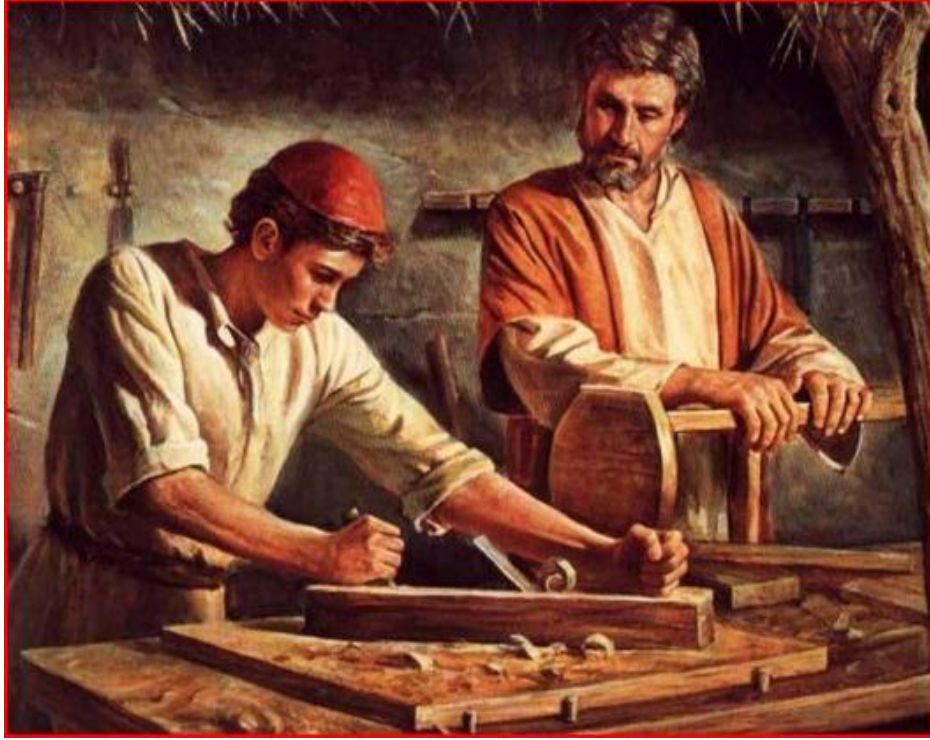


Men of St. Joseph International

Men of St. Joseph Pilgrim's Guide



Men of St. Joseph International is a private Catholic association of the lay faithful dedicated to uniting men through vital relationships, encouraging their transformation as individuals, brothers, fathers, and parishioners by living according to God's Word.

Pilgrim's Guide for the Men of St. Joseph

Men of St. Joseph, Diocese of Providence

RI Men of St. Joseph Prayer

O Blessed Joseph, faithful guardian of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ,
protector of the Mother of our Lord,
we choose you this day to be a patron and advocate.

As Men of St. Joseph, we humbly ask you to receive us as your cause.
Lead us to Jesus for instruction in doubt,
comfort in affliction
and strength in times of testing.
Obtain for us, and for all, the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus Christ.

May all men of good faith turn to you Joseph,
and may you defend and protect us and our families.
Help us to grow more like Jesus by your example,
now and all the days of our lives.

Amen

What is a Man of St. Joseph?

Though in our times, there are many obstacles hindering faith, a man of St. Joseph is one who seeks the Lord: Jeremiah 29:13 *You will seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all of your heart*. Following the example of Jesus, we strive to serve the needs of others rather than seek power and privilege (Lk. 22:25ff). However, this call is not a burden carried by the self-reliant, a man of St. Joseph receives the support of companions who "encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thes. 5:11) and abides in God's strength (John 15). As a result, a man of St. Joseph is fulfilled by discovering and joyfully living out God's purposes for his life (Col. 1:9-12). In short, St. Joseph was the closest man to Jesus, and so like St. Joseph we are seeking to become men who are committed to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

How to Live as a Man of St. Joseph

The Men of St. Joseph hold up Christian ideals, attribute and promises to be faithful in our calling. The following verses, meditations, and questions provide the foundation for the Men of St. Joseph:

Meditation #1 – The Inspiration of St. Joseph

Hebrews 12:1, 2

“We for our part are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, therefore, let us lay aside every encumbrance of sin which clings to us and persevere in running the race which lies ahead. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith.”

Like St. Joseph, our most fundamental challenge is to turn away from the sin and obstacles of our lives toward a life of transformation through faith in Christ who guides us and inspires our lives in all that is good.

Reflection Questions:

What are the “encumbrances of sin” in my life that need conversion?

What solutions does Jesus have to offer?

What are some specific ways that I can apply these solutions in my life?

What rewards and blessings may result by doing this?

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Meditation #2 – St. Joseph the Just Man

Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

St. Joseph experienced crisis and disappointment when he learned Mary was pregnant. Yet he showed the character that is required of godly men and as a just and humble man he intended to avoid exposing Mary to public disgrace.

Reflection Questions:

In my life, what does it mean to be a “just man?”

When others have times of crisis, do I demonstrate mercy and humility?

