



## St. Thomas SyroMalabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago

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By the grace of God, **Mar Jacob Angadiath**, Bishop of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago, sends this greeting and message to all the priests, religious and faithful living in the United States.

**Glory to God in the highest! Amen.**

My dear and Reverend Fathers, Reverend Sisters, beloved brothers, and sisters in Christ Jesus,

I have great joy to announce, this year's Life Sunday to be is celebrated on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. The theme we reflect this year is "St. Joseph: Protector of Life and Family. "

Joseph's example and patronage come at the perfect time. At a time when a global pandemic has forced millions to live hidden away, isolated, and alone, we can see Joseph as a model of the hidden life and the protector of life and families. Mary's husband was undoubtedly familiar with suffering. So, we can see him as our patron, too, praying for us as he understands our struggles with illness.

The hiddenness of Joseph's life can also speak to those overwhelmed by the pandemic, who wonder if God is with them or if God sees their struggles in the daily life. Appearing only briefly in the Gospels, given no words at all to speak, Joseph leads a life of quiet service to God, a life that remains almost unknown to us. And yet his life, filled with countless hidden, unseen, unrecorded acts of love was of infinite value. Joseph's life says to all of us, "God sees everyone", even those who are being neglected and marginalized by the world.

Like many saints whose lineage can be traced back only to the earliest days of the church, very little is known of St. Joseph, besides what we learn from the few lines written about him in the Gospels of Mathew and Luke. He was of King David's line and engaged to a young woman from Nazareth. Mary was found, quite unexpectedly, to be with the child. But Joseph, "being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace," as the Gospel of Matthew tells it, planned to dissolve his betrothal quietly. In the Jewish tradition, Joseph could divorce Mary. But when he decided to divorce her quietly to spare Mary from further embarrassment, Joseph's tender compassion and forgiving heart were on full display.

However, Joseph's fears and anxiety were relieved by a dream of an angel comforting him and reassuring him that Mary would be his wife and Jesus her son will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). He accepts the divine plan and becomes a loving husband to Mary, foster father to Jesus, and the protector of the Holy Family).

The Gospel Story of St. Joseph is familiar to us. In the life of Joseph, we are challenged by the spirituality of contemplative silence and his total surrender to the divine providence. After receiving the confirmation in a dream, the life of Joseph was not exempted from struggles and challenges. This calls us to reflect on the deeper meaning of sufferings in our daily life and the need of accompanying those who are going through sufferings and pain. Joseph never questioned God amid his sufferings but, subjected himself in trustful surrender to the will of God and accepted all hardships in safeguarding the life of the mother and Child.



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There are so many hidden lives around us, which includes every unborn, elderly, or dying person. Pope Francis says "Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying. Consequently, the Church cannot fail to show a special love for the least of our brothers and sisters, for Jesus showed a particular concern for them and personally identified with them." So, I urge you to love, respect, protect and serve every human life- from conception to natural death and do not neglect to take care of the weak and elderly in our homes and in the community. Let's follow the exemplary life of St. Joseph and ask his intercession for obtaining the grace and courage to stand for life.

I request every Parish and Mission to actively use this opportunity of Life Sunday celebration to promote a culture of life in their community and convey the Gospel of life to others. This may be the greatest occasion to recognize people those who have embraced a culture of life in the community. The elderly parents, pregnant mothers, newborn babies, parents with more children, the dignity of children with special needs be recognized and affirmed, along with the other Life Sunday initiatives.

I strongly encourage the parishes and mission to form a "center for life" in the community with the volunteers willing to pray and promote the culture of life. This Center will provide a platform for the parishioners to come together and have a deep encounter with Jesus, to bring the Joy of Life in the Parish and in the families.

Let us rally together for those who are denied the dignity of life. I request you to empower and strengthen our Diocesan National 4Life Ministry in their efforts to promote the culture of life with your sincere prayers, suggestions, and support. Intercession of Mother Mary and God's grace may inspire all your efforts and bless your families.

St. Joseph, protector of Life and Families, pray for us.

May the grace and peace of Christ be with you.

Yours sincerely in the Lord,

+ *Jacob J. Angadiath*

**Mar Jacob Angadiath**  
Bishop



(Fathers, please read this Circular on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> of September at all the Holy Qurbana's)