

# 300 Enjoyed "The Saint Joseph Table"



The Saint Joseph Society of Lodi hosted "The Saint Joseph Table" on Saturday, March 20, 2010, at 7 p.m., in the school gym. About 300 attended.

A tableau honoring St. Joseph filled the stage, which also included the main "Sharing Table."

As people entered, they placed their food on the sharing table. Rev. Michael Marotta, C.R.M., Pastor, blessed the food. There was DJ entertainment during the evening.

This "St. Joseph Table" takes place on or about the actual Day of Saint Joseph, March 19th.

Because this holiday often falls during Lent, the dishes are all meatless.

Sixty-five pounds of "St. Joseph's Pasta," which is a spaghetti with a meatless red sauce, was prepared in the school kitchen.

Some of the traditional foods that make up the celebration are the "Saint Joseph Pasta" (*bucatini-long pasta, sardines, toasted bread crumbs, fennel, in a red sauce*), St. Joseph's Day Cream Puffs (*Sfinge di San Giuseppe - an Italian pastry, a large cream puff traditionally filled with ricotta*), and many different Italian breads (*Pane di San Giuseppe*).

Antipasto dishes, mozzarella, roasted peppers, olives and cheese were also served.

In addition to the traditional foods, many people bake

or cook something to bring for what is known as the "Sharing Table" at many "Saint Joseph Tables."

"It's a time of getting together, kind of like Thanksgiving," said Antonino Pollaro, President of the St. Joseph Society in Lodi.

Mr. Pollaro elaborated by giving a brief history of the "Tavolata di San Giuseppe" ("Saint Joseph Table").

The "Saint Joseph Table" was founded in Sicily during the Middle Ages.

History tells us that Sicily had been in severe drought for an extended period of time. No crops grew and countless people died of famine.

The peasants prayed to Saint Joseph to intercede with God on their behalf to bring much needed rain to the island. Their promise in return was to have a special feast honoring Saint Joseph.

By miracle, the rains came and the peasants were able to plant their crops.

With the harvest, the people prepared a feast of foods from their crops which has become known as the "Tavolata di San Giuseppe" ("The Saint Joseph Table").

The Saint Joseph Society of Lodi began holding this event when it was founded in 1915 and celebrated "The Saint Joseph Table" for decades, but the tradition declined during the 1970s due to declining membership in The Society. Today, the Society has 28



members.

This event was reinstated in the 1980's by Josephine Smiraldi. This is the third consecutive year that the Society has again run this event.

The money raised helps the Society with annual charitable contributions to Parish's Food Pantry, St. Joseph School for the Blind and, most recently, the Haiti Earthquake Relief.

In keeping with tradition, the Society also handed out bread in honor of Saint Joseph to all parishioners on March 19, 20, and 21, 2010, after each Mass at St. Joseph's Church.

The Society's website is: [www.saintjosephsociety.org](http://www.saintjosephsociety.org) ###

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