

CUSTOS

TOTAL CONSECRATION THROUGH

SAINT JOSEPH



THE 33-DAY PREPARATION FOR FULLNESS OF
DIVINE SONSHIP AND SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD

DEVIN SCHADT

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Custos

(Latin for Guardian)

O St. Joseph, God Almighty granted you the heroic and noble duty of being Custos of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Custos of the Son of God, and Custos of the Holy Catholic Church. May I, by your powerful intercession, be as you are, a true and faithful guardian and protector of those for whom I am responsible.

St. Joseph, Custos of the Holy Family, Ora Pro Nobis

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CUSTOS Quick Start

Step 1: Review the suggested Spiritual Practices per each of the seven stages. See Spiritual Practices on p. 213.

Step 2: Select one or two of the suggested Spiritual Practices per each stage.

Step 3: Review the Spiritual Practices chart found on p. 8 and highlight or circle your selections.

Step 4: For those practices that are “To schedule” or are “1x To-Do’s,” plan ahead to determine how you will integrate them into your schedule.

Step 5: At the beginning of each stage of the consecration, review your practices and confirm your practice selections.

Step 6: Give yourself enough time in the morning and at night to fulfill your prayer promises.

Step 7: Be hopeful and persevere. Never give up. Do not let the devil convince you that you are a failure. Only the man who quits fails.

CUSTOS QUICKSTART

Step 1

Review the Seven Stages and their associated Spiritual Practices. (Descriptions begin on p. 213).

Step 2

Select one or two of the suggested Spiritual Practices per each stage.

Step 3

Review the Spiritual Practices chart (on the following pages) and mark your selections.

Step 4

Plan ahead to determine how you will integrate the *1x To Do's* and *To Schedule* practices into your schedule.

Step 5

At the beginning of each stage review the associated practices and confirm your practice selections.

Step 6

Give yourself enough time in the morning and at night to fulfill your prayer promises.

Step 7

Be hopeful and persevere. Never give up. Do not let the devil convince you that you are a failure. Only the man who quits, fails.



STAGE 1

Embrace Silence
Spiritual Practices 1-7

STAGE 2

Embrace Secret Sacrifice
Spiritual Practices 8-11

STAGE 3

Embrace Your Wife
Spiritual Practices 12-17

STAGE 4

Embrace Your Child
Spiritual Practices 18-21

STAGE 5

Build Your Domestic Church
Spiritual Practices 22-26

STAGE 6

Live the Liturgical Life
Spiritual Practices 27-30

STAGE 7

Work for God
Spiritual Practices 31-33

SAINT JOSEPH'S SEVEN STAGES |

33 SUGGESTED SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

1. Daily Morning Offering
2. Daily Litany of St. Joseph
3. Daily Examination of Conscience
4. Pray for Each Member of Your Family
5. Daily Morning Prayer (15 minutes / including 5 minutes of silence)
6. Daily Rosary
7. Evening Prayer (15 minutes / including 5 minutes of silence)
8. One Daily Hidden Significant Sacrifice
9. Reduce forms of media such as radio, music, news, videos
10. Avoid Grumbling About or Demeaning Family Members
11. Tithe Regularly / Give Charitably
12. Weekly / Biweekly Date with your Wife
13. One Daily Intentional Act of Encouragement / Affection to Your Wife
14. Be Faithful to Your Wedding Vows
15. Pray with Your Wife Once a Day
16. Bless Your Wife Daily
17. 10 Minutes of Daily Intentional Time with Your Wife
18. Biweekly Son Man-Date / Daughter-Date
19. One Daily Intentional Act of Encouragement or Affection to Your Child
20. Install Internet Filtration Software
21. Bless Your Child Daily
22. Family Dinner
23. Sacred Images
24. Sunday Gospel Reflection
25. Family Prayer Time
26. Family Evening Time
27. One Holy Hour a Week
28. Frequent Sacraments: Daily Mass with Child Once per Week / Monthly Confession
29. Establish Your Tent of Meeting
30. Celebrate Feast Days / Abide Fast Days
31. Abstain from All Work on Sunday
32. Initiate and be involved in Family Work
33. Sanctify Your Work

**Select one or two spiritual practices per each stage.*

***Previous stage's spiritual practices are added to each next stage's practices*



CUSTOS

TOTAL CONSECRATION THROUGH SAINT JOSEPH

PRACTICES CHART

PRAYER PROMISES

Morning Offering
Morning Prayer (15 minutes)
Litany to St. Joseph
Rosary / Consecration Prayer to Mary
Family Prayer Daily
Evening Prayer (15 minutes)
Pray with Wife Daily
Daily Examination of Conscience
Pray for Each Member of Your Family

1X TO DO'S

Establish Tent of Meeting
Sacred Images in Home
Install Internet Filtration

PERSONAL PROMISES

Be Faithful to Wedding Vows / Be Pure
Abstain from All Work on Sunday
Initiate Serving / Work alongside Children
Avoid Grumbling and Complaining

