

# Novena to St Joseph the Worker for Vocations



## **What is a Novena?**

A novena is a traditional practice of nine days of prayer for a particular purpose or need. The term Novena comes from the Latin word for nine, *novem*. There is no one specific reason for the number nine, however the number does have some significance. The disciples prayed in the upper room for nine days before Pentecost, Jesus spent nine months in Mary's womb and died on the ninth hour of Good Friday. Nine also represents incompleteness, as it is one short of ten. Just like the number nine we also are lacking in many ways, which is why we turn to God in intercessory prayer.

## **Why pray to St Joseph?**

When we pray to saints, we are really looking to their example and asking them to pray for us. In the case of St Joseph he is an excellent example to us for vocations, due to his obedience to God's will and his special vocation of being a father to Jesus and a husband to Mary. St Joseph also encouraged and supported the vocations of Mary and Jesus, which is why Pope Francis refers to him as the 'protector of vocations'. Devotion to St Joseph has been encouraged by many popes, and he has even been proclaimed as the Patron of the Universal Church. St Joseph is also the patron of our Cathedral and the diocese.

## **How to Pray the Novena**

The nine days of the Novena are presented here for you. Part of the prayer is the same each day, but each day also has its own unique reflection and prayer. Simply pray through the days of the novena in nine consecutive days. It may be helpful to pick a particular time of the day to pray each day. Find a place where you can focus, and allow yourself to reflect on the words as you say the prayers. The novena can be prayed on any dates, however the ideal date to start the novena is the 23rd of April, so as to finish on the 1st of May, the feast day of St Joseph the Worker.

# Day 1

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You loved Jesus with a father's heart. You carried out your role as guardian of the redeemer with faith and courage after the angel of the Lord told you not to be afraid. Looking to your example, I pray that I may imitate you in overcoming my own fears and responding to God's call in my life. I invoke your patronage of the Church, not only as a defence against the challenges she faces, but also for her renewed commitment to evangelisation and to re-evangelisation in nations like ours where the Christian faith was formerly flourishing but is now put to a hard test.

Patron of labourers, intercede for our diocese, that the "Lord would send labourers into his harvest". I ask for your intercession that I would know and follow God's calling in my life, and that vocations to the priesthood and religious life would flourish in our diocese.

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.

Hail Mary...

Our Father...



# Day 2

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You are a beloved father. Your greatness came through your marriage to Mary and your fatherhood to Jesus where you placed yourself at the service of the entire plan of salvation. Through your sacrificial service you turned your human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of your self. May I also lead a life of sacrificial service and put my human vocation at the service of God's plan of salvation.

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# Day 3

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You are a tender and loving father. You raised the infant saviour to your cheeks, you bent down to care for him and you took him by the hand, teaching him to walk. God's will and his plan were at work even through your fears. Take me by the hand and teach me that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through my fears, my frailties and my weaknesses. I pray that amid the tempests of life, I will not be afraid to let the Lord steer my course.

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# Day 4

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You are an obedient father. God revealed his saving plan to you by using dreams and you promptly obeyed each time. You declared your own 'fiat', like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. You taught Jesus to be obedient to his parents. Teach me to be obedient to Christ and his Church.

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# Day 5

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You are an accepting father. You set aside your own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of your own history. You were not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive in your acceptance of God's will. I pray that I may set aside my own ideas that hold me back from fully accepting God's will for my life.

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# Day 6

St Joseph the worker, protector of vocations,

You are a creatively courageous father. You were chosen by God to guide the beginnings of the history of redemption. You are the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history. In your protection of the Church, you continue to protect the Child and His Mother. I pray that I can live out my love for Christ through loving service to His Church.

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# Day 7

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You are a working father. Having learned his trade from you, Jesus was known as “the carpenter’s son.” Along with the humanity of the Son of God, work too has been taken up in the mystery of the Incarnation, and has also been redeemed in a special way. At the workbench where you plied your trade together with Jesus, you brought human work closer to the mystery of the Redemption. I pray that I would sanctify my work and place it always at the service of God.

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# Day 8

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

You are a father in the shadows. You knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. You never made yourself the centre of things but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus. In you I find the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. You remind me that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. I pray that

I can see the role that I am called to play in Christ's mission of salvation.

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# Day 9

St Joseph the Worker, protector of vocations,

Your example shows us that vocation matures only through daily fidelity. This fidelity is nurtured in the light of God's own faithfulness. The first words that you heard in a dream were an invitation not to be afraid, because God remains ever faithful to his promises. *Do not be afraid*: The Lord also addresses these words to me whenever and wherever I seek to follow His will. I pray that I can take to heart these words, when like you, I strive to say yes to God with my life, through my small acts of fidelity each day.

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## Sources:

Much of this novena is quoted or paraphrased from Pope Francis' 2020 apostolic letter *Patris Corde* (With a Father's Heart).

Day 1 includes material from *Redemptoris Custos* (Guardian of the Redeemer), a 1989 apostolic exhortation by Pope John Paul II.

Day 9 includes material from Pope Francis' message for the 58th World Day of Prayer for Vocations in 2021.

## Images:

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