



# Protector of the Vulnerable

Recently, a male nurse was admitted to ITU (Intensive Therapy Unit) for his severe covid condition and his wife and a colleague implored the intercession of St Joseph for his recovery. With heartfelt gratitude to God and St Joseph, they shared with me that he was out of danger and transferred back to the general ward after a few days.



**ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE**

Yes indeed, St Joseph, the patron of our parish, always steps up to protect the vulnerable. We celebrate him as the model for workers on 1May. We recognise his fatherly protective love as 'the fellow-worker for God' through the biblical narratives.

When Joseph found out that Mary was with child, he chose to protect her, who was most vulnerable in a patriarchal conservative Jewish community. Initially, he intended to divorce her quietly to minimise her stigma and later, at the prompting of an angel, committed himself to be the guardian and provider for Mary and her child Jesus for the rest of his life.

When Joseph was warned in a dream that the infant Jesus' life was in danger under the hands of king Herod, Joseph spared no thought for himself. His priority was to save Jesus and so he brought Mary and Jesus to take refuge in Egypt. Imagine the worries and fears he must have had, but his sacrificial and protective love outshone his trepidation.



Just as he was the head of the Holy Family, today St Joseph continues to father us all. Especially during this Covid-19 pandemic, when we, children of God, feel most vulnerable, St Joseph is standing with his open arms to shelter us in his mantle, ever-ready to bring us to Jesus our Good Shepherd. I love St. Joseph. I celebrate his votive Mass every Wednesday. And believe me that's my most favourite word in English; 'Vulnerable.' And I truly believe the Good Shepherd learnt his first lessons from his wonderful father St. Joseph, the Protector of the Vulnerable.

The other day I came across a wonderful song in Malayalam, my mother tongue, penned by a Hindu poet. The rough translation would be somewhat like this: "No complaints, we have no complaints! The much extolled justice of God can't go wrong!" Last evening during our community meal, I saw a double rainbow in the horizon. I ran out in the drizzle to take a photo of that wonderful sight. And I was humming those lines . . . "No complaints, we have no complaints! The much extolled justice of God can't go wrong!" As a shepherd knows each one of his sheep and does his best for the well-being of his flock, we trust and believe that God loves each of us and we are in His hands, safe always.

Because He is the Protector of the Vulnerable!



# Reflection

## Reflection

Invite the group to a time of reflection by handing each person a piece of paper and a pen and having them call to mind all the ways they feel or think “they are not enough” in someone else's eyes.

Encourage each person to write sentences – one for each way they are “not enough” alternating these sentences with God's words “I love you.” (For example: “I feel helpless and hopeless. I love you. I feel depressed. I love you. I find it hard to pray. I love you.”)

After everyone has written their sentences, invite them to spend some time praying what they have written, and hearing God's words in between. Encourage the group to take their time with this prayer and remind

them that at some point they might find themselves moving off the paper as they spend time with God.

When everyone is done praying, bring together the group and invite volunteers to share their reflections. Ask:

Where did you find it most difficult to hear God saying “I love you and why?”

How deep were you willing to go with this prayer and why?

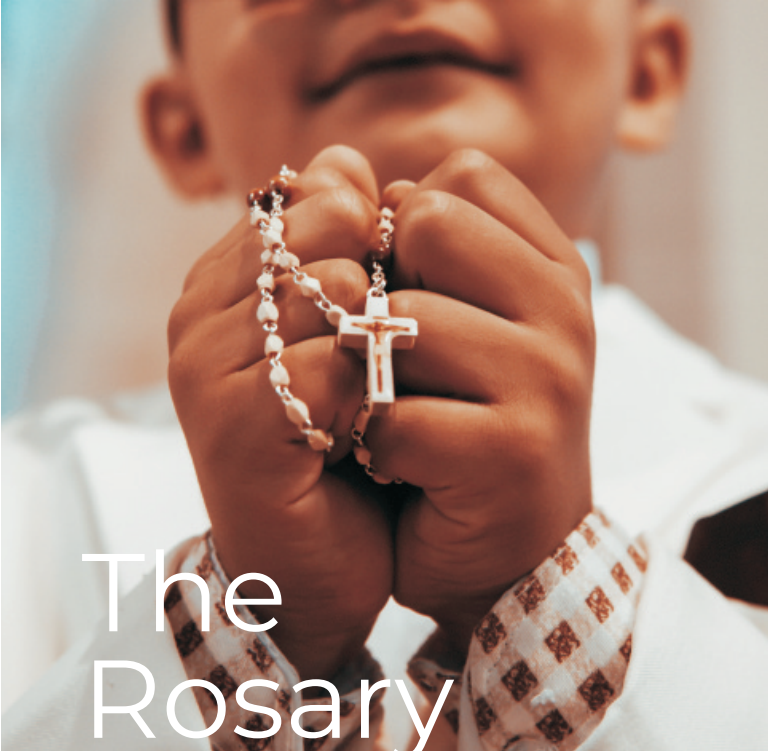
What might hold someone back from truly sharing their hurt with God or receiving comfort from God's presence?

What might we do for people who are blocked or are blocking themselves from sharing their needs with God and receiving God's love?

Close the time with the prayer below.

Good Shepherd, You have a wild and crazy sheep in love with thorns and brambles. But please don't get tired of looking for me! I know You won't. For You have found me. All I have to do is stay found.

-- THOMAS MERTON, from A Book of Hours



# The Rosary amid Covid-19

Pope Francis encourages the faithful to pray the Rosary throughout the month of May. In a April 25th letter, he said “contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial.”

He requests that families and individuals “rediscover the beauty of praying the rosary at home in the month of May.”

# Remember Holy Joes



Your faithful stewardship throughout this crisis has enabled us to fulfil our mission without interruption. And so, I continue to encourage you to remember that St. Joseph's mission is vital to our community now, and will be all the more needed in the weeks and months to come.

I'm inviting you to join me in giving a special Easter offering online, as an act of faith and thanksgiving for the abundant life that you experience through the many ministries of Holy Joe. Your generosity makes this abundant life possible for so many others, both near and far—especially in this season of deep need.

**I am grateful for your generosity and for your continued faithfulness to God, in such a time as this.**

**Please visit our website and the portal 'Donate to Our Parish' and download the forms you need and make your offerings.**

