

St. Rita's Centre

Augustinian Recollect Spirituality Centre

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Dear Friends, what a year 2020 was and most of us are glad to see the back of it. We learned to live with lockdowns and social distancing. We saw parents protecting the children and unable to visit their elderly parents and the numbers of sick and dead are still on the increase. Is it any wonder we all look forward to a normal and peaceful 2021?

This year has one good thing to look forward to, one hundred and fifty years ago Pope Pius IX proclaimed St. Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church. **To mark the occasion of such a great anniversary the Pope Francis has proclaimed 2021 the "Year of Saint Joseph."** The word "patron" comes from the Latin word *pater*, which means, father. A title which is as important today as it was all those years ago.



Just as Joseph is patron of the universal Church, Joseph is also patron of our own parish churches, as well. Just as Joseph provided for Mary and Jesus and provides for the Church as a whole, Joseph can be trusted to provide for all the needs of our parishes. *Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.*

The Augustinian Recollects in their wisdom has had, from its foundation, St Joseph as its own patron. So, as we celebrate 400 years since the foundation of our Missionary Province, we can add the celebration of this year of St Joseph too.

Last year, the year of Covid-19, will be remembered as a year of the sick and the dying, our own Order has lost eleven priests to the illness. With St Joseph as our protector, we can look forward with growing confidence that, this year, will bring us the safety, hope and the peace we so desire.

11th March we start the novena in honour of St. Joseph. All the petitions you send us will be remembered in our prayers, and on the feast of St Joseph, 19th March, the Eucharist will be concelebrated by our friars for your intentions. May the good Lord always keep you secure, loved, and protected under the guidance of St. Joseph and the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Fr. Gerald Wilson OAR