



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

February 17, 2021

Dear Monsignor/Father,

Today I write about our Holy Father's exciting and historic announcement to name this Liturgical Year (2020-2021) the Year of St. Joseph, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady.

Over the last few years, I have witnessed a resurgence in devotion to St. Joseph, so I know that this announcement is most welcome for many of our parishioners. What is more, as Pope Francis says, it is an opportunity for all of the faithful to: "increase our love for this great saint...implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal." (*Patris Corde 7*) As our universal patron, we have much to learn from his witness.

Parishioners should be made aware of this special year and the opportunity to gain a *Plenary Indulgence* as decreed by the Apostolic Penitentiary. One special feature of this decree is an invitation to participate in a spiritual retreat that includes meditation on St. Joseph and contemplation of the Lord's Prayer. To this end, parishes in the Archdiocese of Baltimore that are dedicated to St. Joseph are opening their doors to pilgrims throughout this Year of St. Joseph. Attached, you will find a list of these parishes and the times that they are available for personal prayer and retreat. Please make these opportunities known to your parishioners as well as other such opportunities to gain this *Plenary Indulgence*.

After a year such as the last, St. Joseph's faithful witness is more prophetic than ever. Pope Francis reminds us: "Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties, and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture." (*Patris Corde 2*) It is my sincere hope that the proclamation of the Year of St. Joseph will indeed be a welcome gift for our local Church in Baltimore.

Please be assured of my prayers, as I humbly request yours.

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore

Attachment