

## **Pope Francis Adds Name of St Joseph to Every Mass in the Eucharistic Prayer: What Does it Mean?**

The Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments was made public on Tuesday, June 18, 2013. The decree was promulgated on May 1, 2013, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. The Decree mandates the insertion of the name of St. Joseph in Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. St. Joseph is already included in Eucharistic Prayer I (also known as the Roman Canon). So, why does this decree matter? What does it mean?

There is a Latin maxim describing the centrality of worship in the life, identity and mission of the Catholic Church; *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*. The phrase in Latin means the law of prayer (the way we worship), and the law of belief (what we believe). It is also written as, *Lex orandi, Lex credendi, Lex vivendi (the law of living)*, deepening the implications - how we worship determines how we will live.

The Church knows that part of her vital role as mother and teacher is to watch over worship, for the sake of the faithful and in obedience to the God whom she serves. How we worship reveals and guards the deposit of faith. What we believe guides us in how we live our Christian mission in the world.

Liturgical Worship is the foundation of Catholic identity; expressing our highest purpose. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the life of the Church (CCC#1324-1326). The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the highest worship. We enter into the heavenly liturgy at every Holy Mass (CCC# 1136-1199).

The words said by the Priest at every Mass, standing in the person of Christ the High Priest, are of profound importance. The Eucharistic prayer is the very heart and summit of the celebration. (CCC # 1352).

The Decree from the Congregation explains the vital role of St. Joseph in the plan of salvation. It affirms his vital example as a model of virtue and his role as a patron and intercessor for the universal Church. It notes the great affection which the faithful have shown toward him for millennia. Pope Pius IX named St. Joseph patron of the Universal Church in 1870.

Blessed Pope John XXIII added the name of St. Joseph to the Roman Canon in 1962 during the Second Vatican Council and since then there have been many requests over the intervening decades from the faithful requesting that his name be added to the other Eucharistic prayers.

These requests had come before the Congregation in Rome, and the Decree notes that with the support of both Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis it seemed a most apt time to make the addition. Pope Francis has now officially decreed the addition of the name of saint to all of the canons used during the Mass. It has been done in the official Latin. The implementation in every vernacular language used is underway.

The Decree explains "the Pontiffs had before their eyes the full communion of the Saints who, once pilgrims in this world, now lead us to Christ and unites us to Him."

Pope Francis' coat of arms incorporates the nardo – a grape-like plant with which St Joseph is often represented. He chose March 19th, the Feast of St. Joseph, as the date for his Papal inaugural Mass.

In his homily on that day, Pope Francis referred to Joseph as a "strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak, but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love."

The Gospel of Matthew (1: 16, 18-21, 24a) records Joseph's 'annunciation'.

An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and prepares him for the significant role he was to play in God's saving plan. He was invited to exercise his human freedom, to give his assent to the Lord's invitation - and he did. He said yes by his actions.

Calling this on St. Joseph, that just man, every time we celebrate the Mass is most appropriate; for he was the protector of God's two greatest gifts to the human race: the Savior of the world and his Blessed Mother. Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, and our great intercessor, pray for us.