What are some situations, in my life, that I may be tempted to be unjust, unforgiving, or self-righteous?

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Meditation #3 – St. Joseph the Worker

Colossians 3:23

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”

As a carpenter, Joseph knew the process of refining rough logs into fine furniture. His mind was filled with blueprints with a clear goal in sight; his heart embraced the patient endurance to carry it out. So his work reminds us of the deep inner refinement of the spiritual life and our goal of accomplishing God’s will for our lives.

Reflection Questions:

What is my motivation for working?

What are God’s external and internal purposes for my life at work?

How does St. Joseph’s example speak to me?

How can I become a better worker?

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Meditation #4 – St. Joseph the Foster Father of Jesus

Colossians 15:13

“Greater love has no one man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

Joseph’s dreams for his future were shattered when he found his betrothed was with child. Yet he did not hesitate to give up on his own dreams and hopes to accept God’s will to mentor God’s son. We also have the responsibility to give up some of our own dreams to mentor our children, other children, and other men, as God calls. It is a chance to lay down our lives so God’s love can shape the eternal destiny of other souls.

Reflection Questions:

Since God could have chosen any man to care for His Son, what kind of character do you think St. Joseph had?

What can St. Joseph’s “yes” teach me about being willing to mentor children other children, and other men?

How do you think Joseph mentored Jesus as a child?

What is God’s will and purpose for my life?

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Meditation #5 – St. Joseph the Faithful Spouse

Ephesians 5:3, 4

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or any kind of impurity, or greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.”

Joseph, the humble carpenter, was called to serve Mary, “whom all generations would call blessed,” and Jesus, the Son of God. Imagine the role he played as the chaste spouse leading this Holy Family as the model family for all generations. His purity, devotion, and integrity are a model of chastity for all fathers and husbands.

Reflection Questions:

How do I care for my wife’s needs?

What must I do to foster purity in my thoughts, words and deeds?

What does chastity mean for a married man? For a single man?

How should I remain pure in my words and actions around women? Around men?

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Meditation #6 – Promise #1: Dedicate Your Life to the Lord

Mark 12:29,30

Jesus said... “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

In other words, love the Lord in every possible way. The call of a man of St. Joseph is to put God first in every area of his life as a disciple, husband, father, friend, worker, citizen, and apostle in the world. For a man of St. Joseph this means active participation in Sunday Mass with his family as the foundation of all areas of his life.

Reflection Questions:

What are the specific ways that Sunday Mass brings God’s grace to help me change?

How can I make my personal and family church experience more meaningful?

What does dedicating my life to the Lord mean in the various areas of my life?

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Meditation #7 – Promise #2: Grow In Christian Discipleship

Acts 2:42

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Discipleship is not an aimless pursuit or an obscure mystery. In the early church the foundations for discipleship was set based on the teachings of the Scriptures, the community experience lived together, the Lord's Supper, and a life of prayer. The Catholic Catechism is actually the development of these four pillars of discipleship. For a man of St. Joseph, this is a call to develop a life of prayer, Scripture reading, and worship in community.

Discussion Questions:

How can I develop or improve a personal prayer life?

What elements of spiritual reading, prayer forms, liturgical worship, and community prayer do I include in my prayer life?

What blessings result from this?

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Meditation #8 – Promise #3: Live with Integrity and Honesty

Galatians 5:22, 23

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Against such things there is no law.

As we dedicate our lives to the Lord and grow in discipleship, the Holy Spirit brings about fruit in our lives. The image of trees and fruit implies that this conversion of life and growth in character takes time and results as we abide in the Lord (John 15). For a man of St. Joseph, this is a call to on-going repentance and experiencing the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Discussion Questions:

In what ways am I allowing the Holy Spirit to change me?

What fruits am I strongest in and which am I weakest?

Do I feel comfortable within the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

How does it help me experience conversion?

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Meditation #9 – Promise #4: Be Faithful to Your Vocation

Joshua 24:15 / 1 Timothy 5:8

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. / If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever

Whether our primary vocation as married men is to our family, or as single men to be Christians in the world, or as vowed celibates to build up the church, we must always make our vocation the foundational priority over other areas of our lives. For men of St. Joseph, this means living a balanced life and praying and spending quality time with our family or household.

Discussion Questions:

Is my primary vocation the clear priority of my life?

What areas of my life tend to become unbalanced?

Have I established couple time and family time for fun and prayer each week?

What are some ways to make this a life-giving joy for my family?

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Meditation #10 – Promise #5: Meet Together with Brothers

Hebrews 10:24, 25

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.

Too often, men have been taught to go it alone, to be strong in a solitary path. Yet Jesus himself surrounded himself with a few intimate friends, other apostles, and a larger community of disciples. In our time, it is not uncommon for men to be unaffirmed in their role as godly men. To fill this void and overcome the confusion and shallow images that are popular today, Christian men need to support each other and provide the encouragement to be godly men. As men of St. Joseph, this means forming Christ-centered friendships in small groups and large groups for mutual support.

Discussion Questions:

What are some of the shallow and confusing images of masculinity that are common today?

What are some of the true virtues of a Christian man?

How am I trying to encourage other men in Christian virtue and sharing my journey in small or large group gatherings?

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Meditation #11: The Second Vow: The Great Commission

Matthew 28:19, 20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And I will be with you always even to the end of the age.

After a time of formation, Jesus sent the disciples out to share God’s love. This great commission of the Gospel is to teach all Christ’s ways to all nations for all time. God’s unconditional love is not limited to our own lives and families, but must reach across all boundaries. For a man of St. Joseph, this means building up the local church and supporting his pastor, and further, it means building Christian unity across denominational, ethnic, and racial boundaries, and finally, to share the Good News of Jesus with all people everywhere.

Discussion Questions:

What areas of my life need attention before undertaking the Great Commission?

How can I advance the Great Commission as a man of St. Joseph?

What are some ways that I can build up my local parish and serve my pastor?

How do I share the “Good News” in my daily life?

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The Vision of the RI Men of St. Joseph

Vision and Pastoral Plan: Following St. Joseph, our patron and the man closest to Jesus, our goal as an association of Catholic men along with other Christian brothers is to be committed to Jesus Christ. This vision is carried out through the covenant, local point men, and the service committee.

The Covenant: A man of St. Joseph makes a covenant to live the five promises (see meditations #6-10) with the support of other brothers and his pastor as a witness in the context of Mass or the Liturgy of the Word. In the spirit of true ecumenism, other Christians are welcomed to be Men of St. Joseph and share the covenant in ways that are faithful to their own church traditions.

Local Point Men: A Man of St. Joseph who is faithfully seeking to live out the covenant, mature enough to influence his brothers, and committed to the advice and counsel of others is invited to build up local groups as a “point man”. This involves becoming a contact person, making resources available, and helping men form local communities. This includes small discipleship groups which focus on prayer, sharing, and living the promises, larger gatherings which usually involve sharing a meal, songs, prayer, and a witness talk, and holding wake up calls to introduce other men to the Men of St. Joseph.

Service Committee and Diocesan Events: Each local region has a service committee representative who works with the support of his own local men’s groups to provide resources and support in their region to local Men of St. Joseph communities. The service committee provided resources, carries out a diocesan pastoral plan, and holds diocesan-wide events. This includes an annual conference, retreat weekends, wake up calls, and summer pilgrimage days.

Relationship to Other Ministries: The Men of St. Joseph intends to be mutually supportive of any other Catholic or Christian ministries or renewal associations that minister to the needs of Catholic men. In particular we appreciate the Christian ministry of “Promises Keepers” and the Catholic service groups such as the Knights of Columbus and St. Vincent de Paul. We favor the integration of these ministries and visions in appropriate ways to build up Christian men.

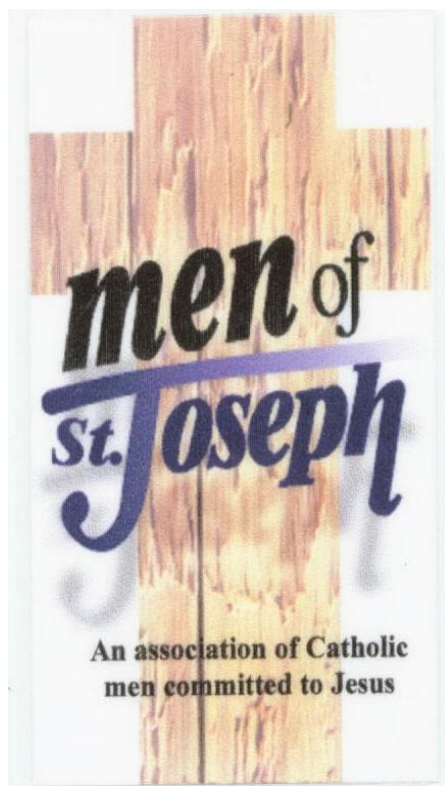
Resources for Men of St. Joseph

-introductory brochures, prayer cards, covenant forms, pilgrim’s guides, bulletin inserts, pastor’s letter, point-man letter, posters, “How to Start a Men of St. Joseph Group,” magazine information. (New Men, St. Joseph Covenant Keepers, Today’s Father).

For more information, call Rhode Island Men of St. Joseph at 401-353-1158 or check out the website at www.rimosj.org.

Covenant

Catholic Men Committed to Jesus Christ



Understanding that becoming a **Man of St. Joseph** is a process, and that I will accept all grace and strength available through Jesus Christ, I hereby agree to live by the Covenant which I am making in the presence of my brothers. I promise to live a life of conversion, integrity, and honesty, to act as a witness for Jesus Christ in my daily living, work, social, parish and family settings; to be welcoming and compassionate to all I meet; and to walk on this spiritual journey in the company of my Christian brothers. I will attempt to live out this unique apostolate by:

- † Participating in Sunday Mass with my family
- † Developing my personal prayer life and attending a weekday Mass at least once a month
- † Experiencing the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently
- † Praying and spending time with my family
- † Gathering together with other men for an annual conference & seasonal meetings

Man of Saint Joseph Signature

Pastor's Signature