could a sinner who desired to obtain forgiveness from Our Lord have found a more efficacious means of obtaining pardon than through St. Joseph? If, then, we desire to receive the forgiveness of our sins, let us have recourse to St. Joseph who, now that he is in heaven, is more loved by Jesus Christ than he was loved by Him on earth.

**St. Joseph, obtain from Jesus the pardon of my sins.*

TWENTIETH DAY

‘And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the town of Nazareth into Judea to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem (Luke 2:4). In response to the decree of Caesar Augustus, St. Joseph made the long journey across the hills from Galilee to Bethlehem with Mary, who bore beneath her heart the Incarnate Son of God. What sweet conversations must Mary and Joseph have held on this journey on the mercy of God in sending His Son into the world to redeem the human race, and on the love of this Son in coming into this valley of tears in order to atone by His suffering and death for the sins of men!

**St. Joseph, I wish to belong entirely to thee, so that through thee I may belong entirely to Jesus and Mary.*

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

‘And it came to pass while they were there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:6-7). How great must have been the sorrow of St. Joseph when he could find no shelter for Mary

on the night of the birth of the Divine Word, and was obliged to bring her to a stable! How his heart must have been pierced with anguish to see his holy spouse, who was pregnant, and near the time of childbirth, trembling with cold in that damp cave, which was open on every side. Dear St. Joseph, through the pain which you felt in seeing the Divine Word born in a stable, so poor, without fire, without clothes,, and in hearing the cries caused by the cold which afflicted Him, I pray thee to obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins by which I have drawn tears from Jesus.

****St. Joseph, penetrate my heart with contrition and obtain for me the grace never to sin again.***

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

‘And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger (Luke 2:7). How great must have been the joy of St. Joseph when he heard Mary calling him and saying ‘Joseph, come, and adore our infant God, Who is just born in this cave. Behold how beautiful He is. Look at the King of the world in this manger, on this straw. See how He, Who makes the seraphs burn with love, trembles with cold. Behold how

He Who is the joy of paradise weeps! Dear St. Joseph, through the joy which you received at the first sight of the infant Jesus in the crib, so beautiful and lovely that your heart began from that moment to beat with love for Him alone, obtain for me also the grace to love Jesus with an ardent love on earth so that I may one day go to enjoy Him in heaven.

****St. Joseph, share with me a little of the burning love that thou didst bear to Jesus.***

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men of good will (Luke 2:14). Consider how great was the love and tenderness of St. Joseph when he beheld with his own eyes the Son of God become an infant; when he heard the angels singing around their newborn Lord, and saw the stable filled with light. Kneeling down and weeping with love and compassion, Joseph said: ‘I adore Thee, yes I adore Thee, my Lord and my God. How great is my happiness to be the first, after Mary, to see Thee born, and to know that in this world Thou wishest to be called and reputed my Son! Allow me, then, also to call Thee my Son, and to say: My God and

my Son, to Thee I consecrate my whole being. My life shall be no longer mine, but shall be Thine without reserve!

****St. Joseph, grant that I may spend my life, like thee, in the service of God.***

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

‘An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, Arise, and take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt’ (Matt. 2:13). Consider the ready obedience of St. Joseph, who raised no doubts about the time of the journey, nor about the manner of travelling, nor about the place in Egypt in which they were to stay, but immediately prepared to set out. He instantly makes known to Mary the command of the angel, and on the same night sets out without guide on a journey of 400 miles through mountains, across rugged roads and deserts.

****My holy protector, obtain for me the grace of perfect obedience to the divine will.***

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

How much St. Joseph must have suffered on the journey into Egypt in seeing the sufferings of Jesus and Mary! Their food must have been a piece of

hard bread. They could have slept only in some poor hut, or in the open air. Joseph was indeed conformed in all things to the will of the Eternal Father, but his tender and loving heart could not but feel pain in seeing the Son of God trembling and weeping from cold and the other hardships which He experienced.

