Year of St. Joseph a Unique Opportunity To Seek Indulgences

by Bill Miller, Senior Reporter

WINDSOR TERRACE — History records very little about St. Joseph. But according to Pope Francis, the Gospel’s depictions of Jesus’ earthly father are potent examples of a loving family man and a solid worker entitled to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

Pope Francis praised these attributes on Dec. 8, 2020, the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph being proclaimed Patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX. The pope called for a year-long celebration of the saint through Dec. 8 of this year.

The Apostolic Penitentiary issued a decree granting plenary indulgences for the Year of St. Joseph. Indulgences are often misunderstood, even by faithful Catholics.

Sin has two effects. Mortal (grave) sin deprives us of communion with God and makes us incapable of eternal life in heaven. This is called the “eternal punishment” due to sin. When we make a good confession and receive absolution, eternal punishment is removed. Even after that, however, we are still attached to creating things in an unhealthy way. These attachments, which also result from venial (less serious) sins, call for “temporal punishment.”

If a person dies in a state of grace and friendship with God, but with temporal punishment still needed, they will undergo purification in purgatory. Plenary indulgences allow us to avoid this purifying state.

“The sacrament of penance is a sacramental encounter with Christ, where our sins are forgiven,” Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of the Diocese of Brooklyn said. “An indulgence is speaking to the temporal punishment due to our sins that we have not worked out in our lives.

Continued on page 7