



NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH

Meditations based on the traditional contemplation of the agonies and joys of St. Joseph that were present in each of the mysteries of his life.

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Final prayer for each day of the novena:

Lord, who chose St. Joseph before the creation of the world as the father and protector of Jesus your Son, and then, until the end of the world, as the father and patron of the Church your Spouse, through your intercession we ask of you the special grace of this novena (indicate), and most of all we ask you for all the graces needed for our salvation. We make this prayer through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is one God with you and the Holy Spirit, Amen!

1st Day: Matrimony of Mary and Joseph

Invocation: **Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!**

Reading¹:

“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus.” (Mt 1:20-21)

“Who is this coming up from the desert leaning on her Beloved?” (So 8:5)

“Pharaoh and all his ministers approved of what he had said. Then Pharaoh asked his ministers, ‘Can we find any other man like this, possessing the spirit of God?’ So Pharaoh said to Joseph: ‘Seeing that God has given you knowledge of all this, there can be no one as intelligent and wise as you. You shall be my chancellor, and all my people shall respect your orders; only this throne shall set me above you.’ It was Joseph, as the man in authority over the country, who sold the grain to all the comers.” (Gn 41:38-40, 42:6)

Meditation:

The annunciation of the Angel to Our Lady caused Joseph moments of great distress. In his humility, Joseph felt excluded from the plans of the Most High, and decided to depart secretly. But in dreams the Lord called his name, because Joseph too was being summoned!

We immediately think of another Joseph, at the beginning of salvation, to whom God spoke in dreams, and who was lifted from the meekest position by the pharaoh to the highest rank as administrator of all the granaries of the kingdom. Just like Joseph of Egypt, Joseph of Nazareth, filled with the Spirit of God, would be put at the head of the House of the Lord, at the head of the true Granary, in that place where the Bread from Heaven is born: Jesus.

Joseph felt overjoyed and rose willingly, and from that moment on he never left Mary. History has never seen a more beautiful and more devout matrimony.

Prayer:

Through your anguish and your joy, through your humiliation and your exaltation, through your pain and your love, intercede for us, St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen!

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

¹ The scripture passages in this English language version of the *Novena to St. Joseph*, by © Teresa Power (2016), are copied from *The Jerusalem Bible: Popular Edition with Abridged Introductions and Notes*. London. Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd..



2nd Day: The journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading:

“So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David’s House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.” (Lk 2:4-7).

“[David swore] not to enter tent or house, not to climb into bed, not to allow himself to sleep, not even to close his eyes, until he had found a place for Yahweh, a home for the Mighty One of Jacob!” (Ps 132/131)

Meditation:

Joseph had received the mission from God to care for the Holy Family. To fulfil it perfectly he needed to listen attentively to the inner voice that guided him, even when everything else around him seemed absurd. And so it was in total obedience that Joseph set out for Bethlehem and searched for a place for the Child to be born. But despite all his efforts no door opened and the Child had to be born in a poor and cold stable. Joseph could not have done more, and although he was at peace, he was exhausted. Could it be that Joseph felt the sadness of someone who thinks they have let their Lord down? So many times we experience that in our lives. But the Child filled the stable with light. And immediately the angels and shepherds sang out to pay Him homage. Joseph’s heart overflowed with joy!

Prayer:

Through your disappointment and your hope, through your struggle and your confidence, through your pain and your love, intercede for us, St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen!

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

3rd Day: The circumcision of Jesus

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading:

“When the eighth day came and the child was to be circumcised, they gave him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given him before his conception.” (Lk 2:21)

“For all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved” (Ac 4:12)

Meditation:

To be circumcised is to be implanted in the history of the people of Abraham. Joseph was called by God to provide the genealogy, the paternity – the name, to Jesus. And in giving the name to Jesus, Joseph was the first to proclaim the name by which we are saved from our sins. What an honour that was for Joseph!

The Child’s cry of pain from the cut in his flesh made Joseph’s heart shudder almost as if in anticipation of a much deeper pain that Joseph would not witness while on earth. But intense joy quickly took hold of him: that drop of blood was the confirmation that the Son of God was truly now the Son of Joseph too.

Prayer:

Through your suffering and your joy, through your humility and your holy paternal pride, through your pain and your love, intercede for us, St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen!

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer



4th Day: The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading:

“And when the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, they took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord... Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon... Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: ‘Now, Master you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel’.

There was a prophetess also, Anna... She was well on in years... [and she] never left the temple, serving God day and night with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.” (Lk 2:22-38)

Meditation:

Forty days after the birth of Jesus, Joseph brought Mary and the Child to the Temple in Jerusalem where he took part in all the rituals of his people and presented Jesus to the priest. And there the old Simeon, prophesising, spoke of the future suffering of Mary and Jesus. Joseph listened on with such pain, for wasn't it he, Joseph, who was responsible for the security and happiness of both of them? Was he going to fail in his mission? But when Simeon and Anna proclaimed the liberation of Israel that Jesus would bring about, Joseph's heart trembled with awe and emotion.

Prayer:

Through your anguish and your hope, through your sacrifice and your reward, through your pain and your love, intercede for us, St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen!

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

5th day: The flight into Egypt

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading

“After they 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 into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him”. So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophets: I called my son out of Egypt”. (Mt 2:13-15)

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “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, went back to the land of Israel. But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled: He will be called a Nazarene”. (Mt 2:19-23)

Meditation



In the middle of the night, Joseph was told in dreams to flee with his family to Egypt. And in the middle of the night, Joseph got up, ready as usual, and did as it had been foretold. Time passed and we find the same readiness, the same fidelity to the received Word when the Holy Family returned to Nazareth.

