

# HOPE

N e w s l e t t e r



English Edition 31 March 2023

For Private Circulation Only

“In the wilderness forty days, being tempted”

— *Mark 1:12*

## TRANSFIGURED IN TRUTH

Lenten Journey with Pope Francis

## SEEKING HIS FACE

Vicariate Lenten Highlights

## FAST OF MERCY

“Christ-like” Youth Famine

## HUMBLE IN HOLINESS

Families of Faith

Cover by Alexander Milo (Unsplash)

Design by Vanessa Newn





*"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*

After years of quiet due to pandemic restrictions, this month of March seems busier, noisier, more exciting, more demanding, more ... everything. With change, celebrations and conflicts all abounding globally, Pope Francis' Lenten message invites us to reexamine the Gospel of the Transfiguration in the light of the synodal journey, to rediscover our mission, to be "a Church that ventures out into the world and is among the people".

Similarly, during this season, the Church in Brunei has organized multiple activities in every parish; from talks and retreats to penance services and prayer meetings, from novenas and rosaries to Via Crucis devotions, from RCIA rites and Easter planning to Sunday School Activities and Family Mass—the faith community here is alive and vibrant indeed!



Photo by Reuters

However external busyness also need to be balanced with internal peace and reconciliation, lest we risk ourselves running on empty into exhaustion and burnout. Our Holy Father, on the occasion of the 10th year of his papacy on the 13th of this month, shared about his painful fight against the "corruption of the heart", which can only be improved, though not easy, by paying attention to God's will and "to attune yourself with the Lord".

Hence our theme for Hope this month focuses on "seeking the face of God, to be more Christ-like", in the middle of "wilderness and temptations". How apt therefore, we also turn to the example of St Joseph, whose feast day falls on 20th March this year, and learn how he depended on the Lord for strength to serve as His foster father and protector.

This Lent, God invites us to return once more to the Way, to seek the Truth in our hearts, to give new meaning to our Life mission in Him. What will our answer be?

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## MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS FOR LENT 2023

Dear brothers and sisters!

The Gospel of the Transfiguration is proclaimed every year on the Second Sunday of Lent. During this liturgical season, we are invited to ascend “a high mountain” in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline – *ascesis* – as God’s holy people.

To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity. We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice and concentration.

