

Stella Maris

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March 2020

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STELLA MARIS

Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres around the world

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

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Stella Maris

39 Eccleston Square
London, SW1V 1BX, United Kingdom'

Tel: +44 020 7901 1931

Email: info@apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

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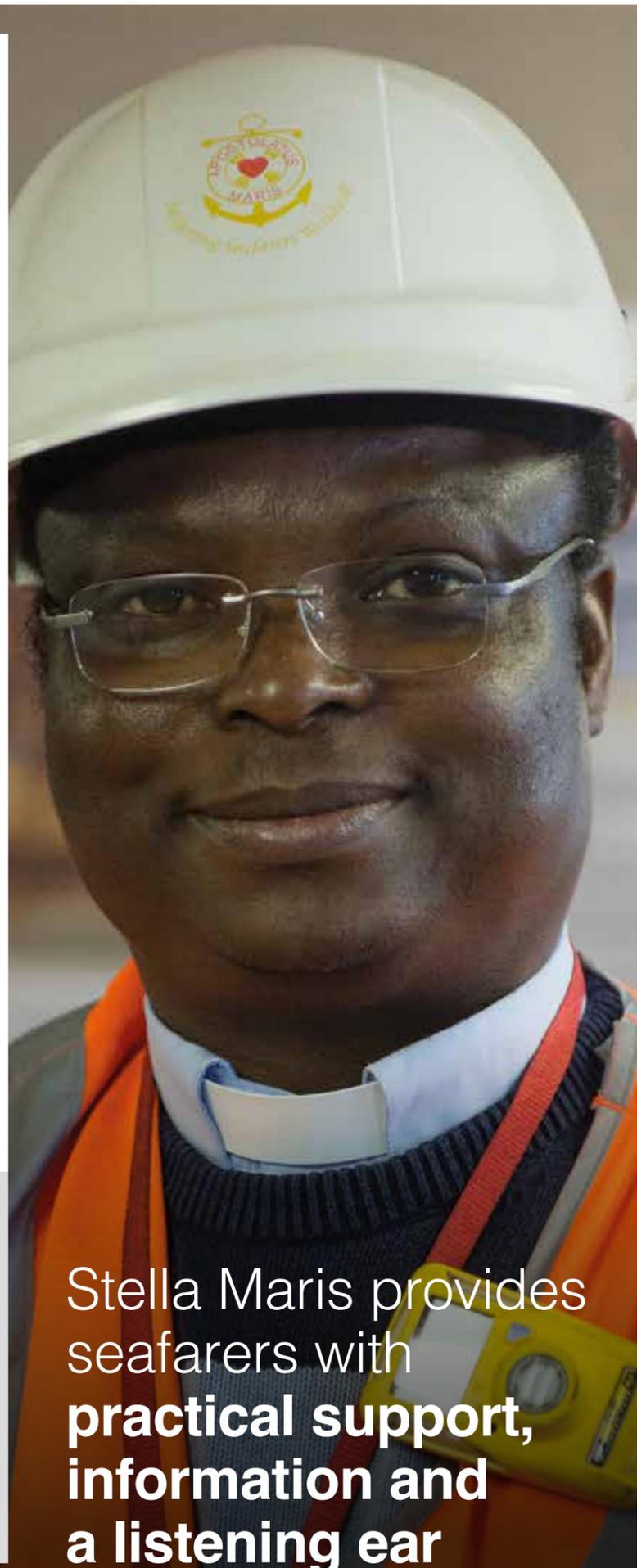
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Pg 2 Stella Maris.

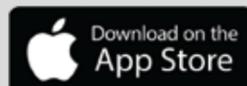


Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear



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Port Focus Montevideo – Uruguay



The Port of Montevideo is the main commercial port of Uruguay and also known for its history of tourism and international fishing.

Our centre is "a home away from home" for all seafarers and fishermen. If you visit us once, we are sure you will want to come back!

