



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

17 March 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Veneration *\və-nə-ˈrā-shən*

Respect or awe inspired by the dignity, wisdom, or dedication of a person. Specifically, honor shown to Mary, the apostles, martyrs, saints, and others viewed as faithful witnesses to Christ by telling their stories, celebrating their feast days, praying for their intercession, displaying their likeness, and performing acts of devotions, including visits to shrines and pilgrimages to a holy sites. **Veneration** is distinct from the homage we give to God.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-veneration>

CONTEXT

Veneration of the saints, respect mingled with awe of these spiritual giants, is a recognition of the supernatural excellence of those who substituted their own ideas for those of Christ.

—James McGrath

Venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them.

—Pope Paul VI, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*

WHY IT MATTERS

Our present culture too often celebrates the vulgar, the cynical, and the rude. **Veneration** is an exercise in humility as it honors those holy ones whose virtues invite us to reach higher, whose lives are signs of faithfulness and hope.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: The Christian **veneration** of images is not contrary to the first Commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, whoever **venerates** an image **venerates** the person portrayed in it. . . . Images [lead] us to God incarnate (2132).

RELATED WORDS

Adoration | Hyperdulia | Honor | Worship | Devotion

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What do we know about Saint Joseph?

In terms of facts, almost nothing. Matthew alone highlights Joseph's role. Here we meet Joseph the dreamer who, like his namesake in Genesis, learns of heaven's purposes while he sleeps. The earliest gospel calls the adult Jesus "son of Mary" rather than "son of Joseph." Luke and John prefer to call Jesus "son of Joseph." However, Luke adds, "as was thought." Joseph's last appearance is when Jesus is 12. Jesus is called the carpenter's son, revealing his father's occupation. Tradition says Joseph died when Jesus was 18 with the art of the Eastern Church depicting the death of Joseph.

Matthew describes Joseph as a righteous man who considers divorcing his pregnant betrothed. Then heaven intervenes. Joseph takes Mary home and gives her his full protection. It's an enormous concession to the divine will, especially crediting Mary's perpetual virginity. We always want more from Joseph. He's already given quite a lot.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-saint-joseph>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE VIRGIN MARY (MARCH 19)

The strong, silent type

Joseph never uttered a word in scripture. Instead, he let his actions speak for what was going on in his heart. By his actions we know that Joseph not only believed in God but listened for God's promptings and was willing to be led—even to some confusing and difficult places.

READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a (543 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/031924.cfm>). "When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him."

FAITH IN ACTION

If you have trouble keeping an open mind, look to Saint Joseph for guidance.