

FESTIVAL INFO

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SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY

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Saint Joseph's Day, also called the **Feast of Saint Joseph** or the **Solemnity of Saint Joseph**, is in [Western Christianity](#) the principal [feast day](#) of [Saint Joseph](#), husband of the [Virgin Mary](#) and legal father of [Jesus Christ](#) celebrated on 19 March. It has the rank of a [solemnity](#) in the [Catholic Church](#). It is a [feast](#) or commemoration in the provinces of the [Anglican Communion](#),^[1] and a feast or [festival](#) in the [Lutheran Church](#). Saint Joseph's Day is the [Patronal Feast day](#) for Poland as well as for Canada, persons named Joseph, Josephine, etc., for [religious institutes](#), schools and parishes bearing his name, and for [carpenters](#). It is also [Father's Day](#) in some Catholic countries, mainly Spain, Portugal, and Italy. It is not a [holy day of obligation](#) for Catholics in the United States.

19 March was dedicated to Saint Joseph in several Western calendars by the 10th century, and this custom was established in Rome by 1479. [Pope Pius V](#) extended its use to the entire [Roman Rite](#) by his Apostolic Constitution [Quo primum](#) (14 July 1570). Originally a double of the second class and a [feast of precept](#), it was re-raised to be of precept in 1917 after having this status intermittently lost, and consequently also raised to its current rank of double of the first class (now called a solemnity), having become in the meantime the rank common to all remaining general feasts of precept. Since 1969, [Episcopal Conferences](#) may, if they wish, transfer it to a date outside Lent. Even if it occurs inside Lent on the usual date of 19 March, it is still observed as a Solemnity of a Saint—this is one of the few times during Lent the [Gloria](#) may be said or sung, the vesture is changed from the purple or violet of Lent to white or gold (as it would be for such a solemnity normally), the [Collect](#) and the [Eucharistic Prayer](#)'s Preface and other prayers are from the Solemnity and not Lent, the hymns are more joyful, and the Creed is said. However, the [Alleluia](#) is still not used, the [Tract](#) being used instead, per Lenten regulations.^[2]

Between 1870 and 1955, an additional feast was celebrated in honor of Saint Joseph as Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and [Patron](#) of the Universal Church, the latter title having been given to him by [Pope Pius IX](#). Originally celebrated on the third Sunday after Easter with an octave, after [Divino Afflatu](#)^[3] of Saint Pius X (see [Reform of the Roman Breviary by Pope Pius X](#)), it was moved to the preceding Wednesday (because Wednesday was the day of the week specifically dedicated to St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist and local patrons). The feast was also retitled The Solemnity of Saint Joseph. This celebration and its accompanying octave were abolished during the modernisation and simplification of rubrics under Pope Pius XII in 1955.

At the same time, Pope Pius XII established an additional Feast of "St. Joseph the Worker", to be celebrated on 1 May, in order to coincide with the celebration of [International Workers' Day \(May Day\)](#) in many countries. Until this time, 1 May had been the Feast of the Apostles Saint Philip and James, but that Feast was then moved to the next free day, 11 May (and again to 3 May, in 1969, having become free in the meantime). In the new calendar published in 1969, the Feast of Saint Joseph The Worker, which at one time occupied the highest possible rank in the Church calendar, was reduced to an optional [Memorial](#), the lowest rank for a saint's day.^[4]

The [Eastern Orthodox Church](#) celebrates Saint Joseph on the Sunday after [Christmas](#).^[5]

Popular customs among Christians of various liturgical traditions observing Saint Joseph's Day are attending [Mass](#) or the [Divine Service](#), wearing red-coloured clothing, carrying dried [fava beans](#) that have been [blessed](#), and assembling [home altars](#) dedicated to Saint Joseph.