

FROM FR. JASON



PRAYER,
FASTING,
AND
ALMSGIVING

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Did you know that the month of March is dedicated to St. Joseph? On March 19th, the Church will celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph. St. Joseph has many titles; my favorite is the 'Terror of Demons.' St. Joseph's intercession against demons is not well-documented but has largely been proven by experience. Here is a prayer to St. Joseph composed by Pope Leo XIII that we can pray during this month. Pope Leo asked that it be added to the end of the Rosary.

"To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities. O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your

constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen."

Okay, a few weeks ago we talked about prayer as one of the tools the Church gives us during this time of Lent. Let us talk about another one of the tools the Church gives us to help us experience the Resurrection this Easter: *fasting*. It is not one of my favorite things to do, so I found some help from the saints as to why fasting is an important spiritual practice. May the saints help us now and always. All the Angels and Saints, pray for us!

1) **St. Augustine**: "Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, and kindles the true light of chastity. Enter again into yourself." 2) **St. Peter Chrysologus**: "Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God's ear to yourself." 3) **St. Jane Frances Chantal**: "God hides the prize of eternal glory in our mortifications and in the victory of ourselves, which we always strive for with great gentleness." 4) **St. Isaac the Syrian**: "When a man begins to fast, he straightway yearns in his mind to enter into converse with God." 5) **St. Gregory the Great**: "It is impossible to engage in spiritual conflict, without the previous subjugation of the appetite." 6) **St. John Chrysostom**: "Fasting is the support of our soul: it gives us wings to ascend on high, and to enjoy the highest contemplation! [...] God, like an indulgent father, offers us a cure by fasting." 7) **St. Francis De Sales**: "Besides the ordinary effect of fasting in raising the mind, subduing the flesh, confirming goodness, and obtaining a heavenly reward, it is also a great matter to be able to control greediness, and to keep the sensual appetites and the whole body subject to the law of the Spirit; and although we may be able to do but little, the enemy nevertheless stands more in awe of those whom he knows can fast." 8) **St. Catharine of Sienna**: "Without mortifying the taste, it is impossible to preserve innocence, since it was by the indulgence of his appetite that Adam fell." 9) **St. Basil**: "Penance without fasting is useless and vain; by fasting [we] satisfy God." 10) **St. Alphonsus De Ligouri**: "He that gratifies the taste will readily indulge the other senses; for, having lost the spirit of recollection, he will easily commit faults, by indecent words and by unbecoming gestures. But the greatest evil of intemperance, is that it exposes chastity to great danger."

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Jason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.