

# MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

April 8, 2018 – DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

## Spiritual Ponderings 7 Joys of St. Joseph

St. Bernard of Clairvaux was asked by his monks whether or not it was important for them to have a devotion to St. Joseph. The following quote is from his response: "St. Joseph was chosen among all men, to be the protector and guardian of the Virgin Mother of God; the defender and foster-father of the Infant-God, and the only co-operator upon earth, the one confidant of the secret of God in the work of the redemption of mankind."

During this month of April, I invite you to ponder the Seven Joys of St. Saint Joseph with me.

### 2. Jesus' Birth itself (Luke 2:7)

The fact that Jesus was born in a stable was listed as one of St. Joseph's sorrows because he would have desired to have been able to provide a better place for his wife and adopted son. The birth of Jesus though is listed as one of Saint Joseph's joys. Struggles are hard but the sense of accomplishment that comes from overcoming adversity feels good. Last summer, I was working a Life Teen Summer camp and the camp director asked me to celebrate Mass on top of a mountain for the campers. Knowing how out of shape I was, I asked for a thirty minute head start up the hill. It was a long and steep path and I found myself thinking about turning back a couple of times. I kept going because I did not

want to disappoint God, my friend, and the campers. When I reached the top of the mountain where we were going to say Mass, I felt a sense of accomplishment. Yes, it was harder than it should have been because I was so out of shape but I also felt a deep sense of joy and accomplishment for making it up the hill. I am sure that Joseph felt something similar even though his life as the foster father of Jesus had started off more difficult than he thought seeing God lying in the manger must have been a moment of pure joy.

Stepping back for a moment, Joseph must have been amazed as a creature that his creator loved him this much that he would become one like him (in all things but sin). Simply ponder the fact that the word who made the universe was now laying in a manger. Wow.

### 3. The Holy Name of Jesus (Matthew 1:25)

As a religious person, Joseph must have been excited to realize that He was now a part of God's plan. He was now stepping up and following in the footsteps of Abraham, Moses, and David. The moment that he and his fellow Jews had been hoping for, dreaming for, was now upon them. Many of us feel a sense of joy when we are entrusted with a mission or given a task to perform because it makes us feel that we are a part of the group. It is important to remind ourselves that just as Joseph was called to be the



foster father of Jesus we are called through our baptism to be priests (offer our lives to God), prophets (tell others about God), and kings (follow Jesus' example of servant leadership).

The great strong man Samson did not see this day, the great prophets Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, etc. had not been blessed to see this day but St. Joseph was. In a similar way we should feel blessed to be able to receive Jesus in the Eucharist at Mass.

The very fact that God was now in the midst of saving his people. The name Jesus literally means "God saves his people," should bring joy everyone. Adam and Eve doubted God's love for them in the garden and now God was showing every human being how much he loved them by becoming one like them.

If I had to think of an image to help me ponder this moment. It would be like being rescued from a sinking ship. The moment the stable ship came close enough for me get on would be a moment of great joy. God was showing us how much he loved us.

### **A PARENT'S PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH**

O glorious St. Joseph, to you God committed the care of His only begotten Son amid the

many dangers of this world. We come to you and ask you to take under your special protection the children God has given us. Through holy baptism they became children of God and members of His holy Church. We consecrate them to you today, that through this consecration they may become your foster children. Guard them, guide their steps in life, form their hearts after the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

St. Joseph, who felt the tribulation and worry of a parent when the child Jesus was lost, protect our dear children for time and eternity. May you be their father and counsellor. Let them, like Jesus, grow in age as well as in wisdom and grace before God and men. Preserve them from the corruption of his world, and give us the grace one day to be united with them in Heaven forever. Amen.

## Breaking Open the Word

### **April 8, 2018 Second Sunday of Easter (Or Sunday of Divine Mercy) Lectionary: 44 Gospel JN 20:19-31**

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

### **Spiritual Reflection:**

"Protestants believe that the sacraments are like ladders that God gave to us by which we can climb up to Him. Catholics believe that they are like ladders that God gave to Himself by which He climbs down to us." — Peter Kreeft. Not even all the apostles experience the Resurrection on the same day. God comes to each of us in our own time.

### **Spiritual Questions:**

1. Why do you think Christians spend so much time comparing themselves to each other?
2. What should Christians be doing instead of comparing ourselves to others?
3. How can we help facilitate Christ encounters for others?
4. How is God speaking to you?
5. How did someone else lead you closer to God?



## Prayers for the Week

### DIVINE MERCY

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion - inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself. Amen.

