

# “Year of St. Joseph”

**Dec. 8, 2020 - Dec. 8, 2021**

Pope Francis has decreed a Year of St. Joseph in which Catholics will have the opportunity to obtain a special plenary indulgence. There are many new ways that Catholics can receive an indulgence, including entrusting their daily work to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker or reciting the rosary with their families. These acts must be accompanied by sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the pope’s intentions, the usual conditions to obtain any plenary indulgence. Plenary indulgences remit all temporal punishment due to sin and must be accompanied by full detachment from sin.

According to the decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on Dec. 8, there are 15 ways to receive an indulgence:

- 1) Participate in a spiritual retreat for at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph.
- 2) Pray for St. Joseph’s intercession for the unemployed that they might find dignifying work.
- 3) Recite the Litany of St. Joseph for persecuted Christians.
- 4) Entrust one’s daily work and activity to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker.
- 5) Follow St. Joseph’s example in a corporal work of mercy, which includes: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, cloth the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the imprisoned, visit the sick, and bury the dead.
- 6) Perform one of the spiritual works of mercy, such as: comfort the sorrowful, counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish the sinner, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries, and pray for the living and the dead.
- 7) Pray the rosary together with one’s family in order that “all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family.”
- 8) Engaged couples can also receive an indulgence from praying the rosary together.
- 9) Meditate for 30 minutes on the Lord’s Prayer, because St. Joseph “invites us to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God’s will.”
- 10) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on St. Joseph Sunday, the Sunday after Christmas in the Byzantine Catholic tradition.
- 11) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph on March 19 with an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph.
- 12) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on the 19th of any month.
- 13) Honor Joseph with an act of piety or approved prayer on a Wednesday, the day dedicated to St. Joseph.
- 14) Pray to St. Joseph on the Feast of the Holy Family on Dec. 29.
- 15) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 with an act of piety or prayer.

“All the faithful will thus have the opportunity to commit themselves, with prayers and good works, to obtain with the help of St. Joseph, head of the celestial Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that today afflict the contemporary world,” the decree signed by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza said.

The elderly, the sick, and the dying who are unable to leave their homes due to the pandemic also have special permission to receive an indulgence by “offering with trust in God the pains and discomforts” of their lives with a prayer to St. Joseph, hope of the sick and patron of a happy death. The decree noted that in this instance the person must have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions for an indulgence, as well as a detachment from sin.

The Apostolic Penitentiary permits any prayer to St. Joseph approved by the Church, mentioning in particular the “To thee, O blessed Joseph” prayer composed by Pope Leo XIII:

*“To thee, O blessed Joseph, we have recourse in our affliction, and having implored the help of thy thrice holy Spouse, we now, with hearts filled with confidence, earnestly beg thee also to take us under thy protection. By that charity wherewith thou wert united to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and by that fatherly love with which thou didst cherish the Child Jesus, we beseech thee and we humbly pray that thou wilt look down with gracious eye upon that inheritance which Jesus Christ purchased by His blood, and wilt succor us in our need by thy power and strength.*

*“Defend, O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, the chosen off-spring of Jesus Christ. Keep from us, O most loving Father, all blight of error and corruption. Aid us from on high, most valiant defender, in this conflict with the powers of darkness. And even as of old thou didst rescue the Child Jesus from the peril of His life, so now defend God’s Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield us ever under thy patronage, that, following thine example and strengthened by thy help, we may live a holy life, die a happy death, and attain to everlasting bliss in Heaven. Amen.”*