

WEEK OF PRAYER 13 – 19 MARCH 2021

TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF POPE FRANCIS'
'AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR'



The Joy of Love experienced by families
is also the joy of the Church. - Pope Francis
Amoris Laetitia, 1

On 19 March 2021, the Church will celebrate five years since the publication of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*) on the beauty and joy of love in the family. On that day, Pope Francis will launch a year dedicated to the family which will conclude on 26 June 2022 on the occasion of the Tenth World Meeting of Families in Rome.

Bishops have welcomed the Holy Father's 'Amoris Laetitia Family Year' and will mark its beginning with a Week of Prayer from 13 March to 19 March (the Feast of Saint Joseph). This resource is offered by the Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family to assist families to participate in the Week of Prayer.

This resource comprises a page for each day of the Week of Prayer which can be easily followed in parish, school and at home. Each day has a theme reflecting on family life through the lens of Saint Joseph, whom we are also celebrating as part of the family year. The resource has at its centre the prayer from Pope Francis which he wrote for the Year of St Joseph and some inspiring reflections from '*The Joy of Love*' (*Amoris Laetitia*).

The Council for Marriage and the Family will be making more resources available throughout the 'Amoris Laetitia Family Year'. For more see www.catholicbishops.ie.

Saturday 13 March: Saint Joseph – the Man of Faith

Today we begin a **Week of Prayer** as we prepare to celebrate a special year which Pope Francis has dedicated to the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. The year will begin on the Feast of Saint Joseph on 19 March. We have chosen Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our Week of Prayer.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph as a man of faith. We pray for all families in our parish: that they will feel nurtured by the coming year, especially when it comes to passing on the faith from one generation to the next.

In order for faith to continue through the generations of a family, there must be a passing down of that faith. The role of parents is to pass down the faith to their children who will in turn pass it down to their children and so faith can thrive from generation to generation. We read a great example of this in Scripture:

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." (2 Timothy 1:5)

In this passage, we see faith was passed down through three generations. Lois the grandmother, Eunice the mother and Timothy the son.

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.

Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

As we conclude day one of our Week of Prayer ahead of this special Year on the Family, I offer you a short reflection from Pope' Francis from 'The Joy of Love':

"In the family, "three words need to be used. I want to repeat this! Three words: 'Please', 'Thank you', 'Sorry'. Three essential words!" (***Amoris Laetitia*, 100**)

God bless all families.

AMEN



Sunday 14 March: Saint Joseph – the Man of Joy

We continue our **Week of Prayer** as we prepare to celebrate the special year which Pope Francis has dedicated to the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. We have chosen Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our Week of Prayer which will end on the Feast of Saint Joseph on 19 March.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph as a man of joy. We pray for all families in our parish: that they will know that the joy of love they share in marriage and family life, is also a source of great joy for the Church.

The love of a father for his children and his wife is captured beautifully in the life of St. Joseph. Even though he is mentioned a number of times in the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke, no words of his are recorded. What mattered was that Joseph was there, present to Mary and Jesus, always ready to listen, to encourage, to protect, to provide and to love.

In the well know piece of Scripture from Corinthians we read: "Now faith, hope, and love remain - these three things - and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

The greatest love of all is expressed in families throughout our parish day after day, and more than ever during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.



Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

As we conclude day one of our Week of Prayer ahead of this special Year on the Family, I offer you a short reflection from Pope' Francis from 'The Joy of Love':

"The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church." (***Amoris Laetitia, 1***)

God bless all families.

AMEN

Monday 15 March: Saint Joseph – the Worker

We continue our **Week of Prayer** as we prepare to celebrate the special year which Pope Francis has dedicated to the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. We have chosen Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our Week of Prayer which will end this coming Friday on the Feast of Saint Joseph.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph the worker. We pray for all families in our parish as a new week begins which may include working from home, homeschooling, or working on the front line in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. We pray that all family members will know that they are loved, appreciated and cherished.

All the work of our hands is precious and to be valued. So much of the work that takes place in family life is under the radar: we think of the parents and grandparents working to better the lives of their children; the work of family carers that is 24/7. We think too at this time of those who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the pandemic.

In Scripture we read:

May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands... (Psalm 90:17)

May God Bless the work of our hands and make us always strive for a good work/life balance.

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.

Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

As we conclude day one of our Week of Prayer ahead of this special Year on the Family, I offer you a short reflection from Pope' Francis from 'The Joy of Love':

"The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church."
(Amoris Laetitia, 31)

God bless all families. **AMEN**



Tuesday 16 March: Saint Joseph – the Family Man

We continue our **Week of Prayer** as we prepare to celebrate the special year on the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. We have chosen Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our week of prayer which will end on the Feast of Saint Joseph on 19 March.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph the family man. We pray for all families in our parish who have found lockdown a struggle.

We pray that families will know the support that their faith can offer them in times of difficulty and that families can share hope and inspire patience in each other at all times.

In Scripture we read:

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."
(Romans 12:12)

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.

Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

As we conclude day one of our Week of Prayer ahead of this special Year on the Family, I offer you a short reflection from Pope' Francis from 'The Joy of Love':

"The family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom."
(Amoris Laetitia, 274)

God bless all families.

AMEN



Wednesday 17 March: Saint Joseph – the Migrant

Feast of Saint Patrick, Patron of Ireland

We continue our **Week of Prayer** as we prepare to celebrate the special year which Pope Francis has dedicated to the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. We have chosen Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our Week of Prayer which will end in just two day's time on the Feast of Saint Joseph.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph the migrant. We remember St Patrick, who heard the call to come among us as a stranger. May we be attentive to the voice of the Lord in our own lives.

We pray for families in our world who face the devastating reality that their best option is to flee to another country seeking refuge. May we always be a parish offering welcome to those in need.

In Scripture we read:

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me. (Matthew 25:35)

May we take time to think about how our faith asks us to respond to those forced to flee their family homes.

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.

Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

As we conclude day one of our Week of Prayer ahead of this special Year on the Family, I offer you a short reflection from Pope' Francis from 'The Joy of Love':

"The Church is a family of families, constantly enriched by the lives of all those domestic churches."
(Amoris Laetitia, 87)

God bless all families.

AMEN



Thursday 18 March: Saint Joseph – the Spouse

We continue our **Week of Prayer** as we prepare to celebrate the special year which Pope Francis has dedicated to the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. We have chosen Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our Week of Prayer which will end tomorrow on the Feast of Saint Joseph.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph the spouse. We pray today for all married couples and for those preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. We pray for the many couples who have had to postpone their marriage as a result of the Covid-19. May all these couples feel supported by their love for one another and by their faith.

In 'The Joy of Love' Pope Francis reminds us that "The space which each of the spouses makes exclusively for their personal relationship with God not only helps heal the hurts of life in common, but also enables the spouses to find in the love of God the deepest source of meaning in their own lives." (*Amoris Laetitia*, 320)

In Scripture we read: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.

Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

As we conclude day one of our Week of Prayer ahead of this special Year on the Family, I offer you a short reflection from Pope Francis from 'The Joy of Love':

"My advice is never to let the day end without making peace in the family. And how am I going to make peace? By getting down on my knees? No! Just by a small gesture, a little something, and harmony within your family will be restored. Just a little caress, no words are necessary."

(Amoris Laetitia, 104)

God bless all families.

AMEN



Friday 19 March: Saint Joseph – the Protector

Feast of Saint Joseph and beginning of the Amoris Laetitia Family Year

We conclude our **Week of Prayer** and begin the special year which Pope Francis has dedicated to the 'The Joy of Love' in family life. We chose Saint Joseph as our inspiration for our Week of Prayer and we hope that his life will continue to inspire us through the coming year.

Our reflection today is on Saint Joseph the protector. We pray especially for protection for all families from Covid-19. During the pandemic, we have observed the dedication and generosity of health care professionals, and many other frontline workers as they treated, comforted and served many sick, elderly and vulnerable people in our communities. Many families have shared their appreciation for the gift of human life in all its stages and the lengths to which we go to protect and save life. As we begin the Family Year may we always be called and inspired to guard and protect all human life as sacred and sacrosanct.

In Scripture we read: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah (1:5)

We pray Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph:

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.

Recite together: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

Litany of Saint Joseph

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us.

Litany continued on the next page.....



Friday 19 March: Saint Joseph – the Protector

(continued)

Holy Mary, pray for us.
St. Joseph, pray for us.
Illustrious son of David, pray for us.
Light of patriarchs, pray for us.
Spouse of the Mother of God, pray for us.
Chaste guardian of the Virgin, pray for us.
Foster father of the Son of God, pray for us.
Watchful defender of Christ, pray for us.
Head of the Holy Family, pray for us.

Joseph most just, pray for us.
Joseph most chaste, pray for us.
Joseph most prudent, pray for us.
Joseph most valiant, pray for us.
Joseph most obedient, pray for us.
Joseph most faithful, pray for us.
Mirror of patience, pray for us.
Lover of poverty, pray for us.
Model of workmen, pray for us.
Glory of home life, pray for us.
Guardian of virgins, pray for us.
Pillar of families, pray for us.
Solace of the afflicted, pray for us.
Hope of the sick, pray for us.
Patron of the dying, pray for us.
Terror of demons, pray for us.
Protector of Holy Church, pray for us.
Amen



Concluding prayer

As we conclude our **Week of Prayer**, we ask for God's protection for all families through the intercession of Saint Joseph. We pray his **Memorare**:

Remember, O most pure spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, my great protector, Saint Joseph, that no one ever had recourse to your protection, or implored your aid without obtaining relief. Confiding therefore in your goodness, I come before you. Do not turn down my petitions, foster father of the Redeemer, but graciously receive them. Amen.

I offer you a final reflection from Pope' Francis on the family: "The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures. In that variety of gifts and encounters which deepen communion, God has his dwelling place." (***Amoris Laetitia*, 315**)

God bless all families.

AMEN

Prepared by the Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family