



**The Month of March – The month of Saint Joseph
Novena to Saint Joseph: Sunday 9th March to Tuesday 18th March.**

Saint Joseph is Patron of the Universal Church – he is a most powerful intercessor and we need his help in the Church and in the world and in families at this moment.

To you, O Blessed Joseph, we come in our trials, and having asked the help of your most holy spouse, we confidently ask your patronage also. Through that sacred bond of charity which united you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the fatherly love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you to look graciously upon the beloved inheritance which Jesus Christ purchased by his blood, and to aid us in our necessities with your power and strength.

O most provident guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ. Most beloved father, dispel the evil of falsehood and sin. Our most mighty protector, graciously assist us from heaven in our struggle with the powers of darkness. And just as you once saved the Child Jesus from mortal danger, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of her enemies and from all adversity. Shield each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your help, we may be able to live a virtuous life, to die a holy death, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

Prayer of Pope Leo XIII to be prayed after the rosary.



THEME FOR LENT

TURN TO FACE CHRIST – LET US REORIENTATE OURSELVES TO CHRIST AS THE CENTRE OF OUR LIVES

What can we do for Christ this Lent?

This Lent we want what Jesus wants

- Christ wants to live his life in us and to share the whole mystery of his life with us – joys and sorrows.
- He is looking for souls to take a little sip of the bitter chalice that he had to drink.
- See everything that happens in our lives (apart from sin) as Jesus living in us, sharing with us.
- He is looking for souls this Lent to keep him company when he was deserted by his closest friends.
- Meditate on the Passion. Jesus revealed to Saint Faustina that an hour meditating on his passion was more than a year of rosaries. Meditate particularly on the Garden of Gethsemane
- Keep Silence – Listen – Remove the little world that surrounds us – thoughts of creatures, imagination, the voices that inundate us (worry, anxiety, control, fear) so that we can hear the voice of Jesus and so that he can enter freely into our hearts.
- Make good and regular confessions. Confession is saying I chose this creature, this pleasure etc rather than choosing Christ.
- Pray for courage and put into the deep. We can truly come to the Paschal mysteries having undergone a profound conversion if we allow the Holy Spirit to purify us.

Let us remember that Jesus took on himself all our temptations and conquered them. St Augustine says that this is the great motive for trust and confidence. We have already conquered in Christ. Therefore, the secret in our battles is to have the greatest trust in the power of Christ working within us, and therefore, to surrender ourselves totally to him.

Temptations mostly arise and gain their power when we have already separated ourselves from Christ. Like Saint Peter who fell by denying Christ because he walked AT A DISTANCE from him.

Stay close to Christ, enveloped beneath the wings of the Most High (psalm 90) and wrapped in the mantle of Mary, these are the means for conquering.

1.Lent is a time of Grace, a vital time given each year to help us become true children of God with our baptismal innocence restored.

2.The main battle in Lent is against sin—to battle our own demons and to make a thorough conversion of heart: The antiphon for day time prayer: Now is the time for redeeming sin and for saving souls.

3.It is a time of saving souls and therefore we must look outwards in works of Charity and proclaiming the gospel. The Liturgy emphasises almsgiving in particular.

4.It is a time for greater diligence in prayer particularly attending the Liturgy during this time.

5.Although we may choose to give up things or do things extra, fasting is the primary means the Church puts forward in this season. This is not only because it works symbolically—we fast from food, as we fast from sin and are fed by the word of God; but also because fasting has a salutary effect on our health; our minds become clearer and certain temptations (e.g. against purity) are lessened. I would strongly urge that unless medical conditions determine otherwise fasting plays some role in our Lent. Very simple: one main meal, two lesser meals. which combined do not exceed the main meal; no snacking in between. This is great wisdom: not too onerous but very productive.

6.Whatever we choose to do should not be so onerous that it detracts from prayer and our spiritual battle, or so light that there is no aid given in this battle. The Liturgical prayers assume that we are doing penance and that we realise we are in a battle.

7.Lent is a time for preparation—it makes no sense unless seen in the light of the Easter Vigil when we celebrate new birth with the baptism of the Catechumens and ourselves are made full of grace. The First Lenten preface is beautifully constructed in this respect:

“Each year You give us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed. You give us a spirit of loving reverence for You, our Father, and of willing service to our neighbour. As we recall the great events that gave us new life in Christ, You bring the image of Your Son to perfection within us.”

8.Lent is a time of Joy because our minds are being made pure.

“Christ does not seek comfort; he goes only to places where divine battles are fought – the heart of man, the depths of Jordan’s waters where demonic monsters were though to lurk, and the desert, where only the saint or demon can survive.....The desert offers two diametrically opposed solutions to the plight of man: either capitulation to the comforts of the satanic attitude – food, power, possession – or surrender to the mercy of God’s providence. The desert is the place of utter poverty and therefore, potentially, of heroic trust in God.....When man experiences his own bareness, when he is most in need then is the time of the decisive crises. Will he accept easy, immediate remedies and compromise his vocation as child of God, or will he wait in silence and privation, fasting from all the world has to offer for the perfect length of God’s pleasure – represented by the forty days and nights.”
(E.L.Merikis Commentary on St Matthew vol 1)

God bless, Fr. Dominic

