

# YEAR of SAINT JOSEPH



*“Show yourself a father, and guide us in the path of life”*

## REFLECTION - SEPTEMBER 2021 St Joseph - Model for Fathers

*This month’s reflection is taken from a message from Robyn Rodwell, the principal of Bethany College Hurstville (NSW), a school for year 7-12 girls.*

Earlier this year on the Feast of St Joseph, who as we know was Jesus’ earthly father, Pope Francis urged all dads in the world to stick by their children’s side, teaching them, guiding them and loving them.

He said: “I ask that you have the grace to be very close to your children, letting them grow, but being by their side. They need you, your presence, to be there, your love.”

St Joseph’s “great mission is to be a guardian”, the pope said.

The saint is a model for all educators, whether they are teachers, catechists, parents, religious or priests.

Like an educator, St Joseph guided and accompanied Jesus so he could grow in “wisdom and age and grace”, Pope Francis said. This is the same thing all parents must do, and “it would be a serious mistake to think that a father and a mother can’t do anything to teach their children to grow in God’s grace,” he said.



Even though God was Jesus' father, St Joseph lovingly took on the paternal role and taught the young Jesus various skills, the value of work, reverence for the Lord and fidelity and obedience to God's will. He also had to keep his family safe during the difficult period of their exile to Egypt.

So, girls, spend a moment thinking about how special your father is to you. Fathers, take a moment to reflect on your daughter and how she has grown from being the one who called you daddy, to the young lady she is to you today calling you dad and hopefully still laughing at your dad jokes.

In our sometimes dysfunctional world, the special relationship between father and daughter can be perceived as being not so common.

Our dads are sometimes the people who have paid for our special surprises, worked long hours sacrificing family time to earn a living and the one who was climbed all over when you were little, took you to the park and bottle-fed you through the night when you were at that stage and sat through numerous dance concerts and plays, despite his favourite sport team being on TV live.

Your dad has challenged you, disciplined you, taught you values that you thought you may not have needed and, all of this, whilst loving you unconditionally. So, on his special day this Sunday, use it as a reminder that Father's Day should be no more special than any other day. Girls, dad still wants that Bunnings gift voucher on Sunday, but let's use Sunday to remind us that we should show our appreciation of dad every day as that's what you also want him to do for you.

On Sunday, let dad wear what he wants to wear without you commenting on if the clothes match or not, let him have some "Man Time" and, most of all, commit to spending some quality time with each other.

Pope Francis urged people to remember God the Father in heaven, but also their own fathers and every father, whether alive or deceased.

As Bethany students living by the motto of “Together We Grow”, my prayer for all dads and their daughters is that growth is measured and valued in the ongoing depth of your wonderful relationship with each other.

Happy Father’s Day and I thank you for the fatherly support that you give to the College on a daily basis. It certainly makes our jobs easier and more of a delight.

