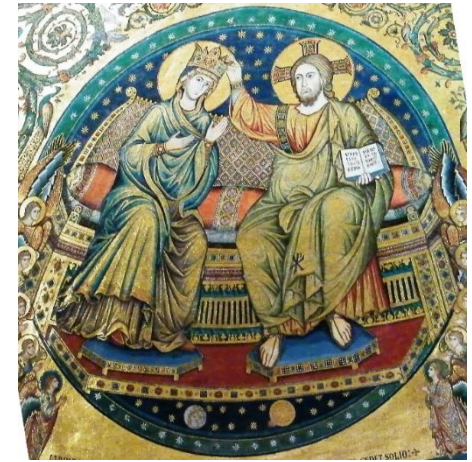


St. Joseph's Family Activities

March Saints and Celebrations



<https://www.theannunciation.org.uk/resources/>

The saints in heaven rejoice with one voice! Holy Holy Holy...

March is quite often wholly or partly in Lent but that does not stop us marking the glorious saints and other festivals which happen this month. For most of the year, a saint's day is called a memorial, unless it is a feast, when it's the feast of an Apostle, or other key saint of the Church.

Solemnities are of a higher order and may be moved if they coincide with key dates in Lent or even with Holy Week and Easter. The Annunciation (25th March), for example, is a solemnity that is often moved if it coincides with either Holy Week or the Easter Octave. The same with the solemnity of St. Joseph, if it falls on a Sunday it will be moved to Monday 20th March, unless this is in Holy Week when it will be celebrated the week before. (This avoids both the solemnities of St. Joseph and the Annunciation being celebrated after the Easter Octave.) These activities include a child-friendly novena to St. Joseph which in most years needs to begin on 10th March.

Finally, on this subject, your parish patronal feast day automatically becomes a solemnity and "trumps" the Sunday in ordinary time, whatever the ranking of the saint.

These activities still reflect the four dimensions of our faith, as in everything we do, we are either learning or proclaiming the faith, celebrating it in the liturgy and the sacraments, living it in the context of the family and community and praying it.

Our Lady being crowned queen of heaven by her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Note that she is wearing His crown! This month we celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation. This is when Mary willingly accepted to become the Mother of God and so her crowning is her reward. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can learn from the saints how we can accept God's plans for us so we can hope to share in His divine life one day.

There are three dimensions of the Church: those of us here on earth, journeying to the Father in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit; those in purgatory whose lives on earth have finished and who are being purified, and those in heaven, sharing in the divine life, for which we have all been created. For them, their joy is complete but because of that, they are eager for us to join them. Close to Our Lord, they intercede (pray) for us. The saints in heaven are more than the canonised saints the Church knows of as the author of the Book of Revelation says, "I looked and saw a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, tribe and peoples and tongues..." (Rev.7:9).

The saints are our heroes. They come from all walks of life, from all around the world and all ages. We can always find a saint who inspires us and ask him or her to pray for us. So, celebrate the saints' days, go to Mass if you can as there, the whole Church is united! We can't see the saints, but we join in with their praise in the Holy Holy Holy. Have something special to eat, light your baptism candle or another one if you don't have it, regard them as special members of the family.

1st March: St David (520 - 589), Patron Saint of Wales

St. David was an abbot and bishop at Mynyw, now known as "St. David's". (The name of the present Catholic diocese of Menevia is based on the original Welsh place name.) St. David created a monastic rule and the monks who were formed by him then evangelised South Wales and travelled to Cornwall, Brittany and Ireland. At St David's death, St Kentigern, who founded St Asaph's in North Wales, saw in a vision St. David being joyfully welcomed into the presence of his Lord in Heaven. St. David's holy relics have been found hidden in St David's Cathedral, where they are carefully preserved. He was canonized in 1123 by Pope Callistus II.* St. David's Last words to his monks are traditionally accepted to be:

“Be joyful and keep the faith. Do those little things you have seen and heard from me.”

*Information from www.universalis.com

The Daffodil is the National flower of Wales: How about making a nice greetings card out of egg boxes, for someone whom you have not seen for a long time.**

1. Fold an A4 Piece of card in half.
2. Cut the cups from the egg carton and paint both the inside and outside yellow. Let dry.
3. Cut out and paint the back petals from lid of the box, (or just draw and colour them onto your folded card). When dry glue onto your folded card.
4. Paint the inside bottom of the egg carton cup orange and let dry.
5. When the orange paint is dry draw in black seeds with the black marker pen.
6. Glue the egg carton cup onto the back petals.
7. Stick green paper or draw/paint the stalks and the leaves onto your card.
8. When it is all dry, write your greetings on the inside and give or send it to someone you love.