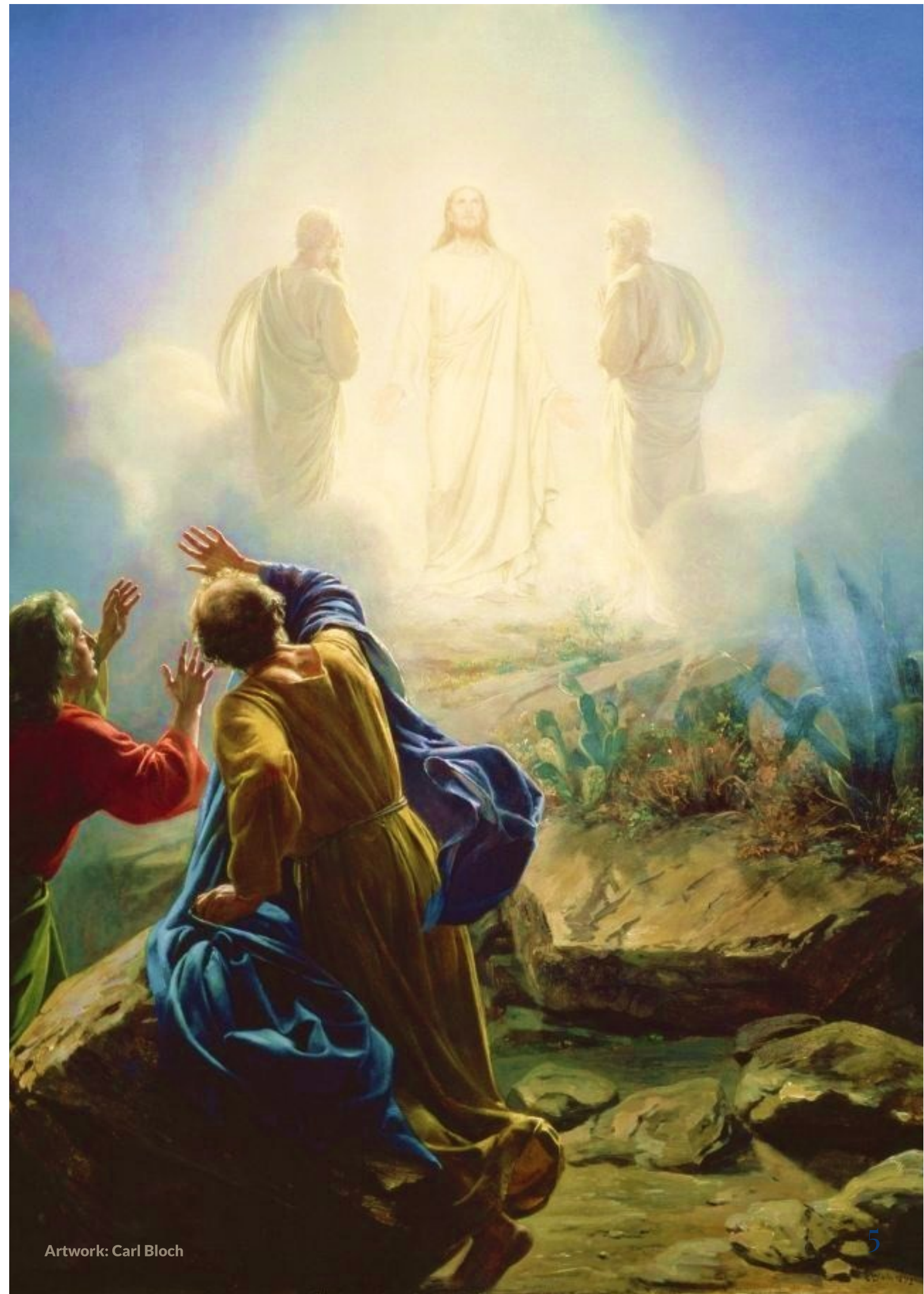
In his “retreat” on Mount Tabor, Jesus takes with him three disciples, chosen to be witnesses of a unique event. He wants that experience of grace to be shared, not solitary, just as our whole life of faith is an experience that is shared. For it is in togetherness that we follow Jesus.

During the Lenten journey of penance and the journey of the Synod alike have as their goal a transfiguration, both personal and ecclesial. A transformation that, in both cases, has its model in the

Transfiguration of Jesus and is achieved by the grace of his paschal mystery. So that this transfiguration may become a reality in us this year, I would like to propose two “paths” to follow in order to ascend the mountain together with Jesus and, with him, to attain the goal.

The voice from the cloud says: “Listen to him” (Mt 17:5). The first proposal, then, is very clear: we need to listen to Jesus. How does he speak to us? First, in the word of God, which the Church offers us in the liturgy. May that word not fall on deaf ears; if we cannot always attend Mass, let us study its daily biblical readings, even with the help of the internet. In addition to the Scriptures, the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need.

On hearing the Father’s voice, the disciples “fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and do not be afraid.’ Here is the second proposal for this Lent: do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles, its hardships and contradictions. Lent leads to Easter: the “retreat” is not an end in itself, but a means of preparing us to experience the Lord’s passion and cross with faith, hope and love, and thus to arrive at the resurrection.



Artwork: Carl Bloch



## VICARIATE LENTEN HIGHLIGHTS

“Lent is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each community and every believer. Above all it is a “time of grace” (2 Cor 6:2). God does not ask of us anything that he himself has not first given us. “We love because he first has loved us” (1 Jn 4:19).” — Pope Francis

*The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.*

(Lamentations 3:25-16)

**Online Devotions**  
with COOL YOUTH

**Divine Mercy Chaplet**  
24th February 2023  
24th March 2023

**St Michael's Chaplet**  
3rd March 2023

**Servite Rosary**  
10th March 2023

**Holy Rosary**  
17th March 2023 (with Litany to the BVM) : for O-Level Students 2023  
31st March 2023 : for the Sick and Departed Souls  
7th April 2023 (15 decades) : for Good Friday

