



# St. Joseph's Family Activities

## Lent week 4: 21<sup>st</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> March

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A warm welcome to week 4 of Lent. As ever, past editions all available on the parish website; <https://www.stjosephsmalvern.org/j/> and then click on the dropdown box for past editions.

St. Joseph is the head of the Holy Family and patron of the universal Church, the “family” of the Church. Although many of these activities are aimed at young families, the term “family” here is very loosely applied.

This is a busy week with Mothering Sunday, St. Patrick and St. Joseph to celebrate, it's a week to enjoy! Regarding mothering Sunday, there is a craft activity do for mothers, so Dads and older siblings need to help the younger ones here!

There is a shamrock to colour in for St. Patrick's day and for St. Joseph, the same novena is here as last week. In the light of Mothering Sunday being on different days in different parts of the world, in Spain, “Father's day” is celebrated on St. Joseph's day. So children look after both Mummy and Daddy this week!



*The family is the “domestic Church” and if we are not able to gather in person with the parish, it's a good idea to set aside special times to pray with the family, even if it is just 10 mins two or three times a week. These are graced moments. Light a candle and have a few moments' silence and remind everyone that they are in the presence of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These times are very precious and even if it is just a few minutes after a meal, it can be a fruitful time. Don't bite off more than you can chew! Start with just a few moments and build up the scope and variety of prayers slowly. Give everyone the opportunity to voice their own prayers as well as reciting traditional prayers.*

**Speaking/Learning the faith  
(which the Church calls  
“professing the faith”)**

**Celebrating it in the liturgy  
and the sacraments**

***There are Four  
Dimensions of the  
Faith making sure  
that Jesus Christ is  
the centre of  
everything we do***

**Living it (in Christ) – i.e. the  
choices we make in  
everyday life**

**Christian prayer.**



## Readings for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March

*Today we are looking at extracts from two of the readings.*

### **Second reading: Ephesians 2:4-10**

... Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.

### **Gospel: John 3:14-21**

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.

No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son."

The Gospel of the Lord

*Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

## Family discussion on the Readings

✠ Light a candle

✠ Make the Sign of the Cross

✠ Someone read the passages slowly (or maybe share them out).

**Q: In the Gospel, who did Jesus say that God the Father gave?** (A: His only Son).

**Q: Who is this "Only Son?"** (A: Jesus).

**Q: Why did the Father send His Son into the world?** (A: So that we may have Eternal Life/So that the world may be saved).

**Q: What does Jesus mean by "Eternal Life"?** (A: Living in the knowledge of being loved by Jesus, by His grace, and looking forward to being with Him and Mary and all the saints in heaven).

**Q: What do we have to do to be saved/to have Eternal Life?** (A: Believe in Jesus, believe what He says [and when we believe Him, we do what He wants us to do, by His grace]).

**Q: St Paul mentions grace in his letter to the Ephesians, what does he say about it?** (A: By grace that we are saved).

*Grace is the "stuff" which helps us to be good, to do what Jesus wants us to do. We are given grace when we are baptised, go to Confession and receive Him in Holy Communion. We are also given grace when we ask Jesus for help to be good. We can't "be good" without it.*

**Q: When can we ask Jesus to give us His grace?** (A: Various responses, e.g. when we don't want to do something that we have to do, when we are tempted to take something that is not ours, like someone else in the family's sweets etc.)

*Perhaps finish with this act of contrition.*

O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again.

## 14<sup>th</sup> March is Mothering Sunday (Mother's Day)

Mothering Sunday, or more commonly said, Mother's Day, has its origins in the medieval times when the readings used by the Church then reflected the Church as mother. It became the habit for people to return to their "mother Church" (i.e. the Church where they were baptised) on this, the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent, and also to honour Mary, the mother of the Church. Despite the Reformation and the dropping of the references to Our Lady, the tradition continued, with girls in service being sent home to their mothers on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent.

During the English Civil wars (1642-1651) it was noted that, *"Every Midlent Sunday is a great day at Worcester, when all the children and godchildren meet at the head and cheife of the family and have a feast. They call it the Mothering-day"* Diary of the marches of the Royal Army during the great Civil War p.27.

