



unknown fellow prisoner spoke to me: „Are you the parish priest of Kronsdorf?“ – „Yes, I am!“ – „Terrible, I would not have recognised you. Small wonder. You know, I have been assigned as a butcher to an external work detachment and every day I am taken by a guard to the great butchery in Dachau, where I can eat.“ – „You can really thank GOD for that.“ – „Yes, I am in very good health. But you know, I have a request to make of you today.“ – „A request for me? I guess there is very little I can do for you here.“ – „You are the only one I know from home. I have so much to eat outside that I do not even look at the piece of camp bread any more, and I also take something from the butchery for myself to the camp. If you want to make me very happy, then allow me to bring you my camp bread every day and whatever other food I can spare!“ Tears came to my eyes, „Oh, I beg you, if it is really possible; I may once again eat my fill!“ – „Saint Joseph, You are truly a helper in the greatest need!“

(Excerpt abridged from “And again St Joseph helped”
by A. M. Weigl)

This Month's Heartfelt Matters

- Let us ask St Joseph to help us to give fresh heart to the sad and hopeless and to bear troublesome people with love and patience.



With joyful and blessed Easter greetings and the blessing of St Joseph, I say goodbye again,

Sister Paula



March 2023

Lay Community of St Joseph

The Most Common Male Name

St Joseph, Your once forgotten name became the most common male name amongst our Christian peoples in the last three centuries. Kings and emperors suddenly remembered that St Matthew the Apostle already wrote about Your royal pedigree. Every prayer book contains beautifully worded invocations to You. Late, very late, You made an incredible “career” amongst the believing children of men – forgive, great Saint, this inappropriate word, but I am writing for the people of the 20th century. They erected statues and images of You in every church, which are often enough a second injustice to You. You have usually been depicted as aged, grey-haired and with a wrinkled face, as if You had possessed a half-dead body all Your life. And yet, when the Angel called You righteous, You were strong and young then. You were in the bridal state, You had suffered pain and sleepless nights because of the so mysteriously blessed body of Your betrothed holy Bride. An Angel of Heaven had to take away the torment from You and set right the disturbed balance of Your mind. People do You wrong when they portray You with such an insultingly good-natured

face, as if You had been by nature without zest, without a spirit of enterprise, without passion, incapable of anger, of command and of the struggle of life, as if the most chaste and most tender relationship with Your holy Bride had not been victorious control over Your own body, not a gracious calling, but only the impotence of Your nature.

And what, in reality, according to the accounts of the Gospel, had been expected of You by the labour of Your hands? The maintenance of a whole family. And that has never been an easy matter for workers and craftsmen because precisely at that time the palaces of the rich and the buildings of the powerful were built by the diligence and sweat of the poor. You were strong enough to lead Your Bride to Bethlehem for the census and the birth and to take upon Yourself all the legwork for the Mother and the new-born Child. It was no trifle when the Angel called You in the night: „Arise, take the Child and his Mother and flee to Egypt ...“ (Mt 2:13) You were resourceful enough to evade Herod’s henchmen and executioners, to defeat the desert and cross the Nile. You were enterprising enough to stand Your ground as a refugee in a country with a foreign people and a foreign language, and to nourish and protect Your Family. You had been deemed worthy to be regarded by Your contemporaries as the Father of the LORD JESUS CHRIST because they said: „Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?“ (John 6:42) You were subtle enough to carry the knowledge of JESUS and Mary silently within You, when speaking prematurely would have meant nothing other than “casting pearls before swine.”

(Excerpt from “And again St Joseph helped”
by A. M. Weigl)



I Started to Pray a Novena Anyway

The priest and writer L. Arthofer, who was born in Gmunden at the Traunsee and is now already old, tells us a story, which he claims has the merit of being literally true.

During the deplorable Hitler era, when my beloved fatherland was forcibly annexed to the Greater German Empire, I got into deep trouble. Because I openly spoke out against the hostility to religion of the Hitler regime, I was declared an “enemy of the state” and, therefore, had to spend 50 months in the Dachau concentration camp. It was a hard time. In 1942, I had already lost 40 kilos of my normal body weight and was like so many of my dear comrades on the brink of starvation. Only he who has experienced something similar knows how agonising hunger can become. About a thousand priests fell victim to it in Dachau. In my greatest distress I remembered how often in my sermons I had recommended St Joseph, the Nursing Father, as a Patron Saint in physical distress; but I doubted whether he could still bring me help. After all, the camp was doubly surrounded by high voltage barbed wires, by battlement walkways and high walls, and the machine guns of heartless guards threatened from every watchtower. From where would anyone hand me a little piece of bread? – Nevertheless, I began a novena to St Joseph, doubting whether he would work a miracle for me. But it all seemed so hopeless, so diabolically thwarted. When I prayed on my straw sack in the evening with burning hunger, the thought came to mind during the novena: „You are putting GOD to the test.“ The novena was over and that is when the miracle happened: on the large roll call square, a completely