



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Pope Francis concludes his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* with beautiful words and a prayer to St. Joseph. (You can find the whole document at [vatican.va](http://vatican.va) and search "Patris Corde".) As we enter into Lent, I invite you to invite St. Joseph into your Lenten journey. Ask him to help you with your fasting, almsgiving and prayer, but most of all, ask him to help you get closer to Jesus!

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"Get up, take the child and his mother" (*Mt* 2:13), God told Saint Joseph.

The aim of this Apostolic Letter is to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal.

Indeed, the proper mission of the saints is not only to obtain miracles and graces, but to intercede for us before God, like Abraham and Moses, and like Jesus, the "one mediator" (*1 Tim* 2:5), who is our "advocate" with the Father (*1 Jn* 2:1) and who "always lives to make intercession for [us]" (*Heb* 7:25; cf. *Rom* 8:34).

The saints help all the faithful "to strive for the holiness and the perfection of their particular state of life". Their lives are concrete proof that it is possible to put the Gospel into practice.

Jesus told us: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (*Mt* 11:29). The lives of the saints too are examples to be imitated. Saint Paul explicitly says this: "Be imitators of me!" (*1 Cor* 4:16). By his eloquent silence, Saint Joseph says the same.

Before the example of so many holy men and women, Saint Augustine asked himself: "What they could do, can you not also do?" And so he drew closer to his definitive conversion, when he could exclaim: "Late have I loved you, Beauty ever ancient, ever new!"

We need only ask Saint Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion.

Let us now make our prayer to him:

*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.*

Given in Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on 8 December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 2020, the eighth of my Pontificate.

Franciscus