

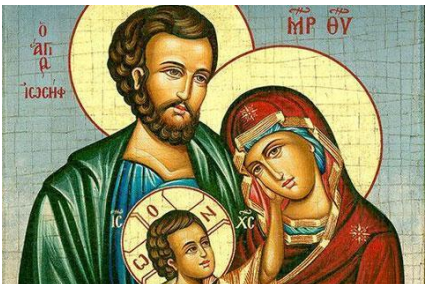
Virtual Family Prayer Bag



Dear Parent / Carer,
here is an electronic version of our Prayer Bag
for the Feast of **St Joseph**

Celebrating St Joseph

Please take some time over the next few days
to come together, as a family, in prayer.
The Feast of St Joseph is celebrated on **19th March.**



A Message from Bishop David



Dear young friends in Christ,

St Joseph is a quiet figure in the Gospels. After the account of Jesus' birth and childhood he disappears from view. Perhaps this is why many have wondered if he had died whilst Jesus was quite young? We do not know the answer to this question. We do know that Jesus is often referred to as the son of the carpenter. St Joseph is known by his profession and perhaps this is why he is the patron saint of workers. One of his great Feasts is on 1st May, St Joseph the Worker. He is also known as the universal patron of the Church. This is because of the role he exercised as a spiritual father to Jesus. He exercises that same role in the Church today for each one of us.

I chose to be ordained bishop, and to begin my ministry amongst you as the Shepherd of the Diocese, on the Feast of St Joseph, 19th March. I have a lovely and unusual statue of St Joseph here in the chapel at Bishop's House. He is lying down and asleep! I love this statue! It reminds me that even when we are asleep, or perhaps not sure what to do next or feel powerless to do anything about a difficult situation, God is always at work. My prayer for each one of you, especially as we continue to deal with the pandemic crisis, but begin to see the way ahead to normal life, is that you might have the confidence and courage of St Joseph. Just trust everything to God as he did. Ask St Joseph to help you to work hard every day. And when you feel lonely or unhappy, ask St Joseph to be a spiritual father to you.

St Joseph, pray for us.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ David

Rt Revd Dr David J Oakley
Bishop of Northampton

Gathering Prayer

**Set aside some time in your day
to gather together for prayer
Make sure you are all sitting comfortably
Light a candle**



In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Joseph was the husband of Mary
and the foster – father of Jesus.
He was a carpenter.



St Joseph is the patron saint of
workers, fathers, families, refugees and
the whole Church all across the world

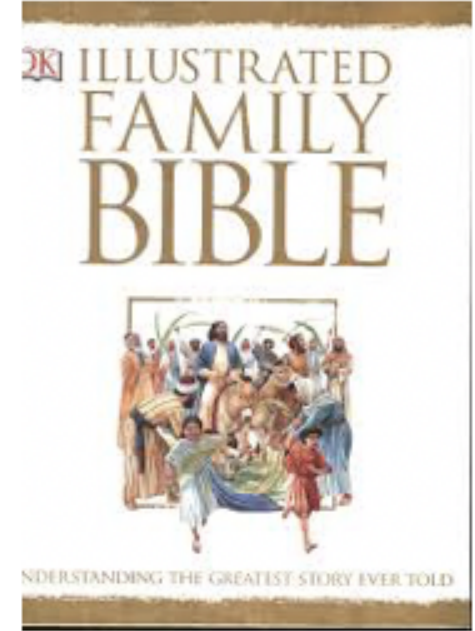
Joseph is often depicted as an older man, with grey hair and a beard. He often appears frail and in the background. Some pictures show him with his carpenter's tools and others with the child Jesus and a lily.



Joseph isn't mentioned very much in the Bible.

We know

- he accepted Mary as his wife even though she was already pregnant,
- he took Mary to Bethlehem to register for the census
- he was descended from King David that's why he had to go to Bethlehem – the city of King David
- after Jesus birth he took the holy family to safety in Egypt



We celebrate the Feast of St Joseph on 19th March

He also has another feast day on 1st May.

The Feast of St Joseph the Worker





**Pope Francis
recently chose 2021
as a year dedicated
to St Joseph**

8th December 2020 – 8th December 2021

Pope Francis
wrote a letter
to everyone who belongs
to the Church,
all over the world,
to celebrate the
150th anniversary
of making St Joseph
the patron saint
of the Universal Church

A letter from
+Pope Francis



**In his letter,
Pope Francis tells us
what Joseph was like,
what sort of person he was.**



An obedient father



God spoke to Joseph through four dreams.
Joseph didn't understand
but he did as God asked him

An accepting father



Joseph accepted Mary completely.
He didn't understand what was happening
but he took Mary as his wife.
Josephs loved her and protected her.

A courageous father



Joseph made the long journey to Bethlehem, with Mary,
and finding no place to stay he took a stable,
the best he could find.

He made the stable a welcoming place for Jesus to be born.

A working father



Joseph was a carpenter.
He earned a living
to provide for his family.

A loving father



Joseph watched Jesus
grow every day.
He taught Jesus
many things
and held him by the hand

A beloved father



**Joseph gave himself to Mary and Jesus
and devoted his life to them**



A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

Glory to you O Lord

**This is how Jesus Christ came to be born:
His mother Mary was betrothed
to be married to Joseph,
but before they came together,
she was found to be pregnant
through the Holy Spirit.**

Joseph was a man of honour and wanted to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her quietly.

He had made up his mind to do this when an angel of the Lord appeared to him, in a dream, and said:

“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you must name him Jesus.

After the wise men had left
the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph,
in a dream, and said:

‘Get up, take the child and his mother
with you and escape to Egypt,
and stay there until I tell you,
because King Herod intends to search for the child
and kill him.

Joseph did as he was asked.

**After King Herod's death,
The angel of the Lord
appeared, in a dream, to Joseph in Egypt.
'Get up, take the child and his mother with you
and go back to the land of Israel,
for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.'
So Joseph got up
and taking the child and his mother with him
they went back to the land of Israel.**

**When Joseph returned he found out
that King Herod's son
had succeeded his father as ruler of Judea
and he was afraid to go there.
Joseph was warned in a dream.
He left there and went to the region of Galilee
where the family settled in Nazareth**



The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

We can learn a lot from Joseph



Joseph was a caring and patient man.
He always obeyed God
even though he did not always understand.

Let us pray.....

We pray that we will always trust in God

We pray for refugees and immigrants

We pray for all families

**We pray for those who work
and those who have lost their jobs**



Prayer to St Joseph

Dear St Joseph,
help us to be more like you:
caring and patient
in all that we do.

We ask you to watch over us
just as you watched over the child Jesus.

Protect us and guide us
everyday of our lives.

Amen



How can we be more like St Joseph?

Let's try this week to be more



loving
obedient
accepting
courageous
hard working



The Sleeping Joseph



Pope Francis, and Bishop David, both tell us that they have a statue of the sleeping St Joseph.

Pope Francis tells us how he asks St Joseph to pray.

This is what Pope Francis said:



***” I also want to tell you something very personal.
I really like St. Joseph, because he is a strong and silent man.
On my desk I have a statue of St. Joseph sleeping.
While he’s sleeping, he takes care of the Church! Yes!
He can do it, we know that.
When I have a problem, a difficulty,
I write a little note and put it under St. Joseph,
so that he can dream about it!
In other words I ask him: Pray for this problem! “***

Let us, like Pope Francis and Bishop David,
leave all our problems and difficulties
with St Joseph
and ask him to pray with us.



St Joseph: Pray for us

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen