

Psalm 89

R. The Son of David will live for ever.

The favors of the LORD I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. R.

For you have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness: "I have made a covenant with my chosen one. I have sworn to David my servant: R.

"Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations." R.

The heavens proclaim your wonders, O LORD, and your faithfulness, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can rank with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the sons of God? R.

As circumstances suggest, the minister may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

INTERCESSIONS

The minister says: Let us call upon the name of the Lord through the intercession of Saint Joseph.

R. Lord, you are our hope and our strength.

Assisting minister: That we who have listened to the word of God may do his will, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister: That we who have experienced doubt and fear may be helped in times of difficulty, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister: That we may hunger for justice and mercy, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister: That we who seek God's way may complete our journey to God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister: That we who follow the example of Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church, may strive

always to build up the body of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. R.

The minister invites all present to sing or say the Lord's Prayer. Let us pray to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

All: Our Father . . .

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.

All-provident God, the good things that grace this table remind us of your many good gifts.

Bless this food, and may the prayers of Saint Joseph, who provided bread for your Son and food for the poor, sustain us and all our brothers and sisters on our journey towards your heavenly kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

A minister who is a priest or deacon concludes the rite by saying:

Lord, you have given us the saints as our intercessors in heaven. May the prayers of Saint Joseph always help us to do your will and live in your love.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Then he blesses all present. And may almighty God bless you all, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. R. Amen.

A lay minister concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying: May almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and protect us. R. Amen.

1696 It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

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*The Family that Prays
Together Stays Together*





The Family that Prays Together Stays Together

St. Joseph Altar

The Solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19) is celebrated in a variety of ways all over the world. The most well-known tradition is the St. Joseph Altar, started in Sicily.

Whether a St. Joseph Altar is an elaborate display at an elegant church or a humble table in a modest home, it is a reflection of deep devotion to St. Joseph, the patron of those in need—workers, travelers, the persecuted, the poor, the aged, the dying. After many centuries, the St. Joseph Altar still serves as a reminder that those who have enjoyed some measure of good fortune must share it with those who have less.

History

The people of Sicily prayed. For too long there had been no rain to nourish the crops that sustained life for most of the island. The dried out wheat stalks cracked beneath the feet of the poor farmers as they walked through their barren fields. Only a sea of dust and withered vines remained from what had once been row upon row of brightly colored fruits and vegetables. And so the people prayed. They pleaded to St. Joseph, their patron, for relief from the famine that gripped the island. At last the skies opened, sending down the life-giving water. The people rejoiced. Some time later, to show their gratitude, they prepared a table with a special assortment of foods they had harvested. After paying honor to St. Joseph, they distributed the food to the less fortunate.

Today, the artistic quality of the breads, cookies and pastries, which are baked in such shapes as chalices, staffs and pyramids, often rivals the exquisite flavor of the food offerings.

Many families believe that having a St. Joseph Altar can bring good fortune. And it is common to hear stories about favors received (a loved one's recovery from an illness, for example), which are in turn attributed to the family's dedication to St. Joseph. But

whatever the reasons people become involved. St. Joseph's Feast Day is a tradition that centers on the entire family.

Unfailing Petition to St. Joseph

Holy St. Joseph, Spouse of Mary, be mindful of me, pray for me, watch over me. Guardian of the paradise of the new Adam, provide for my temporal wants. Faithful guardian of the most precious of all treasures, I beseech thee to bring this matter to a happy end, if it be for the glory of God, and the good of my soul. Amen

Prayer to Obtain a Conversion:

O glorious patriarch St. Joseph, who merited to be called "just" by the Holy Ghost, I urgently recommend to the soul of (Name), which Jesus redeemed at the price of His Precious Blood.

Thou knowest how deplorable is the state and how unhappy the life of those who have banished this loving Savior from their hearts, and how greatly they are exposed to the danger of losing Him eternally. Permit not, I beseech thee, that a soul so dear to me should continue any longer in its evil ways; preserve it from the danger that threatens it; touch the heart of the prodigal child and conduct him back to the bosom of the fondest of fathers. Abandon him not, I implore thee, till thou hast opened to him the gates of the Heavenly city, where he will praise and bless thee throughout eternity for the happiness which he will owe to thy powerful intercession. Amen.

Blessing of Saint Joseph's Table

ORDER OF BLESSING

When the community has gathered, a suitable song may be sung. After the singing, the minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply: Amen.

A minister who is a priest or deacon greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly

from sacred Scripture. May God, who has called us to be saints, be with you all.

And all reply: And also with you.

A lay minister greets those present in the following words: Praised be God, who gives us saints as models and examples. Blessed be God for ever. R. Blessed be God for ever.

In the following or similar words, the minister prepares those present for the blessing. Today we honor the memory of Saint Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary and patron of the universal Church. We rejoice at this table, which is a sign of God's generous blessings and of our call to serve the poor and hungry. We pray that through the intercession of Saint Joseph we too might join the saints at the banquet of the Lord in the heavenly kingdom.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

1:18-23 Joseph did as the angel commanded him. Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."