DAILY COMMITMENTS

Complete All Prayer Promises
One Hidden Sacrifice
Reduce Use of Radio / Noise and Listen to God
One Intentional Act of Encouragement / Affection to Wife
One Intentional Act of Encouragement / Affection to Children
Bless Your Wife and Children Daily
Give Your Wife 10 Minutes of Intentional Time (Focus on Her)
Family Dinner
Family Evening Time

TO SCHEDULE

Date Night (Weekly / Biweekly)
Son Man-Date / Daughter-Date Biweekly
One Holy Hour Minimum Weekly
Take Child to Daily Mass Once a Week
Take Child to Confession Once a Month
Make Feast Days / Saints' Days Celebratory
Tithe Regularly
Family Gospel Reflection Weekly

CUSTOS QUICKSTART

Step 1

Review the Seven Stages and their associated Spiritual Practices. (Descriptions begin on p. 213).

Step 2

Select one or two of the suggested Spiritual Practices per each stage.

Step 3

Review the Spiritual Practices chart (to the left) and mark your selections.

Step 4

Plan ahead to determine how you will integrate the *1x To Do's* and *To Schedule* practices into your schedule.

Step 5

At the beginning of each stage review the associated practices and confirm your practice selections.

Step 6

Give yourself enough time in the morning and at night to fulfill your prayer promises.

Step 7

Be hopeful and persevere. Never give up. Do not let the devil convince you that you are a failure. Only the man who quits, fails.

Preparation for Consecration

Why Another Consecration to St. Joseph?

We have Jesus, we have the Blessed Virgin Mary, and numerous saints who intercede on our behalf. Why do we need St. Joseph?

Jesus and Mary are the most compelling examples of faithfulness to God. Jesus was, and is, a son—the Son of God. Mary was, and is, a mother—the Mother of God the Son. Yet, as perfect as Jesus is, and as holy as Mary is, neither of them had the human vocation of fatherhood. Joseph alone was father and husband.

God appointed St. Joseph to be the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to be a father to God the Son. God granted St. Joseph the incredible vocation of being the spiritual father, *Custos* (Latin for guardian) and leader of his holy family.

This is why St. Joseph is unique, and precisely why we need him. St. Joseph is the saint of husbands and fathers. His heroic fulfillment of his vocation shows us how to live our fatherly vocation. Not only does he show men how to live their vocation, but he relates to us personally. He understands the plights and perils that befall the family man who lives in a hostile world.

Yet, there is more. St. Joseph directs us to Jesus so that we may know Him intimately and be given the grace to become most trusting sons of God. This is very important. You and I cannot be dependable fathers if we do not first become sons who depend on

God the Father. St. Joseph directs us to Jesus, who teaches us how to become holy sons, and Jesus directs us to St. Joseph, who guides us to become holy fathers.

Our world tends to believe that there is no real difference between the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives, or fathers and mothers. This consecration helps us to embrace and live that difference.

With that said, this consecration is not for everyone. This consecration is focused on St. Joseph's unique, essential fatherhood and headship of his family; therefore, it applies specifically to men, who are or will be fathers. By consecrating ourselves to St. Joseph, we fathers hope to become like him and follow his pattern of holiness.

Our Lord does not need us to be St. Joseph to Him. Nor does our Lady need us to be St. Joseph to her. No other person can be St. Joseph to Jesus and Mary. However, Jesus and Mary desire that we become faithful sons of God who then become mature men in Christ by being spiritual fathers. Yes, we are to become an image of St. Joseph to our family. Custos will help you to "go home and be Joseph" to your wife and children, friends, and coworkers.

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THIS CONSECRATION

Why another consecration to St. Joseph? What is unique about this one? Though most consecrations focus exclusively on being consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, or being consecrated to St. Joseph, this consecration is powerful because it follows the example of Jesus in a more true and complete way.

Consider that the God of the universe through whom, and for whom, all things were made, set aside His eternal glory, and

lowered Himself to be a little child, who was dependent upon Mary and Joseph for protection, provision, and love. With complete trust, Jesus radically and totally surrendered Himself to Mary and Joseph.

Jesus was not entrusted only to Mary. Nor was he entrusted to St. Joseph only. God entrusted Jesus to be Mary and Joseph's son. Mary did not consecrate Jesus to God alone. Joseph did not consecrate Jesus to God alone. Mary and Joseph were given the honorable responsibility to consecrate the infant Jesus to God—together. It was under these holy parents' care that Jesus prepared Himself for His mission to offer His life on behalf of us sinners.

So, what does this mean for you? To be a Christian is to follow Christ's example. To live your divine sonship fully, it is essential to do what Jesus did. Christ entrusted himself completely and unreservedly to Mary and Joseph. Following our Lord's example, we grant these spiritual parents our permission to shape us into an image of God the Son. Mary and Joseph by themselves cannot form us into images of God the Son, but because of their special relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit they obtain for us powerful graces that other saints cannot.

At the moment of His conception, Jesus became a member of the Holy Family. Similarly, after our baptism, the Holy Spirit dwelled in us, making us sons of God and members of a universal family known as the Church. The Church is comprised of saints in heaven, holy souls in purgatory, and those striving for heaven on earth. The Church's human members have Mary and Joseph for their spiritual parents.