Our mission as Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) started on December 18th, 1946 with the Salesian missionaries so as to provide pastoral care to the first Italian, Portuguese and Korean seafarers/ fishermen who arrived at this port.



In 1974 the Salesian missionaries transferred the mission to the Scalabrini Missionaries due to their missionary call to serve people on the move and seafarers. From then, we are serving seafarers and fishers from all nationalities, religious and cultural backgrounds.

As parts of our daily activities, we conduct ship visits and visits in hospitals or hotels; give hospitality in our centre (free coffee, tea or a little souvenir); do counseling, psychological and pastoral care and provide the best free unlimited Wi-Fi internet in our centre. We have handball games, piano, ping pong and a little chapel. Also, upon request, we offer Holy Mass or perform ecumenical celebrations on board. We share books and new movies for entertainment during the voyage.

Furthermore, though our parish car is very small, we offer free transportation upon request. to the seafarers' centre or shopping malls.

Stella Maris seafarers' centre

Washington 274, Montevideo- Uruguay

CP 11005- 01605

Tel: (+598) 2915-2421

email: stellamaris274@yahoo.com

Port Chaplain

Fr. Frandry Tamar CS

National Director and Port Chaplain

Cel: (+598) 09339-0556

Whatsapp : (+55) 53 9965- 8348

First Sunday of Lent

1 March 2020

Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

Gospel Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:

Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.



The Gospel and You

In the gospel we tend to look on the figure of Jesus and the impact of his encounters with the main characters in the stories. Maybe on our journey through Lent we could learn some lessons from the ways in which those encounters transformed the lives of the other characters in the Gospel and maybe reflect on how we could allow the Lord to renew us.

The Gospel today invites us into the wilderness. We read of the anguish of Jesus and all the uncertainties and trials that came his way in that bleak place. We too are invited there, where the unexpected might be encountered. How very frightening!

But maybe what frightens us even more, are the untamed and uncultivated deserts within our own hearts, the unexplored and dark areas inside of us where we would rather not go. Perhaps we are frightened of what might lie in hiding there, how vulnerable we might be if we dared to take a closer look. What wild beasts and demons might prey on us? We too feel uncomfortable in those places, except our fear may not be for our physical safety, but often for our sanity and our sanctity.

Maybe in this Lent we will allow ourselves to venture into those areas of our hearts and minds. As we make long voyages around the world, there is much to carry with us.

The first week of lent is a kind of an invitation into that bleakness, the wide spaces of our oceans, to face those dark places but without fear for we are certain that the God who overcame the demons of the wilderness is with us always to give us strength.

The dark places of old wounds, perceived grievances, jealousies, family hurts that we have somehow not faced up to but have allowed to fester and cause us so much anguish.

To deal with these we need to carry an abundance of belief that God loves us and has a special care for each and every one of us. We need to know that God's love for us is unconditional, unwavering.

'God loves us and has a special care for each and every one of us'

2nd Sunday of Lent

8 March 2020

Gospel Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order. 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

