

Joseph holds special place in Canada

Almost 400 years after being chosen patron saint of Canada, St. Joseph remains a model for Christian life

Do you know that St. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is not only the patron saint of the universal Church but also the principal patron saint of Canada?

The history of the Church in Canada tells us that Fr. Joseph Le Caron, one of the first four missionaries to land in this country, chose St. Joseph as the patron saint of what was then New France on March 19, 1624.

Almost 250 years later, in 1870, Pope Pius IX proclaimed St. Joseph the patron saint of the universal Church. And since 2013 his name has been included in all Eucharistic Prayers at Mass, emphasizing his importance in the life of the Church.

So, each year on March 19, Canadians can take special pride as the Church celebrates the Solemnity of St. Joseph.

Who is St. Joseph to us, and why did the early missionaries decide to entrust the country to his spiritual care?

St. Joseph is usually depicted in statues, stained glass windows and paintings carrying a flower, a lily — traditionally considered a symbol of purity. In Our Lady of Peace Church, there is a statue of Joseph carrying a lily in one hand and a tool in the other, symbolizing his work as a carpenter.

St. Joseph is mentioned in the Gospels mainly in the infancy nar-



FR. YAW ACHEAMPONG

ratives of Jesus Christ. However, the events in which he is mentioned can give us some insight to some of the wonderful virtues of this quiet man of God referred to as “son of David” (Matt. 1). In Matthew’s Gospel, the announcement of Jesus’s conception and His role as the Messiah were made by God to Joseph in a dream (Matt. 1), but not to Mary as we hear in the Annunciation story in the Gospel of Luke.

This revelation about the baby whom Mary was carrying made Joseph do exactly what God told him to do — to take Mary home as

Above: *St. Joseph and the Infant Jesus*, circa 1620, by Guido Reni. Right: St. Joseph was the inspiration for St. Brother André in building St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal. His feast day is March 19. (Photo from Wikipedia)

his wife. In the same Gospel, Joseph also obeyed the word of God when God told him in a dream to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt (Matt. 2) because Herod was searching to destroy the infant Jesus.

These two biblical events present Joseph to us as a man of integrity, humility, a man of selflessness and of great faith in God. He became obedient to God. He heard the word of God and acted on it because he put his trust in God.

Despite the circumstances of doubt, fear and the uncertainties that surrounded his life as the husband of Mary, St. Joseph quietly remained steadfast in his faith in God. He surrendered



himself to God and allowed God to take charge of his life. He therefore became a perfect dependable source of God’s protection and love to the infant Jesus and Mary.

Do you have any sort of devotion to St. Joseph? When you stand in front of a statue or gaze at a stained glass window or a painting of St. Joseph, what is it you ask of him? Since the celebration of the Solemnity of St. Joseph occurs in Lent, perhaps we can seize this opportunity to reflect on the importance of his life in our spiritual lives. We can learn to imitate St. Joseph in his fidelity to God

St. Joseph is a saint for our times — a time of fears, worries, anxieties, doubt and uncertainties in our lives, in the Church and in

our world.

The life of St. Joseph represents a model for all Christians. He is our model of faithful discipleship. Our special devotion to Joseph during this Lent can be a spiritual discipline for us. Our devotion to St. Joseph with sincere hearts may help us to strengthen our relationship with God and with our neighbour “for our good and the good of all the Church” and for our country.

As the patron saint of the Church and of Canada, we can all rejoice with hope in the protection and love of God that comes to us through the intercession of St. Joseph.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

(Fr. Acheampong is pastor at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Toronto.)

Pope warns youth of ‘digital narcissism’

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

VATICAN CITY

The fast-paced nature of the digital age can cause young men and women to focus more on capturing moments for their social media rather than experiencing them, Pope Francis told Catholic young people in his message for World Youth Day 2020.

Both young people and adults can “waste their lives with superficial things, thinking they are alive while in fact they are dead within,” seeking gratification through entertainment and fleeting moments while giving in to “widespread growing digital narcissism,” the Pope said in his message.

“All too many people are living this way! Some of them have perhaps bought into the materialism of those all around them who are concerned only with making money and taking it easy, as if these were the sole purpose of life,” the Pope said.

The message, released March 5 at the Vatican, centred on a verse from the Gospel of Luke: “Young man, I say to you, arise!”

The theme for World Youth Day, the Pope said, was what Jesus said before raising a young man from the dead.

Christ’s gesture of compassion toward the suffering of the boy’s widowed mother is a reminder for young people today that

“sometimes our first reaction is to take a picture with our cellphone without even bothering to look into the eyes of the persons involved.”

“All around us, but at times also within us, we can see realities of death: physical, spiritual, emotional, social. Do we really notice them, or simply let them happen to us? Is there anything we can do in order to restore life?” the Pope asked.

This year and next, World Youth Day will be celebrated on a local level — on Palm Sunday, April 5, at the Vatican — and in 2022 it will be an international gathering in Lisbon. Panama City hosted the last WYD in 2019.

Catholic Women’s Conference

Saturday March 28, 2020: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Le Tréport Banquet Hall

1075 Queensway East, Mississauga, ON Free parking

Keynote Speakers:

KIMBERLY HAHN

COLLEEN CAMPBELL



Purchase Tickets For Events In Advance

Register at: www.dynamicwomenfaith.com

or call 416-907-1042


DYNAMIC
women of
FAITH

Mass will be celebrated by
Father Edward J. Curtis,
Rector
St. Michael’s Cathedral
Basilica