**Adapted from <https://www.freekidscrafts.com/egg-carton-daffodils/>

2nd March, St. Chad, (d.672) Patron of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Chad was born in Northumbria and was educated by the monks at Lindisfarne under (St.) Aidan. He was one of four brothers, (all of whom became priests). His elder brother (St.) Cedd, founded an abbey in Lastingham in Yorkshire and asked Chad to take over as abbot in 644.

Only a year afterwards, Chad was invited to be bishop of York, but this post had already been given to (St.) Wilfrid who was on his way to being consecrated in France. But he had been gone a very long time and no-one knew what had happened to him. Don't forget in those days there was no way of communicating other than on foot or on horseback and so the people of York wondered what had happened to Wilfrid. They wanted a bishop! Chad was consecrated Bishop of York and began to walk all over the North of England telling people about Jesus. But... then Wilfrid returned, so there were two bishops!

The Archbishop of Canterbury (St.) Theodore went to York to sort it out and Chad immediately resigned as Bishop, humbly saying that he was really, really sorry and had not wanted to cause offence and of course Wilfrid was the proper bishop.

Chad retired to the abbey in Lastingham and thought that he would spend the rest of his life there, but when the bishop of Mercia died, Chad was asked to be bishop of Mercia (the central part of England). The King of Mercia, Wulfhere, gave him land at Lichfield to build a cathedral and establish his diocese. The present-day cathedral of Lichfield stands in the site of his earlier building.

Chad was known for his humility all his life and accepted roles he was asked to do without question. He was able to do this because he trusted God. He loved nothing more than to spend time in the church, praying and just being still in the presence of Jesus. He died of the plague on 2nd March 672 and immediately he was venerated (recognised) as a saint. Lichfield cathedral became a place of pilgrimage but when the Reformation came and these places were destroyed a Catholic family took his bones and kept them safe for over 300 years, handing them on from generation to generation.

In 1841 St. Chad's bones were placed in the first new Catholic cathedral to be built since the Reformation in Birmingham, which was dedicated to St. Chad, and they are still there in a beautiful casket.



Image of St. Chad from St. Chad's cathedral @ Carol Ann Harnett 2024

How can we celebrate the memorial of St. Chad?

Spend time in the church just taking to Jesus. Maybe you can go to Adoration or just pop in do a "visit" for a few minutes if you are passing by.

If you are asked to do something that you don't want to do, ask St. Chad to help you gracefully say "yes" and not to argue.

St. Chad spent a lot of time telling people about Jesus. maybe you can tell someone about Jesus?

St. Chad said sorry when he realised that he was not the actual Bishop of York, he didn't argue. Remember to say sorry if you have hurt someone, whether it was on purpose or just by mistake.

3rd March, St. Katharine Drexel (1858 - 1955)

This twentieth century American saint was born in Philadelphia to a rich banking family. However, rather than live a life of luxury which would have been expected of her, she realised that God was calling her to something else. Katherine had a great love for both the Native Americans peoples and African Americans who had been released from slavery with nowhere to go or money to live on. So in 1891, she founded an order of women called the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, dedicated to mission work among this forgotten strata of American society.

Katherine spent the rest of her life and the fortune she had inherited, in opening schools, founding a university, and funding many chapels, convents and monasteries. When she died on 3 March 1955, there were more than 500 Sisters teaching in 63 schools throughout the United States.

St. Katherine could have lived a life of luxury but chose to live a life serving the poor and abandoned people of her country. Jesus said that whatever we do for other people, we do for Him (c.f. Mt. 25:40). Truly, St. Katherine served Jesus in the poor and did not just give what was left over but gave them everything she had to give.

Why don't you read this passage in St. Matthew's Gospel and then think about how you could do something for all the people that Jesus mentions?

Look up Mt. 25:31-46.

4th March, St. Casimir (1458 - 1484)

St. Casimir the "peacemaker" was the second son of King Casimir IV of Poland. He and two his brother princes were fortunate to have as their tutor a man of great faith and piety who inspired his charges, particularly Casimir. From an early age, Casimir spent a lot of time in prayer, and for penance, often slept on the floor. He loved to receive Jesus in Holy Communion and would go to Mass every day if he could. Under his rich royal clothes, he wore a rough and hard hair shirt. However, this did not make him grumpy, as Casimir was known for his cheerfulness and for a sense of peace.

