



What Wednesdays mean to Catholics

At the center of our week is the steady center of the Holy Family.

As the day in the middle of the week, Wednesday could be thought of as the linchpin of days. On either side of Wednesday is a grouping of days, clustered together like an outstretched arm on either end of Wednesday's sturdy base. What a perfect day to honor a saint, each of whose arms was outstretched in life to comfort and protect Jesus and Mary. In our Catholic tradition, Wednesday is the day of the week devoted to St. Joseph. The steady center of the Holy Family, this saint is the patron saint of workers, families, homes, and a happy death.

Here are a few suggestions for how to make a run-of-the-mill Wednesday more special by honoring St. Joseph:

- Send prayers, a Mass card or devotional to the dying, or someone who is elderly.
- Drop off a meal to a caregiver.
- Send extra love to your own father, stepfather, foster father.
- Give alms to a charity that assists the dying, gives aid to families, or helps children.
- Take a few minutes to educate yourself on the Church's teaching about death and dying.

The more one learns of the sacrifices of parenthood and family life, the more one marvels at how St. Joseph took such good care of Jesus and Mary. The more one sees of mortality and the worries of life, the more one is drawn to this humble saint who often found sacred answers to problems through the trusting state of sleep. What better saint for us to trust with our worries?

Even other saints have found comfort in Christ's earthly father. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote of St. Joseph, "*our holy patron St. Joseph has the power to assist us in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking.*" And St. Teresa of Avila wrote of St. Joseph, "*Our Lord would have us understand that as He was subject to St. Joseph on earth — for St. Joseph, bearing the title of father and being His guardian, could command Him — so now in Heaven Our Lord grants all his petitions.*"

One way some Catholics honor him is by going to Mass on the first nine Wednesdays of consecutive months, offering this devotion for the salvation of the dying, while lovingly

honoring the foster-father of Christ. A way that might be easier for your work schedule could be saying a prayer to St. Joseph like this “A Prayer of St. Joseph” at grace before meals on Wednesday evening, or before bed:

O blessed Joseph, faithful guardian of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, protector of your chaste spouse, the virgin Mother of God, I choose you this day to be my special patron and advocate and I firmly resolve to honor you all the days of my life. Therefore I humbly beseech you to receive me as your client, to instruct me in every doubt, to comfort me in every affliction, to obtain for me and for all the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus, and finally to defend and protect me at the hour of my death. Amen.

On Wednesdays, we also pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, which celebrate the culminating glory of Christ’s ministry and Paschal sacrifice. Tradition holds that St. Joseph died (in the arms of Jesus and Mary, thus, the most happy death) before Jesus’ public ministry began. As you pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary today, perhaps imagine St. Joseph at the side of Jesus and Mary for the Assumption and Crowning of the Blessed Mother: how glorious indeed this must have been; all three of the Holy Family reunited in Heaven.