But it is not enough to be born into a family. We need to grow up. Mary and Joseph continued to "raise" Jesus into mature manhood well after His consecration to God. Similarly, this consecration

helps us live daily with Joseph and Mary and allow them to raise us to be faithful sons who become faithful fathers.

WHAT YOU ARE TAKING ON

Usually goals that are important are difficult to achieve. If it is easy to be a gold medalist no one would consider it a great achievement. If it is easy to be a saint, we would not laud them as having accomplished a most tremendous ideal. This consecration is challenging because it has great potential to set us on the path to becoming a saint.

Custos is unique because it is comprised of daily meditations, prayers, *and spiritual practices*. The spiritual practices are specifically designed to help husbands and fathers experience personal transformation *and relational transformation*.

This consecration is not only about transforming you, but about the transformation of your relationship with God, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, your wife, and your children. This consecration is “total” not only because we totally surrender ourselves to Mary and Joseph, but also because it affects nearly every aspect of our lives.

Custos spans thirty-three days. Each day consists of a reflection based on those Scripture passages that recount St. Joseph’s life. We only go as far as the Sacred Scripture allows. Therefore, we will not rely on private revelations regarding St. Joseph. This will help us follow St. Joseph as his life unfolds scripturally and reflect on who he is and how he relates to us.

The thirty-three days are segmented into seven stages. Each stage focuses on a certain principle of St. Joseph’s life. To make

this consecration become a lived experience, each stage has several suggested Spiritual Practices. Prior to each stage, the participant selects one or two of the suggested Spiritual Practices associated with that stage. Each stage's practices build upon and are added to the practices of the previous stages. It is important to begin small, with one or two practices, and do them well.

Years ago, on Ash Wednesday, our parish priest encouraged us not to “give up” something temporarily during Lent. Instead he challenged us “take on” a spiritual practice during Lent and continue to do it for the remainder of our lives. I took his advice. Two decades later, many of my spiritual practices consist of those that I took on each Lent. This principle is life-changing. This is the idea behind the combination of reflections, prayers, and ongoing spiritual practices. During this consecration, we take on these spiritual practices with the goal of incorporating them into our life beyond the completion of the thirty-three days.

We do not want this consecration to be a one and done. So often programs inspire us temporarily, but the way we live changes very little. *Custos* is designed to help men experience ongoing transformation. Day 33 is not the end, but rather a new beginning. These thirty-three days are like a spiritual boot camp with St. Joseph. He will train you in his way of life, fatherhood, and holiness—if you humbly walk with him.

THE EFFECTS OF THIS CONSECRATION

This consecration is life-changing because it helps us to conquer pride by becoming a little child. As Christ said, “Unless you become

like a little child you will not enter the kingdom of Heaven.” By going to St. Joseph daily you will gradually become dependent upon his spiritual fatherhood and will learn how to become dependent on Mary your Mother, and ultimately know how to worship Christ in spirit and truth. Consider yourself an apprentice in the strong and silent spiritual giant’s workshop. He will train you to be a true spiritual father. But this depends on you first becoming his spiritual son.

Yet, we do not want only to be children. We must become mature men in Christ, spiritual fathers who are reflections of God our Father. By walking with St. Joseph for the next thirty-three days, you will learn from him how to be both a son and a father.

St. Joseph is the surest way to Mary. Mary and Joseph are the most certain way to Jesus. We are no longer orphans attempting to follow Jesus on our own. By radically surrendering ourselves to St. Joseph, he brings us to Mary, and the two of them give us special access to the heart of Jesus. We become an intimate member of the Holy Family. This is the surest and most secure form of consecration to Jesus because it was the way Christ was consecrated.

Thus, by totally surrendering ourselves to St. Joseph, he and Mary will consecrate us to Jesus, who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The fruits of this consecration are a deep, abiding confidence and trust in God. No longer will you live in servile fear of God or be plagued by scrupulosity. Additionally, by being consecrated to St. Joseph, he will protect you from the devil as he protected Jesus from Herod. As a father you will be given the grace to fulfill the demands of the Gospel while living in this treacherous and sinful world.

You will become a child of St. Joseph and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You will experience the fullness of divine sonship and become

capable of following Jesus your Lord more fully and intimately. You will become a father like St. Joseph, who is a human reflection of God the Father's benevolence, mercy, and relentless love.

After Day 33, if you stay the course you will experience a new beginning. Graces that were formerly veiled will become available by means of your humility and your intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. You will have surrendered all that you are to Joseph, and he, for his part, will obtain all for you.

For a theological explanation of this consecration see p. 179, *Custos Theological Reflections*, including: Concerning the Act of Consecration; A Most Decisive Battle; Binding the Strong Man; St. Joseph Our Hope; The Purpose of This Consecration; True Imitation of Christ; Why Thirty-Three Days?; God's Intention and Plan; The Consecration Structure; Prayers and Practices and Motivations Matter.

For an overview of the suggested Spiritual Practices and their explanations see p. 213.