In the 1913 a "Mother's day" was created in the USA to be celebrated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May. This was a purely secular celebration, and this date is the one that is celebrated many other countries, although in Malawi it is in October, and in Nigeria it is on the same date as ours. In the Middle East it is on 21<sup>st</sup> March this year.

The important thing is not the date, but that we honour our mothers, thus obeying the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment. We can also use the day to honour our Blessed Mother, Mary, the mother of the Church.

Let us ask Mary, our mother to pray for all mothers, whether they are with us or not. This is a good prayer as we appeal to Mary as mother:

**Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.**

**Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.**

**That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**



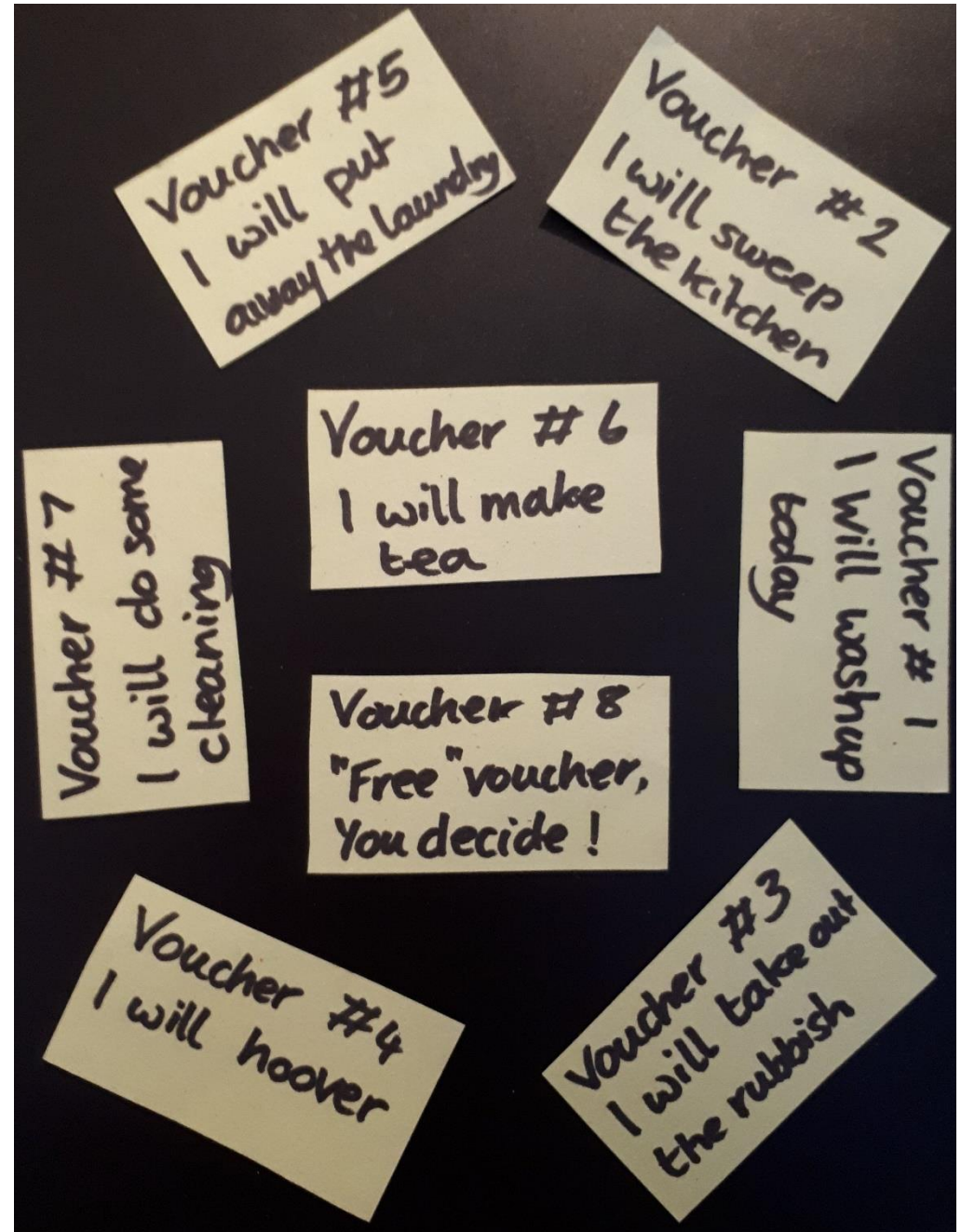
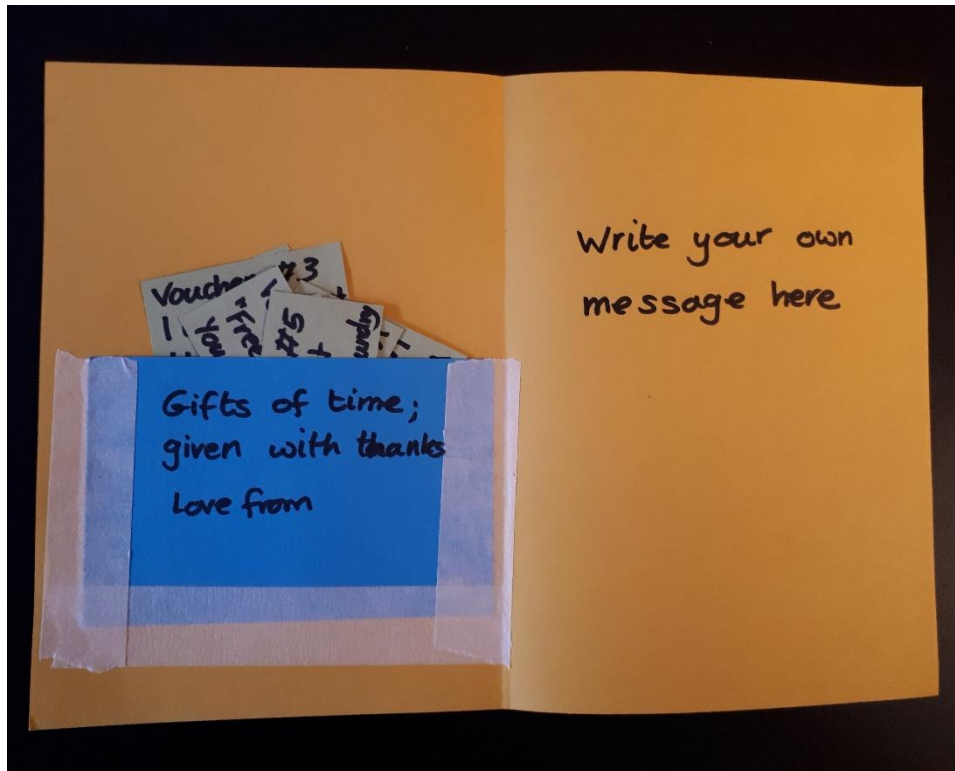
Jesus Crowning His mother Queen of Heaven.  
Mosaic from St. Mary Major in Rome.