The Gospel and You

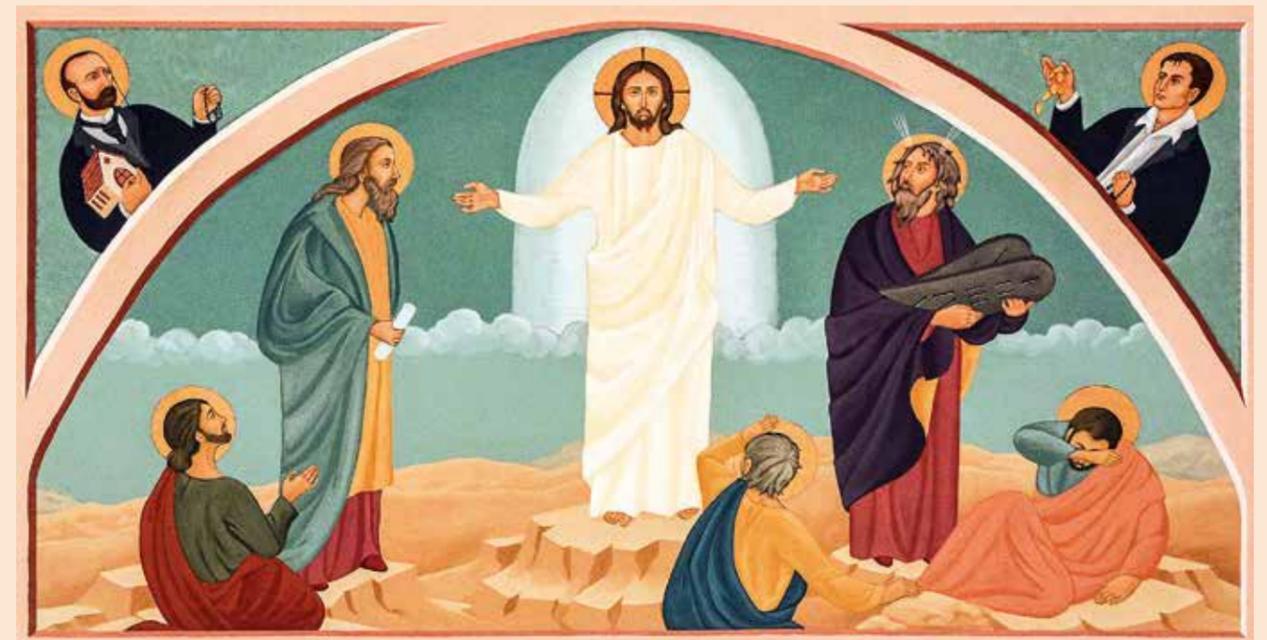
In the story of the transfiguration, we find a lovely touching moment. Pure heaven, and Peter wanted it to last - "Let's stay here forever". Like many of us, Peter, James, and John find it difficult to understand

what is happening in front of their very eyes, so Peter offers to build three shelters or shrines for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Let's make it last. I'm not sure if the voice from heaven: "This is my son, the beloved, listen to him" helped them to have a clearer understanding of what was happening before their very eyes. We too are often on the lookout for answers to some of the things in life we find difficult to understand.

Holding on to the memory is so important. When the darkness came down on the disciples, they would remember the light. The memory of his transfigured appearance would help them when everything would become so difficult to understand after his passion and crucifixion.

So too in prayer. I'm sure we can all remember feeling very close to God. It is important to treasure those moments, for we will need those memories when things get rough and the God we are trying to pray to, seems to be in a distant unreachable place.

Our captains use a lovely phrase: "At Sea, awaiting orders". I like that phrase. It sums up how we spend a lot of our time, not just as seafarers but in many aspects of life. In times of worry or doubt or faced with a problem that is way beyond our capabilities, we wait for guidance. We wait for someone we trust to steer us in the right direction. And of course the right direction might not always be to our liking, but if we trust someone, and if that someone is the voice of God guiding us in prayer then we are more likely to take notice"



3rd Sunday of Lent 15 March 2020

Gospel John 4:5-15,19-26,39-42

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.'

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan for a drink?' – Jews in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:

'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied:

'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.'

'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir' said the woman. 'Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said:

'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come – in fact it is here already – when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship

must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.'

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done,' so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

The Gospel and You

The woman at the well was alone. Usually the gathering of water was a social occasion where the women would meet and spend time chatting and catching up with each other's news. Children would often accompany them and a vibrant almost family like atmosphere would fill the air before they made their way home. But the woman in the story was alone, not allowed to be a part of the group. I wish we had a name for her, and not have to refer to her as the 'Woman at the Well'. But there's not even a mention of a name.

But this was an extraordinary woman. She was a Samaritan, a race of people that the Jews utterly despised as having no claim on their God, and she was obviously an outcast and looked down upon even by her own people. She was ostracised and marked as immoral, an unmarried woman living openly with the sixth in a series of men.

