

Holy Prophet Joel As a Model for our Lives

JOEL WAS THE SON OF BETHUEL, of the tribe of Reuben. He lived in the 9th century B.C. and prophesied when the King of the tribe of Judah was Joash. Joel belongs to the category of the twelve lesser Prophets. His prophetic book is small, consisting of only four chapters, but it is classified as most poetic, ornate, and a jewel of Hebrew literature.

He preached repentance to the people and their return to the God of their fathers, saying to them: “Even now,” declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity” (Joel 2: 12-13). He did not fail, however, to voice the gratitude of God for the repentance of the people, as long as it became a reality, as well as His promise to always be with and protect His people: “Then will the Lord be jealous for His land, and pity His people...’ And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else; and My people shall never be ashamed (Joel 2: 18, 27).



He prophesied the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, which is why he is known as the Prophet of Pentecost: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughter will prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit” (Joel 2: 28-30). Furthermore, he prophesied the Incarnation of Christ, the Son and Word of God, as well as His Second Coming.

If you are going through a difficult time and need a bit of hope, consider trying a novena to St. Joel. For nine consecutive days, ask St. Joel to pray for your intention(s) and then ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read each day’s passage. Ponder the text, allowing God gently and softly to speak to your heart. If inspired, read the footnotes and parallel verses noted in your Bible.

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| Day 1: Joel 1:12 | Day 4: Joel 2:18–19 | Day 7: Joel 4:1–2 |
| Day 2: Joel 1:14 | Day 5: Joel 3:1 | Day 8: Joel 4:12 |
| Day 3: Joel 2:12–13 | Day 6: Joel 3:5 | Day 9: Acts 2:16–21 |

Also, look up the four passages from Joel that are referenced in the New Testament: 2:10 (Mt 24:29, Mk 13:24, and Lk 21:25–28); 3:1–5 (Acts 1:16–21); 3:5 (Rom 10:13); and 4:13 (Rev 14:15). [His feastday falls on October 19.]



Celebrating Our Deep Faith

Byzantine Catholic Worship: Our Church, Its Customs and Rich Heritage

What Autumn Teaches Christians about Life, Death, and God

AUTUMN IS A FAVOURITE SEASON for many. There is something nostalgic about the scents of autumn, the foliage with rich changing colours, the foods and holidays, traditions like apple picking and leaf piles, and cooler weather after a hot summer.

For us, as Christians, the creativity of God hollers. Look at how the paper-thin solar cells (leaves) convert sunlight into acorns! They are everywhere, made by an all-loving Father Who doesn’t know how to stop creating, and does so by refreshing us with new wonder.

Autumn reminds us of the promise of glory. In our culture, we see glory in youth and newness. Aging is looked upon with a wary and skeptic eye. We are “spring-and-summer” people, but we can learn from change. As we watch how our older family members (and friends) “leaves” change (*i.e. their hair is silver*), they may not have quite the same speed on the Frisbee field, but their glory is the same. They have wisdom and grace and decades of joy that shine in their faces. They take on the beauty of autumn, showing dimensions of glory that our green summer-selves do not display.



Inevitably, autumn’s beauty and wonder fades into winter’s chilled silence. Autumn does not stay; it fades and falls away just like the leaves on the trees. “Autumn reminds us that our leaves too will die. The curse we inherited from our father-tree Adam means

we have our seasons and then we go. Winter takes us all”, states Joseph Rhea, director of ministries for Soma Church, USA.

He follows this by saying that “Autumn can also draw our attention to the One who broke through winter into an unending summer. The One who spent three days brown and dead in the dirt and came back in an indestructible green. The One who was not just a leaf; He was a whole new tree. It is this truth that should give us the hope to die beautifully. Yes, winter comes to us all. But winter isn’t the end for Christians, because our lives are joined to a tree that winter cannot touch. Death has no sting; winter has no bite. We will fall from the tree of Adam; but we will flower again in a spring of eternal, glorious growth.”

When I die, I don’t want to be clinging to the edges of this earth, begging for one more tainted day. I want to die with grace, falling back into the arms of our Saviour, and knowing that His beauty is greater than anything we could compare on this earth.