****St. Joseph. obtain for me the grace that in my journey to eternity I may never lose the company of Jesus and Mary.***

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

‘The boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents did not know it (Luke 2:43). How great was the pain of St. Joseph when Jesus was lost in the temple! Joseph was accustomed to the enjoyment of the sweet presence of his beloved Saviour. What, then, must have been his sorrow when he was deprived of it for three days, without knowing whether he should evermore find Jesus, and most painful of all, without knowing why he had lost Him. How great, on the other hand, was Joseph’s joy when he found Jesus and realized that the absence of the Child did not arise from any neglect on his part, but from a zeal for the glory of the Father.

**St. Joseph, through the merits of the pains which thou didst suffer at losing Jesus, obtain for me tears to weep always for my sins.*

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

‘He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them (Luke 2:51). Reflect on the holy life which Joseph led in the company of Jesus and Mary. In that family there was no business except that which tended to the greater glory of God; there were no thoughts or desires except the thought and desire of pleasing God; there were no discourses except on the love which men owe to God, and which God has shown to men, especially in sending His only begotten Son into the world to suffer and to end His life in a sea of sorrows and insults for the salvation of mankind.

**St. Joseph, through the tears which thou didst shed in contemplating the future passion of Jesus, obtain for me a continual remembrance of the suffering of my Redeemer.*

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

Consider the love which St. Joseph bore to Mary, his holy spouse. She was

the most beautiful of all women. She was more humble, more meek, more pure, more obedient, more inflamed with the love of God, than all the angels and than all men that have been or shall be created. Hence, she merited all his love. Add to this his realization of the love that she bore for him, and the fact that God had chosen her as His beloved Mother.

**St. Joseph, obtain for me a great love for Mary, thy most holy spouse.*

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

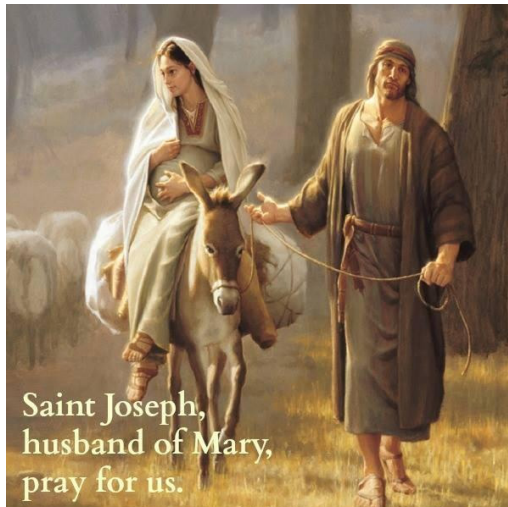
Consider the love which Joseph bore to Jesus. This love was not purely human like the love of other fathers, but superhuman; for he loved Jesus not only as his son but also as his God. Joseph knew from the angel that his child was the Divine Word Who had become man to save mankind. He realized, too, that he himself had been chosen from among all men to be the protector and guardian of this divine Infant. What a flame of holy love must, then, have been enkindled in the heart of Joseph by reflecting on all these things, and by the sight of his Lord obeying him like a little boy, opening and closing the door, helping him to saw or to plane, gathering fragments of wood, or

sweeping the house!

****St. Joseph, remove from my heart all that could be an obstacle to the love of God.***

THIRTIETH DAY

‘Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His faithful ones (Ps. 115:6). After having faithfully served Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph reached the end of his life in the house at Nazareth. There, surrounded by angels, assisted by Jesus Christ the King of angels, and by Mary, his spouse, who placed themselves at each side of his poor bed, filled with the peace of paradise, he departed from this miserable life. Who shall ever be able to understand the sweetness, the consolation, the blessed hope, the acts of resignation, the flames of charity which the words of eternal life coming alternately from the lips of Jesus and Mary, breathed into the soul of Joseph at the end of his life?



****St. Joseph, grant me peace and resignation to God's will at the hour of my death.***

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

Great, indeed, will be the comfort of those, who, at the hour of death shall be protected by St. Joseph. For this great saint has received from God power to command the devils and to drive them away, less they tempt his servants in their dying moments. Happy is the soul that shall be assisted by this great advocate, who, on account of having died with the assistance of Jesus and Mary, and because of having preserved the infant Jesus from the danger of death by his flight into Egypt, has received the privilege of being the patron of a good

death, and of delivering his clients from the danger of eternal death.

****St. Joseph, defend me from the attacks of the devils at the last moment of my life.***