

# Saint Joseph's Day

*March 19th*



## *Who was Saint Joseph?*

He was Jesus' father on Earth. He was Mary's husband.  
He was a carpenter.

# What is a Catholic Saint?

- ◆ In general, Christian Saints are those who follow Jesus Christ and live their lives according to his teaching.
- ◆ *Catholic* Christians describe very special people who followed Jesus' teaching to love one another *so well* that we use them as an example to inspire us to do better in how we follow Jesus.

# More about Catholic Saints...

- ◆ Each Catholic Saint also has something very specific that they are known for and some people pray to them to help with specific things. Different people and countries around the world have special saints that they believe watch over them. These things are called “Being the Patron Saint of...”
  - ◆ Saint Patrick / Ireland
  - ◆ Saint Mary, Mother of Jesus / The United States
  - ◆ Saint Anthony / Lost Things
  - ◆ Saint Benedict / Education

# More about Catholic Saints...

- ◆ Each Catholic Saint has their own special day called a “Feast Day” when we remember them and celebrate their lives.
  - ◆ Saint Patrick's Day / March 17th
  - ◆ Saint Valentine's Day / February 14th
  - ◆ Saint Francis / October 4th

# Saint Joseph of Nazareth

- ◆ St. Joseph of Nazareth is a great saint who totally lived by faith – a faith that made him a real hero. He was chosen by God as the trustworthy guardian and protector of Jesus.
- ◆ He was poor all his life and had to work very hard in his carpenter shop, but he did not mind. Joseph was happy to work for his little family. He loved Jesus and Mary so very much.
- ◆ Whatever the God wanted him to do, St. Joseph did at once, no matter how difficult it was. He was humble and pure, gentle and wise.
- ◆ Jesus and Mary loved him very much. It was a joy for St. Joseph to live with the Son of God himself. Jesus obeyed him, helped him, and loved him.



# Patron Saint of Workers



# Patron Saint of Italy

- ◆ In Italy and in many Italian-American communities around the world, thanks is given to St. Joseph ("San Giuseppe" in Italian) for preventing a famine in Sicily during the Middle Ages. There was a severe drought at the time, and the people prayed for their patron saint to bring them rain. They promised that if he answered their prayers, they would prepare a large feast to honor him. The rain did come, and the people of Sicily prepared a large banquet for their patron saint.
- ◆ Giving food to the needy is a St. Joseph's Day custom.
- ◆ In some communities it is traditional to wear red clothing and eat a Neapolitan pastry known as a zeppola on St. Joseph's Day.
- ◆ Upon a typical St. Joseph's Day altar, people place flowers, limes, candles, wine, fava beans, specially prepared cakes, breads, and cookies, and zeppole. Foods are traditionally served containing bread crumbs to represent saw dust since St. Joseph was a carpenter.
- ◆ In Italy, March 19th is also *Father's Day*.



# Italian Traditions in America

- ◆ In New Orleans, where a lot of Italian immigrants came to America about 150 years ago, Feast of St. Joseph is a city-wide event. Both public and private St. Joseph's altars are built. The altars are usually open to any visitor. The food is generally distributed to charity after the altar is dismantled.
- ◆ There are also parades in honor of St. Joseph and the Italian population of New Orleans which are similar (but much smaller) to the many parades of Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's Day.
- ◆ Saint Joseph's Day is also celebrated in other American communities with large number of Italians - such as New York City, where my grandparents and my parents are from (Sam's grandparents and great grandparents).
- ◆ Like Saint Patrick's Day and "wearing of the green", Saint Joseph's day often is expressed through "the wearing of the red".



# Zeppole

- ◆ A Zeppola (plural: zeppole;) is an Italian pastry. It is a deep-fried dough ball, sort of like a donut or donut hole. It is usually topped with powdered sugar, and may be filled with custard, jelly, pastry cream, or a butter-and-honey mixture.
- ◆ Zeppole are especially popular in Rome and Naples, Italy (where Sam's great-great-grandfather is from). They are also served in Italian-American communities the United States.
- ◆ Zeppole are known by other names, including "St. Joseph's Day Cake."



# Gaeta Family Traditions

- ◆ My Grandmother (Sam's Great-Grandmother) used to give me a present on every St. Joseph's Day and bake me a treat.
- ◆ When she passed away, my mother (Sam's Grandmother) made sure to send a St. Josephs' day card to all the Josephs in her family (Which was a lot!) In addition, she would always call me first thing in the morning to wish me a Happy Saint Joseph's Day.
- ◆ When she passed away, my oldest sister (Ms. Cressler's Mom!) took over the task of sending out St. Joseph's Day Cards to all the Josephs in our family. And she calls (or texts) me every year on March 19th.
- ◆ I am a Georgia Tech fan (so I don't like UGA red!) and a New York Yankees Fan (so I don't like Boston Red Sox red!)...so, I do not own any red clothes. But, I try (TRY) to make sure I have something on that has red in it on St. Joseph's Day!

So...the next time you  
celebrate Saint Patrick's Day  
and Irish Culture, remember:

Two days later, you can  
remember Saint Joseph and  
celebrate *Italian* Culture!