Photo © Carol Ann Harnett



### Make a gift of your time for your mother:

Traditionally we give our mothers flowers or other gifts, but why not give her some time. Make a card and decorate the front in any way you like and then in the inside, make a pocket and fill the pocket with "vouchers" offering to help Mum around the home. Mum can use them when she needs extra help. Here are some ideas.



### 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.

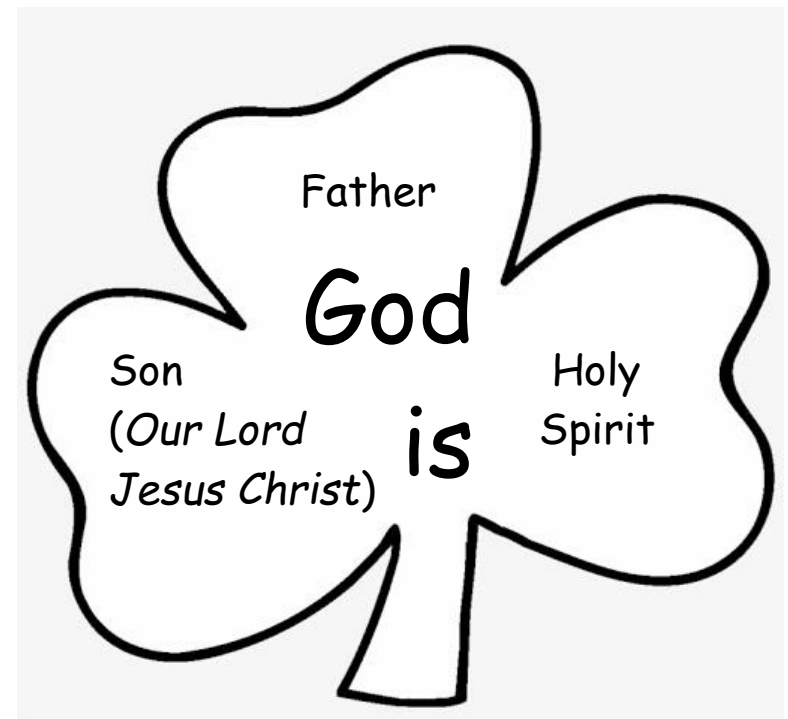
However, in his prayers he realised that God was calling him back to Ireland to be a missionary to the pagan people. He left his family once more and went back to Ireland. Through his preaching, he gathered around him a large group of followers. He built his first church at Strangford Lough and according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



