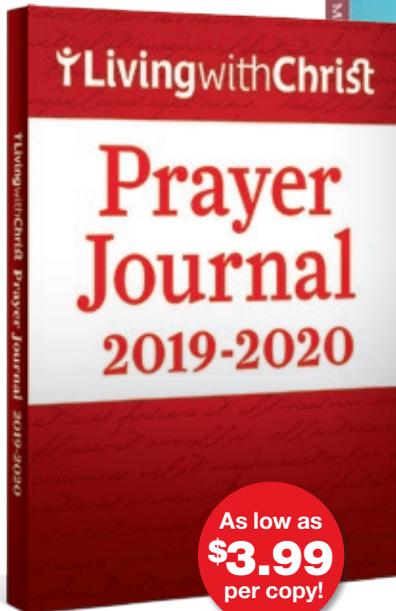
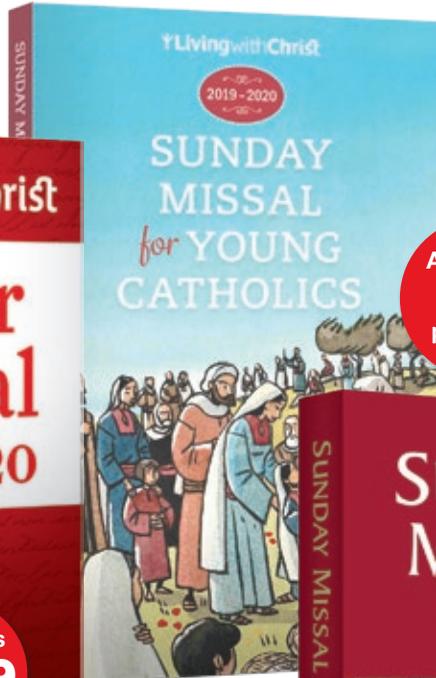


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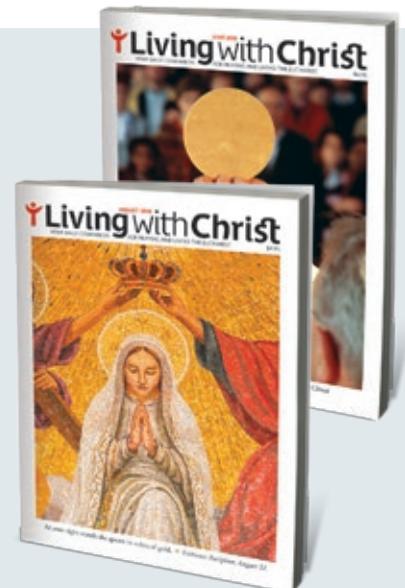
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CELEBRATING ST. JOSEPH

Prayer service honoring the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus

BY JEAN GRANT

LEADER: O Joseph, dedicated protector and faithful member of the Holy Family, you repeatedly listened to the angel's words. With an open and accepting heart, you were obedient to the will of God, and you kept Mary and Jesus from harm.

ALL: O Joseph, guide us in standing strong for our Savior, Jesus.

READER 1: At the Nativity, Joseph, you and Mary swaddled and adored Infant Jesus. You welcomed everyone from shepherds to kings who followed the star and visited. In a dream, Joseph, you received a message to flee and escape Herod. You put Jesus and Mary first, and the three of you immediately left for safety in Egypt.

ALL: O Joseph, guide us in standing strong for our Savior, Jesus.

READER 2: When Herod died, an angel came to you again, Joseph. Your holy family went to Nazareth and fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would be a Nazarean from the House of David. You lived a quiet, unassuming life. As a carpenter, you demonstrated for Jesus a work ethic, responsibility, craftsmanship, and the beauty of a finished piece created with patience and love. As Jesus played with the wood and nails, he was introduced to his future destiny on the cross of Calvary.

ALL: O Joseph, guide us in standing strong for our Savior, Jesus.

READER 3: Thank you, Joseph, for your quiet, powerful effect on Jesus' life. Your voice is not heard in the Bible, yet your influence was far-reaching. You are known as a patron saint of the dying. We implore you to guard us during this life and on to the next in the same gentle way.

LEADER: We honor Joseph, foster father of Jesus and husband of Mary.

ALL: The promises of the Lord I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim

your faithfulness. For you have said, "My kindness is established forever." In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

LEADER: We honor Joseph, patron saint of workers worldwide.

ALL: Whatever you do, do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance. Be slaves of the Lord Christ.

LEADER: St. Joseph, pray for us.

ALL: Amen. **T**

JEAN GRANT is a retired teacher from St. Charles, Missouri.