The story teaches us that God loves us in spite of what might be wrong in our lives. He can't help it. God values us enough to come looking for us, to welcome us into a share of his love and to take delight in us even if others despise us.



4th Sunday of Lent 22 March 2020

Gospel John 9: 1,6-9,13-17,34-38

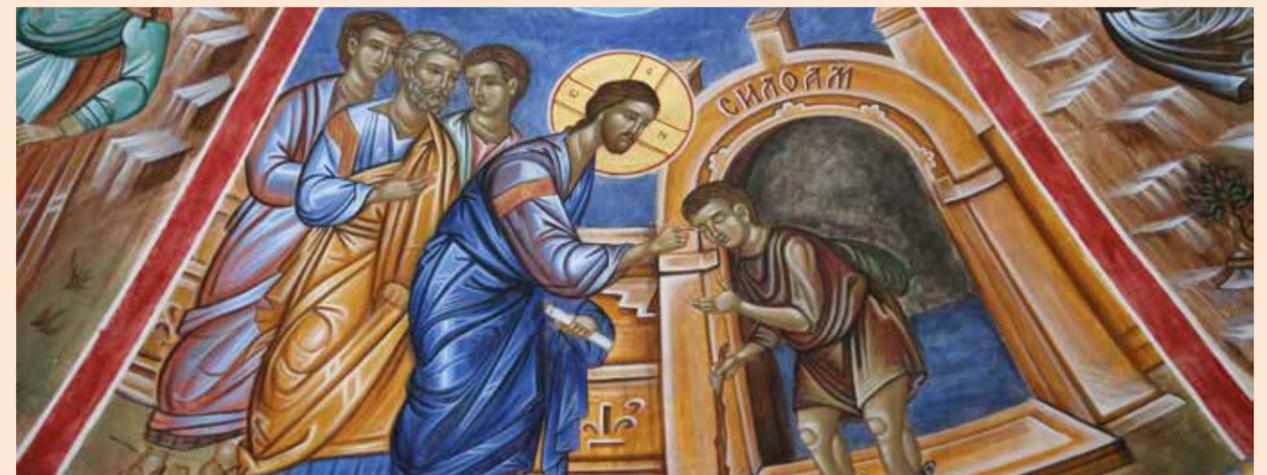
As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.'

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.



The Gospel and You

Today we hear the gospel story of the cure of the man born blind and it got me thinking not only about physical loss of sight but about the many different types of blindness around us.

In the seafarers' world I sometimes hear the phrase Sea Blindness. As a group, seafarers are taken for granted or worse still people don't even know they exist. Goods arrive in the shops but people often don't know how they got there, and certainly there is no understanding of the difficult lives seafarers lead to make all the choices in our shops possible.

That life is filled with constant worry and uncertainties over job security, the state of the ships that sail around the world, and of course the worry of families back home.

On land we too find ourselves in complaining mode about our lot and finding others to blame for the things that make us anxious.

All this complaining can make us blind to the many blessings in our lives. Do you get like that sometimes; being obsessed with what is wrong and finding someone to pin the blame on, and in the process blinding yourself to the many wonderful things that God has given you, not least his great love for you, me and all he has created.

'Jesus came from God to enrich our lives with a new understanding.'

5th Sunday of Lent

29th March 2020

Gospel John 11: 3-7,17,20-27,33-45

The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.

If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?'

'Yes Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world. Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

I knew indeed that you always hear me,
but I speak

for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came

out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

The Gospel and You

The gospel reading tells the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, another amazing miracle performed by Jesus, one of the many described in the Gospels; Miracles of healing the sick, curing the lepers, making the blind see, the lame walk. All remarkable stories. There are such a variety of miracles but they all have one thing in common. We're told that after the sick were healed they were restored again into their families or communities. In the miracles worked by Jesus, outsiders belong again.

