



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

1311 BYRON STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 230
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

Friday, February 26, 2021

Greetings in Christ,

As we to enter into the Holy Season of Lent, a time of increased prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we also prepare to begin the Year of St. Joseph, announced by the Holy Father earlier this year.

In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, we will begin the Year of St. Joseph, patron of the universal Church and of our Diocese, on March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph. This special day in our Church's liturgical calendar honors Joseph, foster father of Christ and spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

While it always occurs during Lent, this important Solemnity falls on a Friday this year, when we would normally abstain from meat. Canon Law tells us; however, "Abstinence from eating meat or some other food according to the precepts of the conference of bishops is to be observed on every Friday of the year unless a Friday occurs on a day listed as a solemnity" (Canon 1251).

Given the dispensation according to Canon Law, I encourage our faithful to safely celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph with family, perhaps creating your own St. Joseph Table Dinner, which may include meats. This Italian tradition, dating back to the Middle Ages, gives thanks to St. Joseph for his intercession for us to our Heavenly Father. I also encourage you, as is the custom of the St. Joseph Dinner, to double efforts to feed the poor, either by donations of food to local shelters, or volunteering to serve meals to the poor that day.

Together let us give thanks to God for the life and example of St. Joseph, especially as we prepare to begin this special Year of St. Joseph in our Church.

Entrusting you to the care of St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family,

I remain,

Bishop Mark Brennan
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston