



Newsletter

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**USCCB Secretariat of
Divine Worship**
3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: (202) 541-3060
Fax: (202) 541-3088
www.USCCB.org

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Pope Francis Adds Seven Invocations in the Litany of Saint Joseph

In honor of the current Year of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis has decided to insert seven new invocations in the Litany of St. Joseph, the first changes to the litany since its original promulgation in 1909. This was communicated to the Presidents of the world's Conferences of Bishops by a circular letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on the memorial of St. Joseph the Worker, May 1, 2021 (Prot. n. 133/21).

The new invocations are *Guardian of the Redeemer*, *Servant of Christ*, *Minister of salvation*, *Support in difficulties*, *Patron of exiles*, *Patron of the afflicted*, and *Patron of the poor*. They were drawn from the writings of various Popes, as they reflected on the foster father of the Lord Jesus Christ and patron saint of the universal Church.

The Congregation's circular letter in multiple languages, and the revised Litany of St. Joseph in Latin, may be found at CultoDivino.va/content/cultodivino/it/documenti/lettere-circolari/litaniae-s--ioseph.html. Different English translations of the Litany of St. Joseph are available, including one found in the current edition of the *Manual of Indulgences* (USCCB Communications, 2006). In accord with the Congregation's instruction that the translation and publication of the new invocations falls to the competence of the Conference, the Committee on Divine Worship has approved the version printed on the final page of this *Newsletter*. It is largely based on a translation published in *The Ecclesiastical Review* in 1909 but has been slightly adapted and incorporates the new invocations.

Origins of the New Invocations

Guardian of the Redeemer – On August 15, 1989, St. John Paul II issued *Redemptoris Custos*, an encyclical letter on the person and mission of St. Joseph in the life of Christ and of the Church. The image of St. Joseph as guardian of Christ is also found in the Collect for his solemnity. In this oration, the Church recalls that the beginnings of human salvation were entrusted to Joseph's faithful care (*fidelis custodia*). St. Joseph is the one who guards, cultivates, and cares for Christ.

Servant of Christ – St. Paul VI reflects on St. Joseph as the servant of Christ in a homily at an ordination of bishops on March 19, 1966 (*Insegnamenti*, IV [1966], pg. 110). He notes that St. Joseph knew, served, and protected the mysteries of Christ's childhood and his Virgin Mother. His service to Christ is the secret of his greatness.

Minister of salvation – In his fifth homily on the Gospel of Matthew, St. John Chrysostom considers the obedience of Joseph to the angel (V, 3: PG 57, 57f).

Enlightened by the angel, St. Joseph resolves not to divorce Mary quietly, but rather takes her to himself and “ministers to the whole divine plan” (διακονεῖται τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ πάσῃ). The Greek word, οἰκονομία appears in a similar context in St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians: “God has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in Christ as a plan (οἰκονομίαν) for the fullness of times” (1:9-10a). Later in the same letter, Paul describes his own ministry with the very same word: “the stewardship (οἰκονομίαν) of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit” (3:2). St. Joseph is the steward of the divine plan in Christ.

Support in difficulties – The last four invocations are found in Pope Francis’s Apostolic Letter on St. Joseph, *Patris corde*. Speaking about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Pope Francis remarks: “How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope. How many are showing our children how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all. Each of us can discover in Joseph a support in times of trouble.”

Patron of exiles, Patron of the afflicted, Patron of the poor – In the fifth section of *Patris corde*, “A creatively courageous father,” Pope Francis reflects upon the angel’s command to Joseph, “Take the child and his mother” (Mt 2:13). In his life, Joseph has carried out this command not only toward the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus but also toward the entire Church. Like Joseph, we, too, are called to “take the child and his mother”: Christ, Our Lady, every Christian, and indeed the whole Church. Additionally, Joseph “takes the child” when he serves those who are suffering, those in whom his Son dwells: “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40). Pope Francis declares, “Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is ‘the child’ whom Joseph continues to protect. For this reason, Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying.” As we imitate St. Joseph in his care of Christ, Our Lady, and the Church, so are we called to imitate him in his solicitude for the least ones.