The hopeless have reason to believe once more. And the story of Lazarus is no exception. On rising from the dead, he is restored to family life with his sisters, Martha and Mary.

Maybe it's just that I am getting older but I find the world I live in is becoming a much harsher and more aggressive place. Whether on land or at sea, this harsh and noisy world seems to be all around us. But maybe I too am a part of that noise, disturbing the lives of others with my demands.

I know there's not much of Lent left but I'm going to make another resolution.

In our tough and often unbending world our gentleness can be a vivid reminder of the presence of a loving God among us.

I'm going to try to be a little **more** gentle, more **patient** with those around me. Maybe my attempt at gentleness will rub off on others.

Wouldn't that be a fine way to sail towards Easter.



The Good Life: Back Pain

Herniated discs, strains, sprains, inflammation, stiffness and tenderness are just some of the back pain symptoms that can occur due to heavy lifting and day to day shipboard activities.

Back pain is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide and is a common health problem experienced in the maritime workplace. Prolonged sitting, lifting a heavy load, incorrect posture and muscle imbalance are just some of the causes.

With the recent innovations in technology many people find themselves spending all day in front of the computer. When it's time to rest often they are doing the same thing in front of the TV or computer screen. Over time you may feel an ache in your back or neck with the pain lasting for several days or even longer. Prolonged sitting is proven to be bad for your health. The sedentary lifestyle is associated with various health hazards such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. In addition there are the musculoskeletal effects to consider too.

According to the World Health Organization 60-70% of the population in industrialised countries will experience back pain at some point in their future.

Back problems involving the spine are the most difficult to handle. More often, these conditions occur during the course of employment, and are associated with trauma (e.g. fall, impact injury to the back, etc.) or poor positioning when lifting a heavy object where the sudden upward jerk misaligns the vertebra that eventually results in disc problems.

9 Tips on Looking after Your Back

- 1. Do you maintain your ideal body weight? The more you weigh, the more stress you are putting on your joints, especially your hips, knees, back and feet.**
- 2. Do you move your body? Exercise protects joints by strengthening the muscles around them. Strong muscles keep your joints from rubbing against one another and wearing down cartilage.**
- 3. Do you stand up straight? Good posture protects the joints in your neck, back, hips and knees.**
- 4. Do you pace yourself? Where possible, alternate periods of heavy activity with periods of rest. Repetitive stress on joints for long periods of time can accelerate the wear and tear that causes osteoarthritis.**
- 5. Do you listen to your body? If you are in pain, don't ignore it. Pain after activity or exercise can be an indication that you have overstressed your joints.**
- 6. Are you static? Changing positions regularly will decrease the stiffness in your muscles and joints.**
- 7. Are you a weekend warrior? Do not engage in activities for which your body is not prepared. Start new activities slowly and safely until you know how your body will react to them. This will reduce the chance of injury.**
- 8. Do you wear proper safety equipment? Make sure you wear the appropriate PPE, that is comfortable and fits appropriately.**
- 9. Do you ask for help? Do not carry out a task that is too heavy or big for you to handle. Get another pair of hands to help out.**

Courtesy of www.ukpandi.com



5 Ways to Be a Father Like St Joseph

March 19th is the Feast of St Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary and patron of the Church.

St. Joseph has long been seen as a role model for husbands and fathers. This is surprising for some people to learn. After all, Jesus' true father is God the Father, and Joseph served as His foster father during His earthly ministry. Yet, despite Joseph's unconventional fatherhood, this holy man proved to be the best role model that husbands and fathers could ask for.

This Father's Day, if you are a father, we invite you to follow Joseph's example of fatherhood in the following ways. If you are not a father, we ask you to join us in lifting up in prayer all those who fill the role of father.

1. Practice humility

Joseph is a notoriously silent figure in the Gospels. Although we receive some accounts of his actions, especially leading up to the birth of Jesus, we do not get a single word from Joseph's mouth. This is surprising, given the importance men held in society in this era. The Gospels tell us more about Mary. Once Jesus begins his public ministry, we don't receive another account of Joseph at all.

