

## INTERCEDE



Inspired by St. Joseph, may fathers fulfill their vocation to love, protect, and care for their children.

## PRAY

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECT

St. Joseph was a humble carpenter from Nazareth, who lived a mostly hidden life. Yet, for centuries he has been venerated as one of the Church's greatest saints. Joseph's greatness was not derived from grand conquests or earthly accomplishments, but rather by fulfilling his vocation as a *husband and father*. In Joseph we see an all-encompassing, selfless commitment to love, protect, and care for the Christ child. "In his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father: he watched over him and protected him, never leaving him to go his own way" (*Patris corde*, 7).

St. Joseph demonstrates how the seemingly ordinary demands of family life can be elevated to the heights of heroic love. On the long road to Bethlehem, in the simplicity of the manger, and in the darkness surrounding the flight into Egypt, Joseph remains steadfast. As Pope Francis writes, "Fathers are not born, but made. A man does not become a father

simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child" (*PC*, 7). In a world that so often undervalues fatherhood, men may find it challenging to fully embrace their unique and irreplaceable role in the lives of their children. Through the intercession of St. Joseph, we pray that all fathers may have the courage to answer their call to heroic fatherhood.

## ACT (Choose one.)

- Offer Pope Francis' prayer to St. Joseph ([www.bit.ly/prayer-patris-corde](http://www.bit.ly/prayer-patris-corde)):

*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.*

- Reflect more deeply on the irreplaceable role fathers have in welcoming new life in this brief article from Bishop Fabre: [www.bit.ly/fabre-fatherhood](http://www.bit.ly/fabre-fatherhood).
- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do for this month's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

In honor of the Year of St. Joseph—and in the month we celebrate Father's Day—take time to prayerfully read Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *Patris corde (With a Father's Heart)*: [www.bit.ly/read-patris-corde](http://www.bit.ly/read-patris-corde).

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