### PRAYER FOR DIVINE MERCY

O Greatly Merciful God, Infinite Goodness, today all mankind calls out from the abyss of its misery to Your mercy - to Your compassion, O God; and it is with its mighty voice of misery that it cries out. Gracious God, do not reject the prayer of this earth's exiles! O Lord, Goodness beyond our understanding, who are acquainted with our misery through and through and know that by our own power we cannot ascend to You, we implore You, anticipate us with Your grace and keep on increasing Your mercy in us, that we may

faithfully do Your Holy Will all through our life and at death's hour. Let the omnipotence of Your mercy shield us from the darts of our salvation's enemies, that we may with confidence, as Your children, await Your final coming - that day known to You alone. And we expect to obtain everything promised us by Jesus in spite of all our wretchedness. For Jesus is our Hope; Through His merciful Heart, as through an open gate, we pass through to heaven. Amen.



## Saint Monica Society Prayer For April



### PRAYER TO KNOW THE WAY TO PEACE

Jesus, Lord, don't let the fear of death overpower us. And don't let the loss of our loved ones cause us to doubt Your power to "Easter" everybody. Remind those who have fallen away and us, Lord, that You have the last words over death. You are risen! You are not "among the dead." Neither are we. We shall live forever in Your triumphant love. - Amen.

### St. Monica Society

Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

## Pro-Life Corner

### Pro-Life Prayer for April

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Author of Life, Who died and now lives forevermore. May we who work and pray That children in the womb may be protected Always draw strength, confidence, and joy From Your victory over death, For you are Lord forever and ever.



## Catholic Trivia



### Last Week's Answers

Place the Following Terms in the Right Category.

Category #1 Parts of the Church

Category #2 Marks of the Church

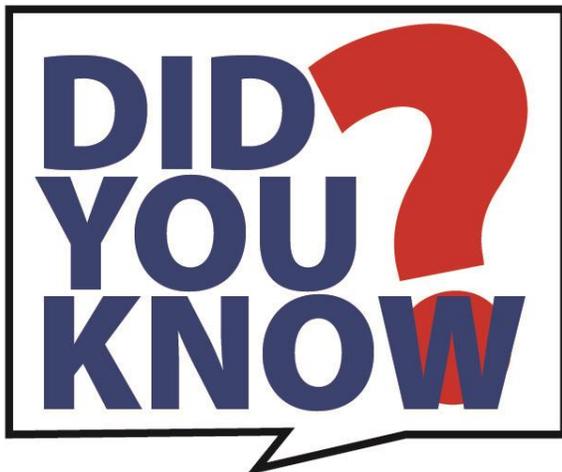
Category #3 Pillars of Church Authority

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One=2 Militant=1 Holy=2 Catholic=2

Tradition=3 Magisterium=3 Triumphant=1

Apostolic=2 Suffering= Sacred Scripture=3



### This Week's Questions

#### **True or False**

1. Catholicism has been a moving force in the development of Western culture. It continues to be influential in religious issues, social institutions, art, education, medicine, science, music, philosophy, literature, and politics.
2. The Catholic Church's Vatican has diplomatic relations with almost every country in the world.
3. Pope John Paul II traveled to more than 129 different countries, logging more than 750,000 frequent flyer miles, which is about three times the distance to the moon.
4. The word "Catholic" was first used by Ignatius of Antioch around the year A.D. 110. It is from the Greek word *katholikos*, which means "toward the whole." Ignatius was suggesting that the Church is a gift offered by Christ to all people.

## Quotes of the Week

St. Faustina was born in 1905. Through her and her diary, Jesus communicates to the world the message of His Mercy. Here are the 4 inspiring quotes from St. Faustina's Diary.

1. "Suffering is a great grace; through suffering the soul becomes like the Savior; in suffering love becomes crystallized; the greater the suffering, the purer the love." (#57, page 29)
2. "O my God, how sweet it is to suffer for You, suffer in the most secret recesses of the heart, in the greatest hiddenness, to burn like a sacrifice noticed by no one, pure as crystal, with no consolation or compassion. My spirit burns in active love. I waste no time in dreaming. I take every moment singly as it comes, for this is within

my power. The past does not belong to me; the future is not mine; with all my soul I try to make use of the present moment. (351, page 157)

3. "Great love can change small things into great ones, and it is only love which lends value to our actions. And the purer our love becomes, the less there will be within us for the flames of suffering to feed upon, and the suffering will cease to be a suffering for us; it will become a delight! By the grace of God, I have received such a disposition of heart that I am never so happy as when I suffer for Jesus, whom I love with every beat of my heart." (303, page 140)
4. "I will not allow myself to be so absorbed in the whirlwind of work as to forget about God. I

## Catholic Humor