What does this mean for fathers? It does not mean that fathers should take a lesser role in the lives of their families. On the contrary,

we can infer that Joseph was an extremely devoted and involved parent in Jesus' life. What it does mean, however, is that fathers can emulate Joseph's humility. Joseph understood that he was given a special role in salvation history, namely, raising Jesus and protecting his family. Instead of looking for attention or rewards for this huge responsibility, he quietly accepted it and put in every effort to fulfill his role.

2. Be chaste

The Church teaches that Mary retained perpetual virginity, meaning that her marriage with Joseph was not consummated. While marriages generally do not call for abstinence, all marriages do require chastity. In the case of married couples, chastity means faithfulness to one's spouse and openness to new life.

Joseph lived exactly the kind of chastity that God asked of him. Though this probably wasn't easy, he likely drew his strength and commitment from his devotion to God and his true love and respect for Mary. Fathers can follow his example by avoiding sexual sin not just because of the fear of punishment, but because of true commitment to their families.

3. Teach your children

Jesus learned the trade of carpentry from

Joseph, which indicates that they spent a lot of time during Jesus' formative years in a teacher/apprentice relationship. Joseph showed true investment in Jesus' life by putting so much time and effort into teaching Him a trade. Fathers today should put in just as much effort to teach their children to earn a livelihood, understand the value of hard work, and put their God-given skills to use.

The fact that Joseph taught Jesus his own trade also tells fathers something important about how they should relate to their children. Joseph saw Jesus as not simply a child, but as a fully capable human being. Undoubtedly, he received the respect from Jesus that is expected from children to parents. But Joseph did not use his position to put himself above Jesus. Since he included Jesus in providing for the family and invited Him to join in his work, we can infer that Joseph also showed human respect for Jesus. Fathers, likewise, should respect their children.

4. Use your gifts to strengthen your family

Joseph's foster son was fully God and fully man. His wife was born without original sin. He could have given up with the knowledge that he could never match either Jesus' or Mary's level of holiness. But Joseph did not do that. Instead, he took the hand he was dealt and figured out what he could do with it. God provided Joseph with the gifts he needed to protect and provide for his

family. These included his skills as a worker, his humility, and his dedication to loving both Jesus and Mary deeply.

Like Joseph, fathers can identify the gifts God has given them and use those gifts in a way that best serves their families. All men will not have the same gifts or abilities. But by careful reflection and honest spousal partnership, fathers can discern how they are called to serve their families.

5. Be obedient

Obedience is not usually the first trait that comes to mind when one thinks about fatherhood. However, obedience is, in fact, an absolutely essential trait for a father to possess if his family is to have a strong foundation. This obedience is not obedience to other people, but to God.

Joseph obeyed God by taking Mary into his home. He obeyed God by bringing Jesus and Mary to Egypt for protection. He obeyed God again when he brought them back to Nazareth. Even when he might not have understood the reasons, Joseph always trusted that God was leading him in the right direction and did as he was told. All fathers should practice this same obedience to God, which will be all the easier if fathers trust in God's plans for their families.

Courtesy of CatholicTV.org

Joseph saw Jesus as not simply a child, but as a fully capable human being. Undoubtedly, he received the respect from Jesus that is expected from children to parents.





Prayer to St Joseph

Blessed St. Joseph, patron of all working people, obtain for me the grace to work in a spirit of penance for the atonement of my many sins. Help me to be conscientious in my work so that I may give as full a measure as I have received.

May I work in a spirit of thankfulness and joy, ever mindful of all the gifts I have received from God that enable me to perform these tasks. Permit me to work in peace, patience, and moderation, keeping in mind the account I must one day give of time lost, talents unused, good omitted, and vanity of success, so fatal to the work of God. Glorious St. Joseph, may my work be all for Jesus, all through Mary, and all after your holy example in life and in death. Amen.



STELLA MARIS