~ Liz Kanoy

Why Should We Love and Honour the Blessed Virgin Mary?

PERPETUAL HELP is a beautiful title. It signifies power in battle and glory in life; the echo of this Mother's goodness toward all, the melody of love. It is faith, it is hope, it is what the world holds dear. It is purity to virgins, holiness to priests, patience to mothers, kindness to fathers, for our Lady of Perpetual Help is the loving Mother of all mankind, of Saints and of sinners, as she had been created by God to help us in every way.

The name of Perpetual Help was revealed by Mary herself who said to her little messenger, "I am the Mother of Perpetual Help."



Catholics honour and love the Blessed Virgin Mary since apostolic times. Devotion to the Mother of the Saviour is almost a distinctive characteristic of Catholics. We would question the Catholicism of those Catholics who do not venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary, for how can they possibly be real Christians, that is, true followers of Christ Who loves His Great Mother whom they despise?

We should love and honour the Blessed Mother of Perpetual Help as good children love their earthly mother. She will help us in all necessities of life, she will procure for us all the graces we need to overcome temptations and the devil, she will preserve us from an unhappy death in mortal sin and finally she will lead us to heaven. St. John Damascene, a great Doctor of the Eastern Church, assures us that a true devotion to the Mother of God is the best guarantee of our salvation. "God," he says, "grant this favour of true devotion to Mary only to those whom He wants to save." And Saint Anselm adds, "'As it is impossible for one who is not devout to Mary, and consequently not protected by her, to be saved, so it is also impossible for one who recommends himself to her, and consequently is beloved by her, to be lost,' for according to St. Alphonsus de Liguori, heavenly Patron and Protector of Catholic confessors and moralists, "A child of Mary cannot be lost."

*Virgin most blessed, you are all holy
We give you honour singing your glory
You are God's temple all full of grace,
Promised and sure hope of Adam's race.*

*Most loving Mother, well of perfection
Pray that Your Son in boundless affection
Bind with His love both the East and West
Praising the Father forever blessed.*



A Prayer of Thanksgiving: Grateful for the Giver

AS THE BODY OF CHRIST endures our current moment of trouble, it seems an appropriate time to remember that "man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Deuteronomy 8:3). **No matter what we face, we have God with us.** Unlike many around us, we have His peace, which is beyond our understanding; His hope, which is not grounded in health or prosperity; and His joy, which is not fleeting but endures as we come to know God more deeply. Let's pray that even in the midst of the challenging times in which we find ourselves that we will find it in ourselves to have hearts of gratitude.

*Lord, as I participate in the all-too-consuming activities that require
my attention today, I pray that I would not lose sight of You.*

*Give me this day a heart of gratitude which looks beyond my appreciation
for things, for comfort, for peace, for prosperity.*

*Give me a heart of gratitude which is ever and always thankful
for the Giver, thankful for the One who has provided,
thankful for the One who, unlike His gifts, will never fade away.*

*Give me a heart of gratitude which refuses to surrender
to frivolous complaint, to seek more than you have given,
to succumb to the annoyances and frustrations of this world.*

*Give me a heart of gratitude which is so filled with thanksgiving
that worry and concern have no room.*

*Give me a heart of gratitude which remembers you as the present Giver
Who is my refuge and my portion.*

*Give me a heart of gratitude which cries out thanksgiving and praise
even in the midst of anguish, pain, and frustration.*

*Give me a heart of gratitude which is capable of love, hope, and peace de-
spite the tensions, hurts, and foolishness of this world.*

Give me a heart of gratitude which is ever and always Yours. Amen.

~ James Spencer

Thanksgiving Troparion and Kontakion

Troparion, Tone 4

We, Your unworthy servants, give thanks to You, O Lord, for Your great benefits which we have received, Glorifying You, we praise, we bless, we thank, we sing and we magnify Your mercy. And as Your servants we call out to You with love: "O Benefactor, our Saviour, glory be to You!"

Kontakion, Tone 3

Found worthy of Your gifts and benefits beyond our merits, as Your servants, O Master, we eagerly fall before You and give ardent thanks. And glorifying You as our Benefactor and Creator, we cry: "Glory be to You, O most merciful God!"