

THEME, SCRIPTURE, REFLECTION, PRAYER, CHALLENGE

DAY 22 PATRON OF THE DYING

The death of St. Joseph is not recorded in the Gospels; however, we do know that he was not present during the Crucifixion of Jesus, and according to Church tradition, Joseph most likely died before the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It is believed that St. Joseph died a holy and happy death, gazing upon Jesus and resting in the arms of Mary. What a blessed death to see God before you die and for God Himself to tell you to go. This was Joseph's gift from his Son, who would hand his father over to His Father. Thus, Christ entrusted Joseph a particular intercessory power for all those at the moment of death.

St. Joseph's death is a touching and desirable example for us. God has designated St. Joseph as the Patron of the Dying because he wants us to experience a death similar to that of St. Joseph -- a holy and happy death. Death is a part of life; but letting go and saying goodbye to family and friends is not easy. However, we need to be prepared for death because Satan always tries to get a soul to despair and turn away from our loving God at the hour of death. Ask any priest; he will tell you that a spiritual battle takes place over a soul at the hour of death.^{xvii} However, St. Joseph can help us to make our death beautiful. The example of his passing encourages us not to fear death because the holy protecting powers that hovered near the saint's deathbed are at our command, especially through the means of grace given us by Mother Church, in holy Viaticum (the Eucharist given to someone who is near death).

Therefore, when we die, we could surely benefit by praying to St. Joseph to help usher us to eternity. Moreover, we can ask St. Joseph to intercede for a family member or a friend, who might be close to the end of his or her life.

O Glorious St. Joseph, behold I choose thee today for my special patron in life and at the hour of my death. Preserve and increase in me the spirit of prayer and fervor in the service of God. Remove far from me every kind of sin; obtain for me that my death may not come upon me unawares, but that I may have time to confess my sins sacramentally and to bewail them with a most perfect understanding and a most sincere and perfect contrition, in order that I may breathe forth my soul into the hands of Jesus and Mary. Amen

Pray the [Litany of St. Joseph](#).

Daily Challenge: Life is busy, and we do not often stop to contemplate the final things such as death. Set aside some quiet time today to contemplate your own mortality and death. Invite Joseph, Mary and the Holy Trinity to meet you there and to help you prepare in this lifetime for uniting with them in eternity.