The Reform and Translation of the Rites of Ordination

At the June 2019 USCCB plenary meeting, the Latin Church bishops of the United States approved a new translation of *Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons*. The text was confirmed on February 22, 2021 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. In anticipation of its publication this summer by USCCB Communications, a history of the reform of the rites of ordination following the Second Vatican Council and its translation into the vernacular may be helpful.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (no. 76) provided broad guidelines for the revision of the rites of ordination. It called for the revision of “[b]oth the ceremonies and texts of the ordination rites” and noted that in the consecration of a bishop “the laying of hands may be done by all the bishops present.” It also granted permission for the bishop to give the introductory addresses in the vernacular. The 1964 Instruction *Inter Œcumenici* expanded the use of the vernacular to the examination of the bishop-elect at the Ordination of Bishops and to other admonitions throughout the rite.

Consistent with those initial options and in response to decisions made by the then-National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Holy See confirmed for liturgical use on October 15, 1965 English translations of the examination of the bishop-elect, admonitions, and introductory allocutions for the minor orders, diaconate and priesthood. These were made available as English-Latin inserts for the *Pontificale Romanum*. At the November 1966 plenary meeting, the bishops agreed to seek permission for the use of the vernacular for the complete rites of ordination and episcopal consecration using vernacular translations approved in November 1965. These translations of the then-current *Pontificale Romanum*, incorporating the revision for concelebration, were duly confirmed by the Holy See. The Committee on the Liturgy subsequently published the text as an 80-page insert to the *Pontificale Romanum*.

On June 18, 1968, Pope Saint Paul VI issued the Apostolic Constitution *Pontificalis Romani recognitio* approving the new rites of ordination. The “supreme criterion” for the revised rites, wrote the Holy Father, “must be the clear

teaching of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church concerning the nature and effects of the sacrament of orders.” Regarding the rite of episcopal ordination, the Constitution notes that the new consecratory prayer is taken from the fifth century Church Order known as the *Apostolic Tradition*. Still used in the Coptic and West Syrian liturgies, it offers “a witness to the harmony of tradition in East and West concerning the apostolic office of bishops.” The revision of the rite of ordination of priests was guided by a need “to reduce the entire rite... to a greater unity and to express more strikingly the central part of the ordination, that is, the laying on of hands and the consecratory prayer.” Finally, the revision of the rite for deacons “had to be made to satisfy the recent prescriptions about the diaconate as a distinct and permanent grade of the hierarchy in the Latin Church or to achieve a greater simplicity and clarity in the rites.”

The Sacred Congregation of Rites issued a decree August 15, 1968 publishing the *editio typica* of the revised rites of ordination, and the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) prepared a provisional English translation. Newly appointed bishops received permission to employ the revised rites for their ordination, using this provisional text. The Committee on the Liturgy also published a 50-page booklet for use by ordaining bishops. In 1975, ICEL submitted its definitive translation of the rites of ordination to the NCCB, which approved it in 1976, and the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship confirmed *The Ordination of Deacons, Priests, and Bishops* in August 1977.

Just over twenty years later, a second typical edition (*editio typica altera*) of the ordination rites was promulgated by the Holy See, on June 29, 1989. The publication decree highlights seven changes with respect to the first edition. These include the addition of doctrinal introductory material and the reversal of the order of the rites, to begin with the ordination of a bishop, then priests, and finally deacons. The new edition also added the “Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders” in an appendix.

There has been a long journey to the definitive English translation of this second edition of the ordination rites. In 1996, the NCCB Administrative Committee approved the ICEL provisional translation of the second edition with U.S. adaptations. The following year, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments advised the presidents of the ICEL member conferences of bishops that it was not possible to confirm that ICEL translation. A revised translation was then submitted to the Congregation in 2000. In March 2001, the Congregation promulgated its Instruction on liturgical translation, *Liturgiam authenticam*. Subsequently, in 2002 the Congregation offered the ICEL member conferences a revision of the ordination rites that it had prepared in accord with the new translation principles. The USCCB was one of the few Conferences to adopt this text, doing so at its November 2002 plenary meeting. It was confirmed immediately by the Holy See and published by the USCCB in a large-print format in 2003. This translation was then reprinted with minor emendations in the 2012 *Roman Pontifical* produced by the Holy See’s *Vox Clara* Commission.