Prince Casimir's love for Jesus was reflected in his love of the poor. Like yesterday's saint, he would give to the poor as much as he could and never kept things for himself if someone else would need it more. He also loved Our Lady, and every day would sing to her a hymn which we know in English as "Daily daily sing to Mary". (Known as the Hymn of St. Casimir but it was probably written by St. Bernard of Cluny - see below).

When Prince Casimir was 15 years old, his father, the king, sent him with some soldiers to conquer Hungary. Prince Casimir was not pleased, and on hearing that Pope Sixtus IV had sent a messenger to his father, asking him to abandon this idea, Casimir turned around and marched back to Poland. The king was furious at his son's lack of military ambition. However, when the king had to go to Lithuania, he left Prince Casimir in charge of Poland as viceroy for, which he did with wisdom and justice, earning a lot of respect. St. Casimir died in his early 20s, probably of tuberculosis and his relics are still in Vilnius, which is in Lithuania. He is patron saint of Poland and Lithuania. **Can you sing/pray this hymn?**

1. Daily, daily sing to Mary,
Sing, my soul, her praises due:
All her feasts, her actions
honour
With the heart's devotion true.

2. Lost in wond'ring
contemplation,
Be her majesty confessed:
Call her Mother, call her
Virgin,
Happy Mother, Virgin blest.

3. She is mighty in her
pleading,
Tender in her loving care;
Ever watchful, understanding,
All our sorrows she will share.

4. Advocate and loving mother,
Mediatrice of all grace:
Heaven's blessings she
dispenses
On our sinful human race.

5. All our graces flow through
Mary;
All then join her praise to sing:
Fairest work of all creation,
Mother of creation's King.

6. Sing in songs of peace
unending,
Call upon her lovingly:
Seat of wisdom, Gate of
heaven,
Morning star upon the sea.

7th March, Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (d.203)

Sts. Perpetua and Felicity were martyred during the persecution of the emperor Septimus Severus. At this time, it was dangerous to be a Christian, but these two young women refused to give up Jesus and inspired so many other people to be firm in their faith. The word "martyr" actually means "witness" and by dying for their faith, they witnessed to Jesus' death on the cross. The Church has always asked the saints and martyrs for their prayers knowing that they are now in heaven with Jesus. Felicity and Perpetua were mentioned in the "Roman Canon" one of the oldest Eucharistic Prayers which is still said at Mass sometimes these days. Listen out for their names in the list of saints!

How can we celebrate the memorial of Sts. Felicity and Perpetua?

Pray for anyone you know called Felicity, or pray for people who are persecuted for their faith.

Read the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer 1) and look for the names of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity.

Felicity means "happiness" and Perpetua means "never ending". Make a big effort to smile all day today and "be happy!"

Find out what your name means that you were given in Baptism and may be look up to see if there is a saint you are named after.

9th March, St. Frances of Rome (d.1440)

St. Frances of Rome was the daughter of a rich family and was engaged to be married to the son of another rich family in Rome when she was 11 years old. Married by the time she was 13, she gave her life to serving the poor as well as her family. She and her sister-in-law prayed together and until they had children sent all their time looking after the sick in Rome. Don't forget this was before there was any "health service" and the poor could not afford to pay for medical care.

In all the ups and downs of her family life, her husbands' family lost their lands and their grand house in Rome, and their children were captured by enemy armies, Frances carried on looking after the household and the children. Prayer was always at the centre of the life of her family. When she no longer had to look after her children, she organised a society of women to serve the poor in Rome. They were not nuns and made no vows but just worked together to "be Jesus" there. Eventually, when her husband died, Frances was able to give her time completely to serving the poor. One day, when she was very ill, she decided to visit her son, Battista, but on her way home, weak and tired she almost collapsed! She was spotted by her priest who took her back to Battista's house where she died. Frances had said that she had been guided by an angel all her adult life, who had kept her close to Jesus despite all the difficulties her family faced. When she died, those around her said that her face shone like an angel.

Very quickly people in Rome said that she was a saint, but it was not until 1608 that she was canonised. The church of Santa Francesca Romana is named after her.

How can we celebrate the memorial Frances of Rome?

Think of all the girls and ladies that you know called Frances, Francesca, Fran, etc and say a special "Hail Mary" for each of them.

Do something that helps people not as well off as you are.

Frances' eldest son was called "Battista" after St. John the Baptist. What can you find out about John the Baptist?

Frances took her family to Mass almost every day. See if you can go to a weekday Mass? It's usually quite short and quiet.