**2023 COLA LITURGICAL SERVICES LENT/HOLYWEEK**

**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
22nd February @6:30pm

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS - EVERY FRIDAY OF LENT**

**CONFESSION@COLA**  
8th March, Wednesday  
4:00-6:00pm  
7:00-9:00pm  
MASS at 6:30am

**YOUTH FAMINE@SJC**  
23rd-24th March

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**-Mass of the Lord's Supper- 6th April @ 6:30pm

**GOOD FRIDAY** of the Lord's Passion  
7th April- Stations of the Cross 12:00  
Celebration of the Lord's Passion- 3:00pm

**Holy Saturday Easter Vigil**  
Mass @ 8:00pm

**FOR MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS PLS. REFER TO THE PARISH NEWS LETTER**



Lenten Recollection Talk @ COOL

**LENTEN RECOLLECTION**

**COOL:**  
10th & 11th March 2023  
@ 7:30 PM

**COLA:**  
13th & 14th March 2023  
@ 7:00 PM

**SJC:**  
16th & 17th March 2023  
@ 7:00 PM

**March 2023**  
upcoming fortnight

**Lenten Talks in English**  
COOL : Wednesday 1st March at 7:30 PM  
SJC : Friday 10th March at 7:30 PM  
COOL : Saturday, 11th March at 7:30 PM

**Mass and Lenten Talk in Mandarin**  
COOL : Thursday 2nd March at 8:00 AM

**Sunday School Family Mass**  
COOL : Sunday 10th March at 10:30 AM

**Lenten Penance Services / Confession**  
COOL : Monday 6th March, from 4:00-6:00 PM and from 7:00-9:00 PM  
SJC : Tuesday, 7th March, from 4:00-6:00 PM and from 7:00-9:00 PM  
Also available every Sunday, 25 minutes before Mass or by appointment



Lenten Fridays Soup Fellowship @ COOL



RCIA Presentation of the Creed



# VICARIATE LENTEN HIGHLIGHTS

## COLA and COOL Chinese Mass & Lenten Talk

*Guide me in your truth and teach  
me, for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day  
long. (Psalm 25:5)*





## VICARIATE LENTEN HIGHLIGHTS

### COOL—SJC Chinese Mass & Lenten Talk

2. 3. 2023, 星期四, 時隔十多年  
的今天, 劉志堅神父蒞臨于詩里  
亞, 聖母無染原罪堂, 慶祝華語彌  
撒!

梁順財神父替大家錄製成直播彌撒,  
以紀念這難得的時刻! 另一位在外地  
的神父為我們整理了中文彌撒和拼音  
文件。余鴻強兄弟就整理了這份文件  
成PPT幻燈片。這就方便僖友們觀看  
視頻來答和唱!

早上8點華文彌撒開始, 江森華姐妹大  
聲而清晰地讀經, 雖然這是她第二次  
臨於讀經台!

令我驚訝的是, 50 名或更多的僖友們  
答唱的很好, 很優美, 地回應劉志堅  
神父。

劉志堅神父在聖體慶典期間解釋麵餅  
和酒變體的實際情況。他使我們的  
(RCIA) 慕道詢問者和其他僖友們受益  
不淺。

(令人驚訝的事實是, 劉志堅神父在  
2023 年 3 月 1 日才剛到, 根本不知  
道他們是誰! )。

道理講的很好, 使我們更了解劉神父  
的佈道。我們很感興趣的聽大家所面  
臨生活中的共同事實! 我們很容易認  
同他的教導, 這樣我們就可以學習如  
何做使上主認可的正確事。

他的講道開朗而樸實, 讓所有人都能  
理解他的用心良苦。

像我們這樣單純的靈魂聽到劉志堅神  
父解釋天主的聖言和教導, 讓我們享  
有一場快樂的彌撒。因此, 我們明白  
並祈禱我們會付諸實踐。

感謝梁順財神父邀請劉志堅神父來汶  
萊。我們敬愛的堂區神父付出了額外  
的努力, 才讓我們, 在天主的恩典  
下, 成為有可能享有, 四旬期華文告  
解、華文彌撒和四旬期華文講習會!

感謝上主並讚美祂的大能和对我们的  
疼愛, 使詩里亞聖母無染原罪堂和馬  
來奕聖若望教堂能蒙受天主恩賜的這  
個聖典!

翁月萍 Adeline

2 March 2023, Thursday - After more  
than ten years, Rev. Fr. Simon Lau  
returned to our parish Church of  
Immaculate Conception, Seria to celebrate  
Chinese Mass!

Fr. Robert Leong recorded livestream Mass  
for everyone to commemorate this rare  
moment, while one of his overseas priestly  
friends prepared the Chinese Order of the  
Mass in Mandarin and Pinyin for us. Br.  
Thomas Yee then compiled this into slides,  
convenient for the participants to follow,  
respond and participate in the Mass!

The Chinese Mass began at 8:00 in the  
morning. Sr. Amy Kong recited the Readings  
loudly and clearly, although this was only  
her second time at the lectern!

To my surprise, our 50 or more congregants  
sang beautifully, and responded  
enthusiastically to the prayers and chants!

During the Lenten talk, Fr. Simon explained  
the mystery of transubstantiation of bread  
and wine in the Eucharistic celebration. This  
truly benefited our RCIA catechumens and  
other church friends. (The astonishing fact  
was that Fr. Simon had just arrived on  
March 1, 2023 and had no idea who they  
were!).

The reasoning was very good, and it made  
us understand Fr. Simon's sermon better.

He was cheerful and his sermons simple, so  
that everyone could understand his good  
intentions.

Also, we were interested to hear about the  
examples of common realities of life that  
everyone faced! It was easy for us to relate,  
especially in our attempt to live and do what  
is right and pleasing to God.

God had let simple souls like us to enjoy  
such a joyful Mass and Lenten Talk, hearing  
Fr. Simon explaining His holy Word and  
teachings.

We appreciate Fr. Robert Leong Soon Choi  
for inviting Fr. Simon Lau to Brunei. Our  
dear parish priest had put in extra effort to  
make it possible for us, by God's grace, to  
enjoy Chinese Confession, Chinese Mass  
and Chinese Lenten Talk!

Thanks be to the Lord and praise His love  
showered on us, so that the community in  
the Church of the Immaculate Conception  
of Seria and St. John's Church of Kuala  
Belait could receive this holy grace!

Adeline Ong



# FAST OF MERCY

## “CHRIST-LIKE” YOUTH FAMINE (COLA, SJC, SPC AND COOL)

The retreat was held at each parish

*Then I turned my face  
to the Lord God,  
seeking him by prayer  
and pleas for mercy with  
fasting and sackcloth  
and ashes. (Daniel 9:3)*









## VICARIATE LEGION OF MARY ACIES

Legionaries from the three parishes of the Vicariate celebrated the yearly event - ACIES, on Sunday 26th March 2023 at the Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, Seria. This is the time when they seek to renew and express publicly their Consecration to Mary in the condensed and beautiful formula; 'I am all yours my Queen and my Mother and all that I have is yours.'



## ST JOSEPH'S DAY

HUMBLE IN HOLINESS

This year the Church celebrates the Feast Day of St Joseph on Monday 20th March. In COOL, a special Novena to St Joseph is held for 9 days prior to the Feast Day, led each day by a Parish Prayer Group or Ministry, culminating with a Mass for the Saint Protector,

