

## St. Joseph's Family Activities

# March Saints and Festivals



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

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

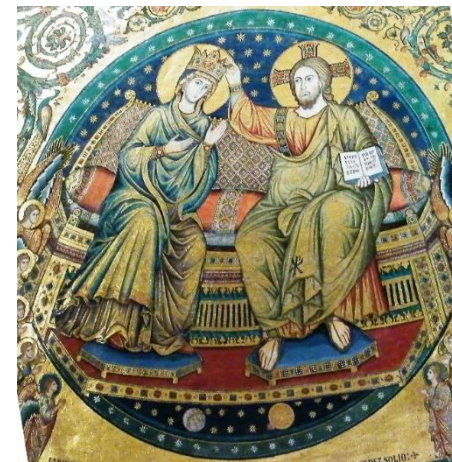
March is quite often wholly or partly in Lent but that does not stop us marking the glorious saints and other festivals which happen this month. For most of the year, a saint's day is called a memorial, unless it is a feast, when it's the feast of an Apostle, or other key saint of the Church. Solemnities 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 (25<sup>th</sup> March), for example will be moved if it occurs during this period as will the feast of St. Joseph and a patron saint of a diocese or church.

Talking of St. Joseph, there is a family/child-friendly novena to St. Joseph on last page. As it's a novena, it will need to begin on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Although I have given the dates for these memorials, commemorations, feasts and solemnities, they may differ from one year to the next and sometimes in different dioceses, so it's always worth checking in your diocesan ordo if you need to be sure.

Recent past copies of the family activities sheets which cover saints days until the end of February are available from <https://www.theannunciation.org.uk/resources/>. If you are after copies that go back further, please contact me directly.

**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 parts to 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.*

**1<sup>st</sup> 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 joyful 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. (Information from [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com)) 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.”

**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/>)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 they 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.



### 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 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.

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



## 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

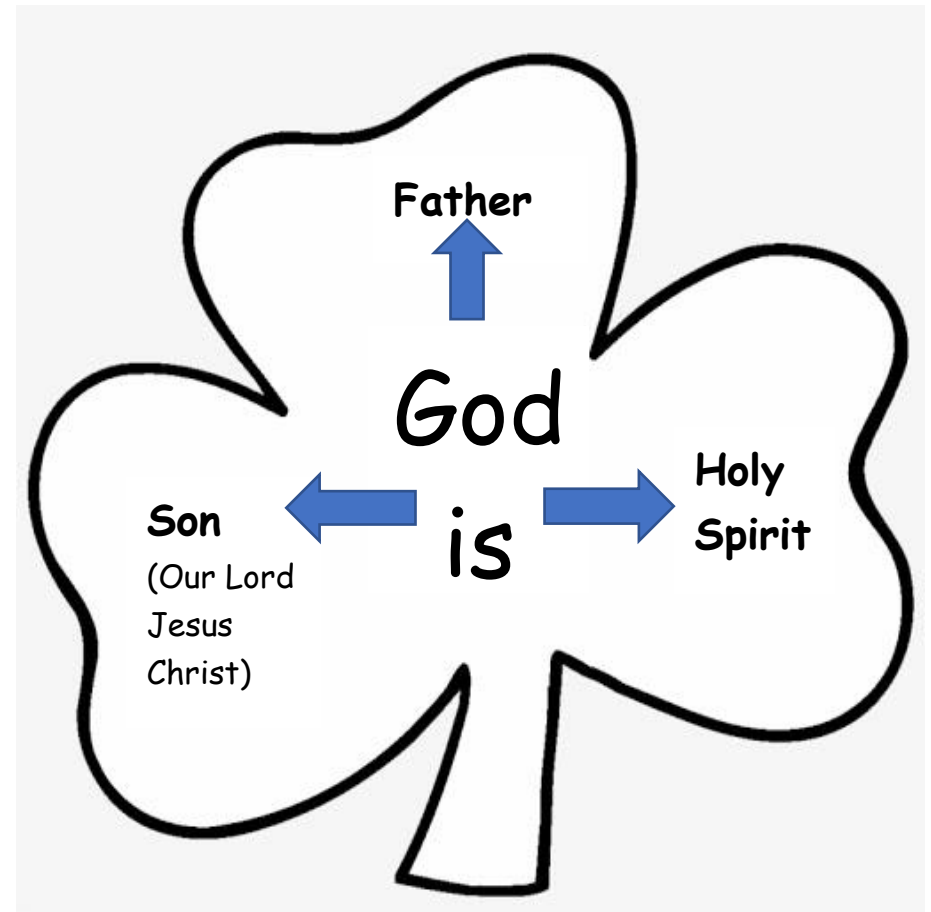
However, in his prayers he realised that God was calling him back to Ireland to be a missionary to the pagan people. He left his family once more and returned to Ireland. Through his preaching and teaching, he gathered around him a large group of followers. He built his first church at Strangford Lough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



## 19<sup>th</sup> 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's family came from Bethlehem

St. Joseph is a descendant of King David

St. Joseph followed Jesus when he was teaching in Galilee

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

St. Joseph is patron saint of immigrants

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

St. Joseph was an old man when Jesus was born

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 a happy death

St. Joseph is patron saint of workers

St. Joseph was a carpenter

St. Joseph is patron saint of fathers

St. Joseph has two feast days; 19<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> May

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

St. Joseph is patron saint of unborn children

St. Joseph was born in Bethlehem





## 25<sup>th</sup> 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).

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).

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



### 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: 19<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> May. 1<sup>st</sup> May is an optional memorial of St. Joseph the worker (patron saint of workers).

There are official prayers and novenas to St. Joseph, but to make things simple in the family, why not just add one of these simple evocations each day at the end of prayers, or at a meal-times:

10<sup>th</sup> March: St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us

11<sup>th</sup> March: St. Joseph, husband of Mary, pray for us

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

13<sup>th</sup> March: St. Joseph, faithful servant of God, pray for us

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

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

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

17<sup>th</sup> March: St. Joseph, friend in suffering, pray for us

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



Holy Family window in St. Joseph's Malvern