17th March, St. Patrick, Patron Saint of Ireland

St. Patrick was born in Roman Britain, around the end of the 4th century into a family of deep Christian faith. As a teenager, he was captured by pirates and taken to Ireland, which was still a pagan country, and sold as a slave. However, although he was roughly treated, his faith grew stronger despite the difficulties that he faced. After about six years he heard a voice in his sleep telling him to escape and travel to a ship 200 miles away. Once there he asked if he could be taken aboard for free, and when the sailors refused, Patrick knelt down and prayed. After three days, just before the boat was to leave, the sailors changed their mind, and he got on board. He was probably taken to Gaul (France) and from there he made his way back to his own family.

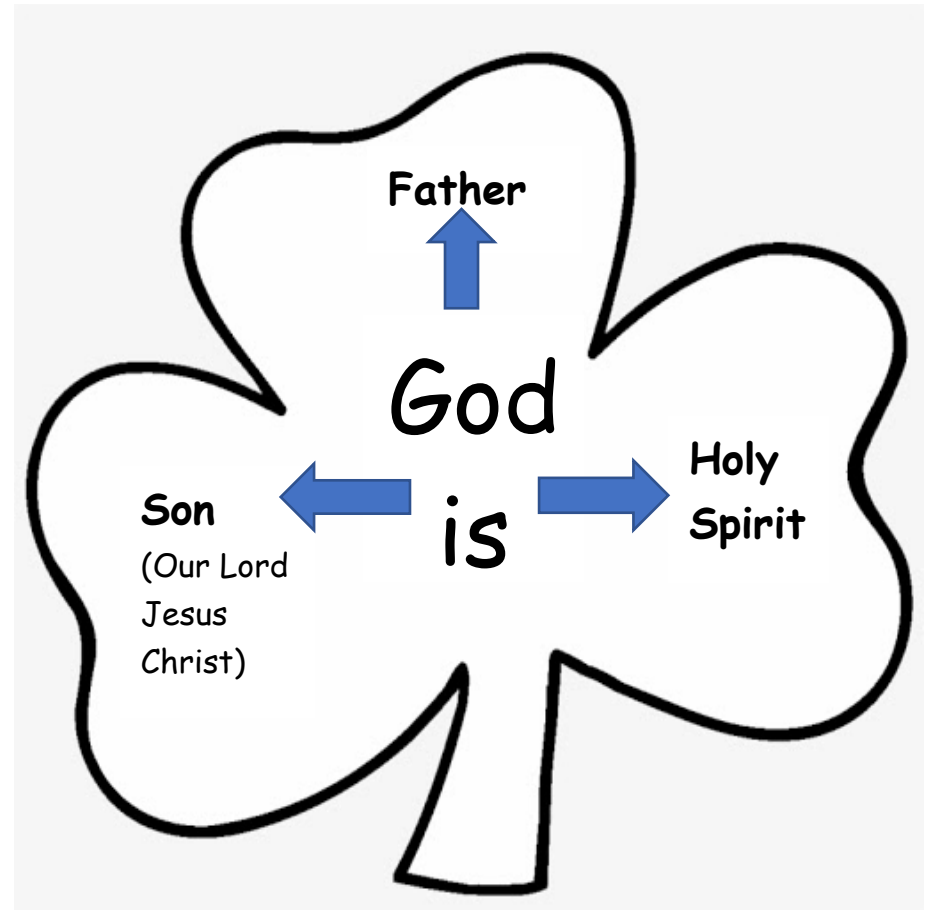
However, in his prayers he realised that God was calling him back to Ireland to be a missionary to the pagan people. He left his family once more and returned to Ireland. Through his preaching and teaching, he gathered around him a large group of followers. He built his first church at Strangford Lough and according to the Annals of Ulster, in 444 founded the Cathedral Church or Armagh.

As a missionary bishop, he faced many hardships and opposition even from his friends and fellow Christians. Nevertheless, he worked hard to tell the local chieftains and their families Jesus loves them and wants everyone to know God His Father, through the Holy Spirit. St. Patrick is remembered for his simplicity, his care, and his trust in God as he taught the very people who had held him as their slave. He died in about 461 and was probably buried at Strangford Lough.

The details of his missionary work have been lost to time, but what we do know is that he was very clear that God is a Trinity of three equal persons. He famously demonstrated this with his shamrock leaf which is one leaf with three sections.

