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## Editorial

# Heart of an Ordinary Father

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On Dec. 8, 2020, Pope Francis declared the beginning of a Year of St. Joseph. The timing was perfect, coming on the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pius IX declaring St. Joseph as Patron of the Catholic Church and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Joseph's spouse.

Along with the Pope's announcement in his apostolic letter *Patris corde* ("Heart of the Father") came a proclamation from the Apostolic Penitentiary about special plenary indulgences that are now available for this Year of St. Joseph.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence," who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

In fact, Saint Joseph "concretely expressed his fatherhood" by making an offering of himself in love "a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his

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home,” writes Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor St Paul VI.

And because of his role at “the crossroads between the Old and New Testament,” St Joseph had a significant role in the history of the Church. In him, “Jesus saw the tender love of God,” the one that helps us accept our weakness, because

Saint Joseph is “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

“it is through” and despite “our fears, our frailties, and our weakness” that most divine designs are realized. “Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser,” emphasizes the Pontiff, and it is by encountering God’s mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we “experience His truth and tenderness,” – because “we know that God’s truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us” (2).

Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his ‘fiat’ he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to “do the will of the Father.” Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he “cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption,” as St John Paul II said, “and is truly a minister of salvation” (3).

May we be inspired by St Joseph to lead silent, sincere, courageous and hopeful lives supporting one another! May this New Year be a joyous one for every human being on this precious and precarious earth!

The Editor