

Liturgical Living: St. Joseph Table



While the entire month of March is devoted to Saint Joseph, we also celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19.

Saint Joseph's Day is also Father's Day in Italy. This isn't too surprising since Saint Joseph was the foster father of Jesus and is the patron saint of fathers. But where does the St. Joseph Table come from?

The tradition of the "St. Joseph Table" has its origins in Sicily. Legends from the Middle Ages attributed the end of a devastating drought to a prayer-devotion that the Sicilian people made to St. Joseph. The feast celebration was a symbolic "thank you" and renewal of the Sicilian people's devotion to St. Joseph.

The St. Joseph Table is a shared celebration with the entire community where the bountiful food is given as alms to the poor. Traditional etiquette is that *no one* can be turned away from this table. Different foods have been added and deleted over time, but two constants remain: no meat and sesame-coated breads in symbolic shapes.

On this feast day, create your own St Joseph's Day table at home. Traditionally, the feast table has three tiers representing the Holy Trinity. A statue of St Joseph is placed on the top tier. Some items found on the other tiers can include: breads (shaped loaves with sesame seeds), figs, olives, lemons, limes, oranges, biscotti with almonds or Italian cookies, flowers, candles, rosaries, and a basket for prayer petitions.

Make sure you pick up a loaf of free bread at church! All parish locations will be distributing shaped loaves of bread for the solemnity celebration.

Saint Joseph, pray for us!