## Stations of the Cross

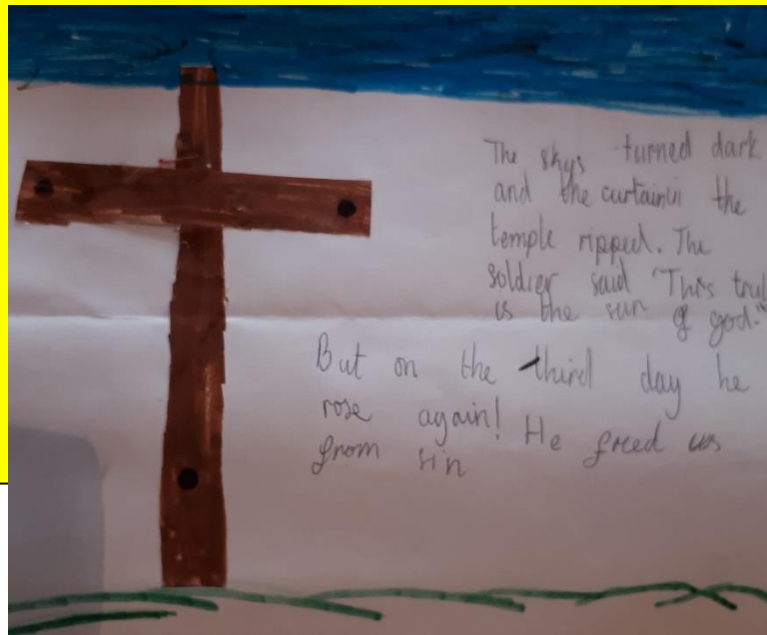
Reflecting on the stations of the Cross can help us to enter more deeply into what Lent is all about. It does not have to be morbid or gloomy, and children can express their real sense of injustice in their simple words and drawings.

St. Joseph's parish is inviting anyone from anywhere (in the world) to write a reflection or prayer and/or to submit an artwork or small model on one or more of the stations of the Cross. The submissions will be used for a "stations of the cross" which will be live-streamed at 6.30pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March. Please send your reflections/prayers or scans of drawings before 20<sup>th</sup> March to [stjoe.fam.activities@gmail.com](mailto:stjoe.fam.activities@gmail.com)

- (1) Jesus is condemned to death,
- (2) Jesus carries his cross
- (3) Jesus falls the first time
- (4) Jesus meets his mother
- (5) Simon of Cyrene helps to carry Jesus' cross
- (6) Veronica wipes Jesus' face
- (7) Jesus falls the second time
- (8) The women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus,



Jesus dies on the cross; two lovely pictures for our meditation.



- (9) Jesus falls the third time
- (10) Jesus is stripped of his garments
- (11) Jesus is nailed to the cross
- (12) Jesus dies on the cross
- (13) Jesus is taken down from the cross
- (14) Jesus is placed in the tomb
- (15) Jesus rises on Easter Sunday morning



## Year of St. Joseph

19<sup>th</sup> March is the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of ours and many other parishes around the world. Traditionally at St. Joseph's in Malvern we pray a novena to St. Joseph, beginning on 10<sup>th</sup> March to finish the day before his feast day. A novena is nine days' prayer before a feast day or a solemnity. The original novena was the Apostles' prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit between Jesus' Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

There are official prayers 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