In the humility and the poverty of a family of refugees, the Holy Family fulfils in its story the entire story of the people of God, who found in Egypt protection and were later freed from there. Moses is a great affirmation of the salvation that Jesus, the true liberator, will bring us. And he is also an announcement of the humble yet extremely special mission of Joseph who led Mary and Jesus in safety from Egypt to Nazareth.

Prayer

Through your anxiety and your willingness, through your fear and your strength, through your pain and your love, intercede for us St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

6th day: Jesus is found in the Temple

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading:

“Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, ‘My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you’. ‘Why were you looking for me?’ he replied ‘Did you not know I must be busy with my Father’s affairs?’” (Lk 2:46-49)

Meditation:

The three days of suffering when Joseph lost his son in the Temple were his anticipated participation in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Is there any greater affliction than that of losing a son or daughter? Joseph felt that he had failed in his mission, that he did not mind carefully enough the Treasure that had been confided to him. But at the same time, an inner voice preserved hope inside of him, for God would always be ahead of the caravan of the Holy Family. Joseph had no doubts that the Lord would always show him the way, like a column of fire. Would God have allowed such great distress if it were not for a higher purpose? In the midst of the affliction, Joseph did not lose hope.

How many times do we too doubt like that, in the face of the surprises of life? When finally Joseph found Jesus among the Priests of the Temple, his joy poured out.

Prayer:

Through your anxiety and your confidence, through your anguish and perseverance, through your pain and your love, intercede for us St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

7th day: The hidden life of the Sacred Family of Nazareth

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading



“He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men” (Lk 2:51-52)

Meditation:

For thirty years, Joseph took care of Jesus and Mary with a truly paternal and spousal love. Living in his culture with simplicity, without notions of grandeur, Joseph in his humility hid the supreme mission that had been given to him. With Joseph, Jesus learned to pray, to go to the synagogue and to meditate on the Scriptures. With Joseph, Jesus learned all the customs of his people. With Joseph, Jesus learned to earn his own livelihood through honest, careful and perfect labour. With Joseph, Jesus spent many hours at play and laughed happily many times. For his part, with Mary and Jesus, Joseph learned to pray, to converse with the Father and to meditate on the mysteries of the Kingdom. No mystic in the history of the Church has ever reached the heights that Joseph rose to of intimacy with the divine. At the end of each day, Joseph lifted up to God a hymn of thanks. Despite the apparent normality of his existence, he did not forget to be thankful for the grace he received of sharing his inner life with the Saviour and his Mother. Nobody has ever venerated Mary and adored Jesus like Joseph did each day of his life.

Prayer:

Through your simplicity and your greatness, through your gratitude and your joy, through your pain and your love, intercede for us St. Joseph, with your Son Jesus, Our Lord, Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

8th day: The death of St. Joseph

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading

“Then, leaving the plains of Moab, Moses went up Mount Nebo, the peak of Pisgah opposite Jericho, and Yahweh showed him the whole land; Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the stretch of the Valley of Jericho, city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Yahweh said to him ‘This is the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying: I will give it to your descendants. I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross into it.’ There in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of Yahweh died as Yahweh decreed: he buried him in the valley, in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but to this day no one has ever found his grave. (Dt 34:1-6).

Meditation

Like Moses, Joseph was also called to lead a special family, the family of God, from “Egypt” to the “promised land” of the Gospel. His journey through the “desert” from Nazareth must have lasted around thirty years, but unlike the people of God that left Egypt, Joseph was totally faithful to the “cloud” and the “column of fire” that led him on. And like Moses, Joseph also died at the gates of the “promised land”, where Jesus, the new Joshua, would establish the people of God by his death and resurrection. Jesus was to begin His public life and Mary was to be left alone. Joseph died without having seen the prophecies about the name of Jesus fulfilled. No-one has ever discovered his burial place... Just like during his life, at his death pain was mingled with love and renunciation with confidence. Because even if Joseph suffered for having left Mary alone and for not being there to accompany Jesus to Calvary, Joseph knew better than ever that God is the Lord of History and leads all things for the good of those who love Him. Tradition tells us that Joseph died in the arms of Mary and Jesus. Could there be a more blessed death than that?

Prayer:

Through your life and your death, through your renunciation and your confidence, through your pain and your love, intercede for us St. Joseph, with your Son, Jesus, Our Lord, Amen.



Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer

9th day: The glory of St. Joseph

Invocation: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make our family one with yours!*

Reading

“He who looks after his master shall be honoured.” (Pr 27:18)

“Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet’s reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy man will have a holy man’s reward. If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.” (Mt 10:41-42)

Meditation

Jesus tells us that a cup of water given in His name will not go unrewarded. If those who welcome prophets receive the reward of prophets, and those who welcome the just receive the reward of the just, what reward could possibly be in store for the man who welcomed God Himself? Oh how Joseph will be rewarded in heaven, he who prepared a place for Jesus to be born, who saved Him from Herod, who fed and dressed Him, who educated and loved Him, who played with Him and who held Him in his arms with such great love! Let there be no doubt that Jesus wanted to exalt in Heaven the father he so loved on earth. After Mary, there is no greater glory than that of Joseph! He who cares for the Head also cares for the Body. From his heavenly place, St. Joseph continues to care for the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. That is indeed why the Popes proclaimed him to be the Patron Saint of the Universal Church.

Prayer:

Through your humility and your glory, through your simplicity and your greatness, through your pain and your love, intercede for us St. Joseph, with your Son, Jesus, Our Lord, Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father... Final prayer