

# DIOCESE OF LIMERICK

# VOCATIONS



MAY 2021

## St. Joseph, Model of Workmen

Pray for Us.

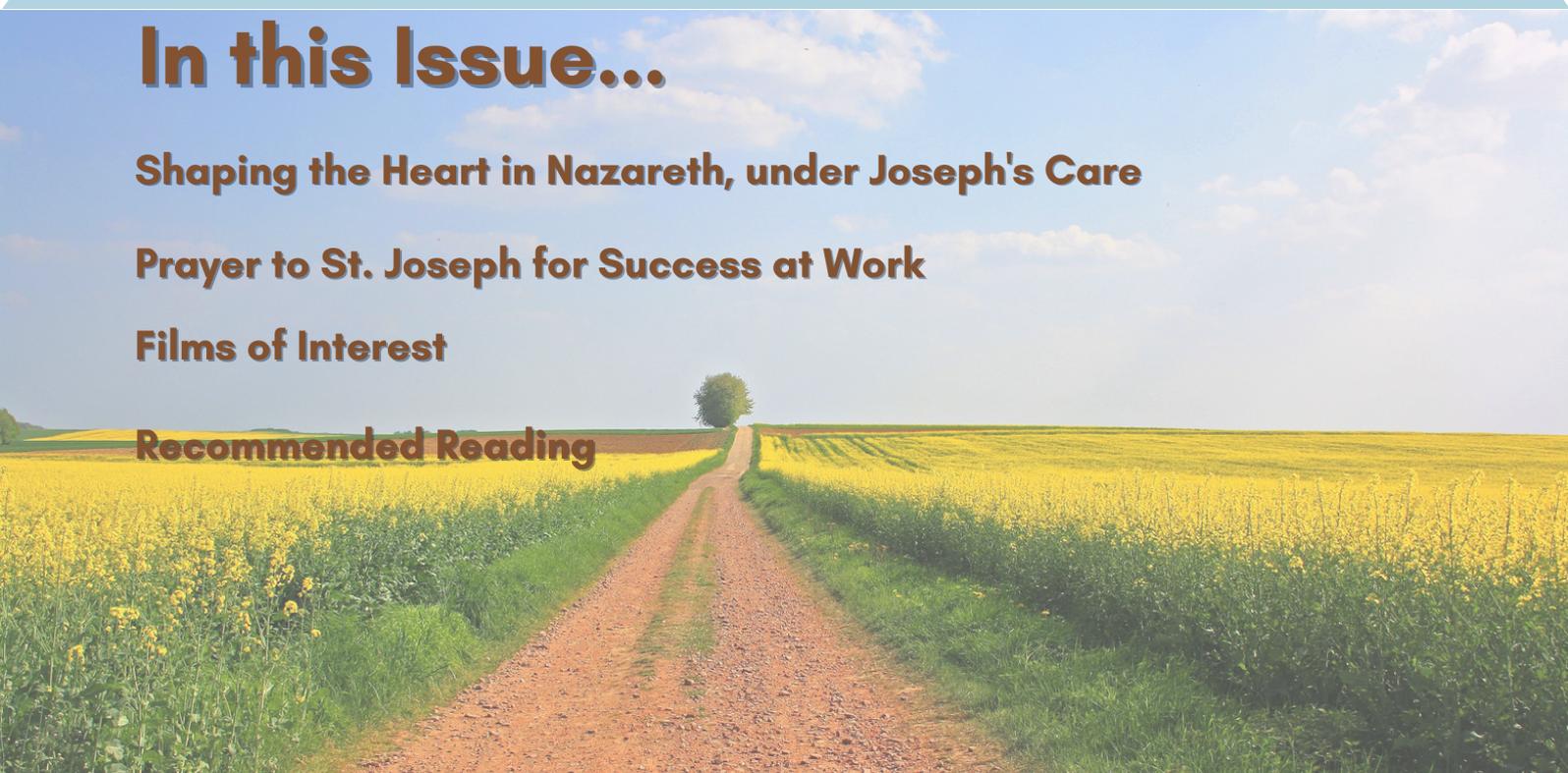
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# Shaping the heart in Nazareth, under Joseph's care

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Accessed 13/5/21 <https://aleteia.org/2021/05/02/shaping-the-heart-in-nazareth-under-josephs-care/>

The spiritual life isn't the great works of Bethlehem or Jerusalem, but the daily efforts of Nazareth. Nazareth is located between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Not on a map. Geographically, Nazareth is North of Jerusalem, situated 150 kilometers (about 100 miles) away, while Bethlehem lies to the South.

Nonetheless, Nazareth sits spiritually between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Why?

Bethlehem, the city of David, the birthplace of Jesus teaches the lessons of simplicity and docility. To follow the Lord, to be content with the humble manger calls us to detachment and to prefer spiritual things. Jerusalem, where Jesus spends his final days and ultimately offers his life on the cross, teaches the lessons of charity, of the loving mercy of God poured out for our redemption.

And between these lessons, between these cities there is Nazareth.

At Nazareth, the link between the cities is forged. While Bethlehem calls to self-renunciation and Jerusalem to self-sacrifice, Nazareth is the place of virtue, the place of sanctification.

At Nazareth, Joseph and the Savior labored together. Father Michel Gasnier, OP, poetically describes the scene, saying, "They worked side by side from morning till evening. At dawn they entered the shop. They opened the shutters and sunlight flooded the whole place. Everywhere was the good healthy smell of worked wood. The workbench stood in the center of the shop. The tools hung from huge hooks on the walls. Sawdust and shavings were swept into a pile in a corner to be taken to Mary in the evening (Joseph the Silent)."

## Shaping beauty

Cuts and scrapes, calloused hands and aching muscles were undoubtedly the lingering signs of the carpenters' efforts. The shaving and shaping of natural wood to fulfill their commissions imitates the shaping and shaving of heart as virtues are ingrained and cultivated in us.

The work of shaping the heart, the work of cultivating virtue, demands the rigor and dedication of labor. Like a carpenter whose keen eye and perfected skill allow him to easily work his craft, so virtue disposes the soul for the reception of grace. Chisel and mallet mold raw wood, the virtues are the tools that shape the heart.

Which brings us to this Sunday.

The vine grower, like the carpenter, practices a ready skill. Tending and nurturing his vines, he trains their growth and nourishes and protects them. What careful husbandman would leave his crop to wither on the vine? Carefree cultivation yields small harvests. Yet the attentive vine grower oversees and prunes his vines, making it possible for them to bear abundant fruit.

Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, demonstrates for us the care of the Father. Dedication to his family, diligent oversight of his shop and labors, reveal to Christians throughout the world the love of the Father.

## Living daily for Jesus

Joseph, the Worker, is the dutiful, unwavering example of the life of holiness in one's workaday life. The spiritual life is lived in Nazareth. With occasional journeys to Bethlehem or Jerusalem, we are called to the gentle renunciations of life which allow us to grow in virtue. It is tempting to believe that holiness consists exclusively of the ultimate sacrifices of Jerusalem, but day in and day out, our hearts are shaped by the virtues we pursue, living our lives in Nazareth.

Joseph's ready service of the Gospel, his tending of the vineyard of his heart, was made possible because of his devotion to the graces of daily life. Father Gasnier says, "Joseph fed his own spiritual life on what he saw, what he heard. Nothing was allowed to escape him. He kept the memory of all things as precious treasures in his heart and mind. He lived only for Jesus. He had no desires apart from Jesus."

In everything we do, it is possible to be near Christ, to allow his words to rule our hearts, his teaching to direct the course of our every action.

To remain on the vine, means to remain dedicated, like Joseph, to the project of shaping hearts. To show up, day after day, for life in Nazareth, knowing that it will demand of us our every strength, this is the project of remaining on the vine. Allowing Christ, the center and height of life to reveal himself in the smallest, meekest ways ... such is the life of Nazareth.

St. Joseph, father and worker, pray for us, that we might glorify our Father in heaven.

## Prayer of St. Joseph for Success at Work

**Glorious St. Joseph,  
model of all those who are devoted to labor,  
obtain for me the grace to work conscientiously,  
putting the call of duty above my many sins;  
to work with thankfulness and joy,  
considering it an honor to employ and develop,  
by means of labor,  
the gifts received from God;  
to work with order,  
peace, prudence and patience,  
never surrendering to weariness or difficulties;  
to work, above all,  
with purity of intention,  
and with detachment from self,  
having always death before my eyes  
and the account which I must render of time lost,  
of talents wasted,  
of good omitted,  
of vain complacency in success  
so fatal to the work of God.  
All for Jesus,  
all for Mary,  
all after thy example,  
O Patriarch Joseph.  
Such shall be my motto in life and death.  
Amen.**

# FILMS OF INTEREST

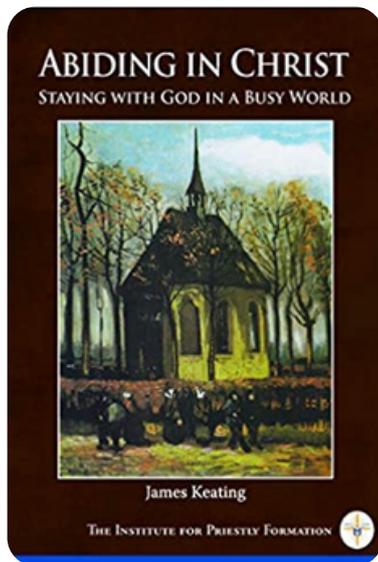


Fr. Eamonn Bourke - chaplain at UCD on Discernment  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONvgZM80sE4>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbhZ9J0NxzU>

# RECOMMENDED READING



## **ABIDING IN CHRIST** **STAYING WITH GOD IN A BUSY WORLD**

by Deacon James Keating, PhD

*Deacon James Keating's book Abiding in Christ: Staying with God in a Busy World is a how-to-pray resource. This book helps readers to find a quiet space wherein they can be present to God and offers suggestions of how they can be more open to God's movement within them. (from the publisher)*

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Abiding-Christ-Staying-Busy-World/dp/0998116467>

People, both clergy and lay-faithful, can become busy with work, family, friends, clubs, etc. Especially when we are busy, remaining in the presence of God lightens our burdens and makes our work a blessed time of growth.

## SUPPORTING VOCATIONS IN YOUR PARISH?

Please pray for holy vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life regularly. Would you consider having regular Adoration for this intention? Do you currently have any events or initiatives in your parish or schools to support the understanding and promotion of vocations? Would you like to? If we can help to organize something for you, please be in touch!

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**VOCATION OFFICE**

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