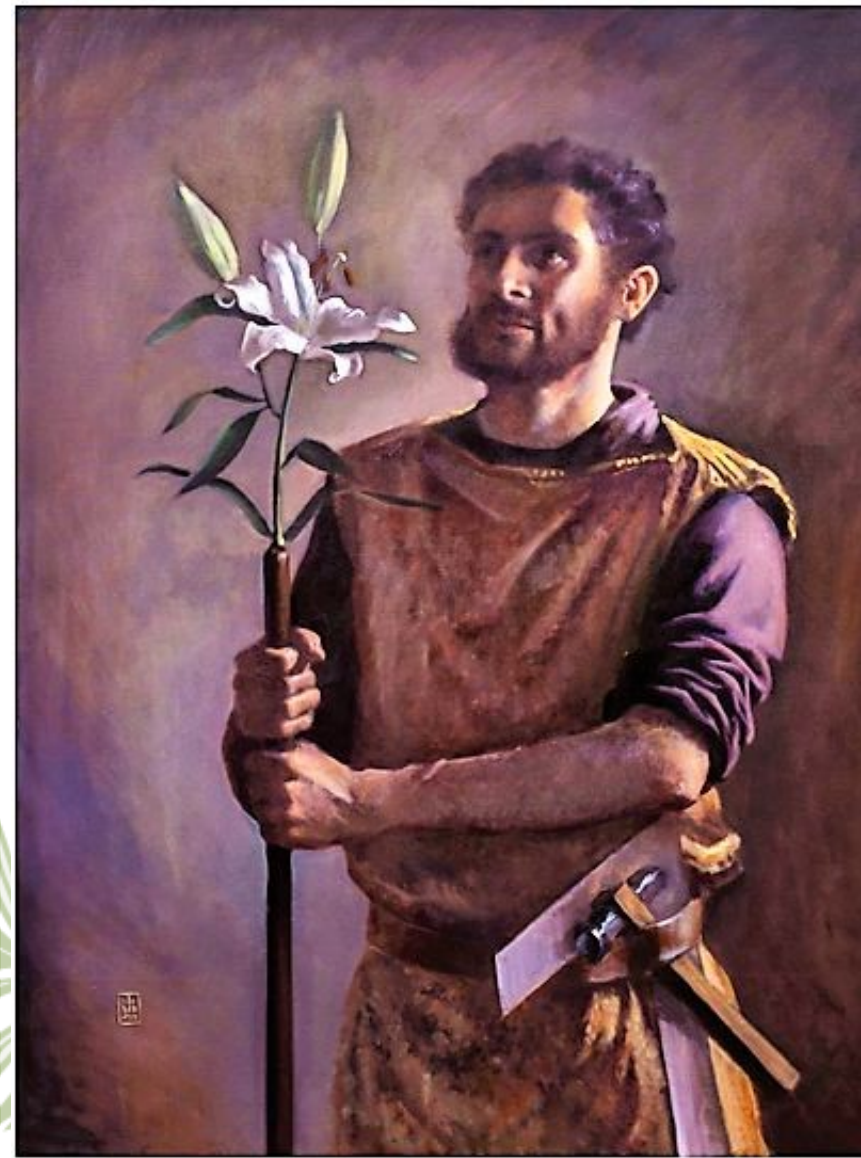
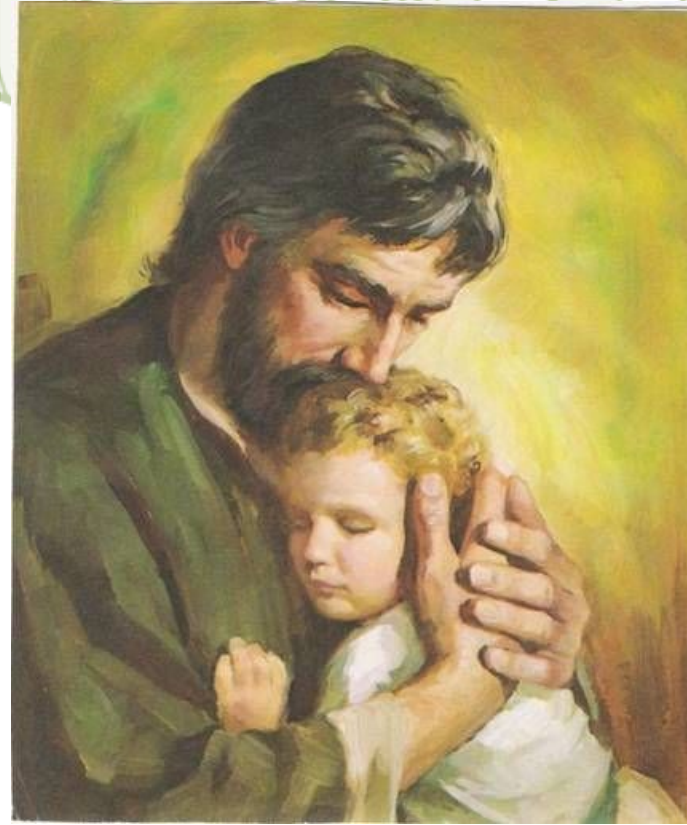
invoking his care and intercession for our families and community.

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.*  
(1 Peter 5:6)



St Joseph's Altar, 20 Mar 2023 at COOL







*Pray for Us*

# ST JOSEPH

Foster Father of Jesus | The Just Man | The Silent Saint  
Protector of the Universal Church

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