

Time To Reflect January 2021

How about a straightforward suggestion to begin the new year:

Make a **New Year Resolution**...but let the focus of it be somebody else, not you. I think that is something different from usual and, perhaps, the way of judging the success of keeping the resolution – and maybe for longer – will be interesting too!

And as we look to this new year, maybe it is an opportunity to become acquainted with some of the initiatives that Pope Francis is asking us to focus on in the coming year:



Year of St Joseph

Last 8th December and until 8th December 2021, Pope Francis asks us to look to the figure of St Joseph in our prayer and example of one who cares for the Mother and her Child.

The relatively short letter which outlines Pope Francis' thoughts on St Joseph and why he should be a focus in this way can be found here:

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html

Pope Francis cites the various patronages for which we look to St Joseph:

Patron of the Catholic Church

Patron of Workers

Guardian of the Redeemer

Patron of a happy death.

The Holy Father recognises St Joseph's importance for us in the light of so much of our experience of the unforgettable year 2020:

*...we experienced, amid the crisis,
how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people,
people often overlooked.*

*People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines,
or on the latest television show,
yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history.*

*Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers,
cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers,
men and women working to provide essential services and public safety,
volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others.*

*They understood that no one is saved alone...
How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope,
taking care to spread not panic, but shared responsibility.*

*How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers
are showing our children, in small everyday ways,
how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines,
looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer.*

*How many are praying,
making sacrifices
and interceding for the good of all.*

*Each of us can discover in Joseph –
the man who goes unnoticed,
a daily, discreet and hidden presence –
an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble.*

*Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows
can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation.*

A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.

Amoris Laetitia Year of the Family (March 2021 – June 2022)

Pope Francis has asked the Church to continue to reflect on his encyclical Letter *Amoris Laetitia* (the Joy of Love), 5 years since its publication:

http://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf



*The Joy of Love
experienced by families
is also the joy of the Church.
As the Synod Fathers noted,
for all the many signs of crisis in the institution of marriage,
“the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant,
especially among young people, and this is an inspiration to the Church”
As a response to that desire,
the Christian proclamation on the family is good news indeed*

There is a **dedicated website for this year of the Family** which begins on the Solemnity of St Joseph, Husband of Mary on 19th March and will run until the next **World Meeting of Families** which will be held in Rome in June 2022.

<http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/amoris-laetitia.html>

In the Archdiocese of Birmingham, our Marriage and Family Life Co-ordinator is Mrs Lianne Pap. To contact Lianne about any of the initiatives for this year, please contact:

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