The edition of *Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons* recently confirmed by the Holy See is therefore the second translation of the Latin text prepared in accord with the principles of *Liturgiam authenticam*. While not differing greatly from the version published in 2003, it has been adopted by several other English-speaking Conferences, and it is to be hoped that a certain stability and consistency worldwide will be achieved with this text. May those who are ordained with these rites “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to nourish the Church with the word and grace of God” (*Lumen gentium*, no. 11).

2023 Liturgical Calendar Available for Purchase

The 2023 edition of the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* is available for purchase from the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship. The calendar lists each day’s celebration, rank, liturgical color, Lectionary citations, and Psalter cycle. Calendars are on sale for \$10.00 each, payable by check only, and are available either in 8½ × 11” paperback or e-mailed in Microsoft Word or PDF format. For more information on placing an order, visit [USCCB.org/committees/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar](https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar).

Litany of Saint Joseph

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.	God the Father in heaven,	have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.	God the Son, Redeemer of	
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.	the world,	have mercy on us.
		God the Holy Spirit,	have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.	Christ, hear us.	Holy Trinity, one God,	have mercy on us.
Christ, graciously hear us.	Christ, graciously hear us.		

Holy Mary,	pray for us.	Joseph, most loyal,	pray for us.
Saint Joseph,	pray for us.	Mirror of patience,	pray for us.
Illustrious son of David,	pray for us.	Lover of poverty,	pray for us.
Light of Patriarchs,	pray for us.	Model for workers,	pray for us.
Spouse of the Mother of God,	pray for us.	Glory of family life,	pray for us.
Guardian of the Redeemer,	pray for us.	Guardian of virgins,	pray for us.
Pure Guardian of the Virgin,	pray for us.	Cornerstone of families,	pray for us.
Provider for the Son of God,	pray for us.	Support in difficulties,	pray for us.
Zealous defender of Christ,	pray for us.	Comfort of the sorrowing,	pray for us.
Servant of Christ,	pray for us.	Hope of the sick,	pray for us.
Minister of salvation,	pray for us.	Patron of exiles,	pray for us.
Head of the Holy Family,	pray for us.	Patron of the afflicted,	pray for us.
Joseph, most just,	pray for us.	Patron of the poor,	pray for us.
Joseph, most chaste,	pray for us.	Patron of the dying,	pray for us.
Joseph, most prudent,	pray for us.	Terror of demons,	pray for us.
Joseph, most brave,	pray for us.	Protector of the Holy Church,	pray for us.
Joseph, most obedient,	pray for us.		

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,	spare us, O Lord.	He made him master of his house, and ruler of all his possessions.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,	hear us, O Lord.	<i>Let us pray.</i>
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,	have mercy on us.	O God, who in your inexpressible providence were pleased to choose Saint Joseph as spouse of your most holy Mother, grant, we pray, that we, who revere him as our protector on earth, may be worthy of his heavenly intercession. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

<i>Alternate introduction:</i>		<i>Alternate conclusion:</i>
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.	Christ, hear us.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.	Christ, graciously hear us.
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.	Christ, graciously hear us.
<i>Or:</i>		<i>Or:</i>
God the Father in heaven,	have mercy on us.	Lamb of God, you take away
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,	have mercy on us.	the sins of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,	have mercy on us.	spare us, O Lord.
Holy Trinity, one God,	have mercy on us.	Lamb of God, you take away
		the sins of the world,
		hear us, O Lord.
		Lamb of God, you take away
		the sins of the world,
		have mercy on us.
Holy Mary...		He made him master... <i>Let us pray.</i> O God...