Credits: universalis.com, Butler's Lives of the Saints, Concise Edition (Burns and Oates 1991)

Colour in this shamrock and cut it out to put up in your bedroom to remind you that we believe in One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit



19th March, St. Joseph, Spouse (Husband) of Mary

What do we know about St. Joseph? Here are some facts about him and a few fables as well. Cut out the true ones (or colour them in) and stick them around the picture of St. Joseph taken from the stained glass window in St. Joseph's church Malvern.. (Answers below)

St. Joseph is a descendant of King David

St. Joseph was told by an angel the baby Mary was carrying was the Son of God.

St. Joseph's family came from Bethlehem

In some countries, Father's day is the 19th March, whatever day of the week that is.

St. Joseph took Jesus' body down from the cross

St. Joseph was engaged to Mary when the Angel Gabriel visited her

St. Joseph is patron saint of unborn children

St. Joseph was an old man when Jesus was born

St. Joseph is patron saint of the Universal (whole) Church

St. Joseph is patron saint of immigrants

St. Joseph was a carpenter

St. Joseph is patron saint of fathers

St. Joseph has two feast days; 19th March and 1st May

St. Joseph is patron saint of workers

St. Joseph took the family to Egypt to escape King Herod who wanted to kill baby Jesus

St. Joseph was born in Bethlehem

St. Joseph followed Jesus when he was teaching in Galilee

St. Joseph is patron saint a happy death



Answers to the St. Joseph page:

In fact, most of these are correct. The only ones not correct or not known are:

- St. Joseph of Aramatheia took Jesus' body down from the cross - a different Joseph!
- We have no idea how old Joseph was when Jesus was born - the Bible does not say. He might have been a young man.
- There is no mention of St. Joseph during Jesus' public ministry when He was teaching, and it is assumed that he had died before Jesus started to teach as Mary accompanied Jesus as He travelled around.
- We don't know where St. Joseph was born, only that his family came from Bethlehem.

And a note on his two feast days: 19th March and 1st May. 1st May is an optional memorial of St. Joseph the worker (patron saint of workers).

10th March: St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us

11th March: St. Joseph, husband of Mary, pray for us

12th March: St. Joseph, chosen by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, pray for us

13th March: St. Joseph, faithful servant of God, pray for us

14th March: St. Joseph, patron (protector) of the Church, pray for us

15th March: St. Joseph, patron (protector) of families, pray for us

16th March: St. Joseph, patron (protector) of workers, pray for us

17th March: St. Joseph, friend in suffering, pray for us

18th March: St. Joseph, patron of a happy death, pray for us



Holy Family window in St. Joseph's Malvern

25th March is the Solemnity of the Annunciation,

This is when Mary agreed to give birth to the Son of God who came to save us from our sins and restore us to communion with Our Father in heaven.

Begin by reading the Gospel account of the Annunciation (Lk. 1:26-38) and then use this picture as a focus for discussion. Finish by praying the "Hail Mary" (on the next page).

Q: Who can we see in the icon? (A: The Angel Gabriel and Mary).

Q: The Angel Gabriel is pointing to Mary, why? (A: To show that he is talking to her)

Q: Look at the Angel Gabriel's wings, where are they pointing? (A: One up (to heaven) and one down (to earth)).

Q: Who came to earth from heaven? (A: The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to Mary/ The Son of God who was to be born and called Jesus).

Q: The Angel Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her, and she would become pregnant with God's Son. How has the artist depicted the Holy Spirit in this icon? (A: The bolt of light with three prongs coming down from the centre top of the picture).

Q: The Angel Gabriel said that Mary's Son would "sit on the throne of His ancestor David" (v.32). How is this shown in the icon? (A: Mary is sort of sitting on a throne).

Q: Jesus was born to save us from our sins, and He did this by dying on a cross, or as is often said "the wood of a tree." How is this shown in the icon? (A: the stylised tree in the middle of the picture, the cross on the Angel Gabriel's staff, and the use of red indicates Jesus' Passion.).

Q: When Jesus died on the cross the curtain in the Temple was torn in two. How is this alluded to in the icon? (A: The red curtain behind Mary is pulled back).

This modern icon helps us to see the importance of the Annunciation in the History of Salvation



Q: In the Gospel account we hear all three persons of the Holy Trinity mentioned (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). This is indicated by the number 3 in the picture. Count how many times 3 is used, or triangles are shown. (A: Open-ended).

The Angelus, traditionally prayed at 6 am, 12.00 midday and 6pm. You can use the solemnity of the Annunciation to introduce this to children, with them responding with the words in bold (whatever time of day it is).

1. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
**Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.**
Amen.

2. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
**Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.**
Amen.

3. And the Word was made flesh.
And dwelt amongst us.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
**Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.**
Amen.

4. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.
Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his passion ✠ and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord,
Amen.