

Our Blessed Mother

Friday 8th May 2020



May is the month traditionally associated with Our Lady. Winter is over and we are well into spring. The sun is making a more frequent appearance, the leaves are covering the trees and many of the flowers are bursting open into spectacular blooms. Everything is fresh and full of life. This is why we remember Mary in May because, through her total 'Yes' to God, she brought Life into the world.

During our parish Lenten retreat this year, Fr. Michael Doody showed us how fundamental Our Blessed Mother is to our spiritual life. She was given to us as a gift by the Lord himself at the Cross.

'Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother'. And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.' (Jn 19: 25-27).

The disciple represents us. By giving his mother into the care of the disciple, Jesus was giving her to us. She is our second mum who cherishes us because of her son's love for us. A love that, even when he was on his way to calvary carrying his cross to die a painful death, did not waver.



We know that not only does our heavenly Mother love us but that she cares deeply for us and is always interceding to God on our behalf.

‘Three days later there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding had all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said, ‘Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.’

His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ (Jn 2:1–6)

The wedding couple do not yet realise that their special day is about to be ruined. Their hospitality to all the wedding guests is about to be marred because the wine has finished. They will be judged, criticised and the joy of the occasion will turn to frustration. Mary sees all this and turns to her son. Nobody asks her, she simply sees the need and intercedes. Jesus’ answer seems on the surface very dismissive but Mary is not put off. She has asked on behalf of the bride and groom for help and she knows it will be given hence her words to the servants: *‘Do whatever he tells you.’* Trust in Mary, because she is always interceding on our behalf, to have our cares met and to bring us closer in our relationship with Jesus her son.

When a priest is ordained one of the beautiful traditions, we have in the Church is that he gives his mother a bouquet of roses after his First Mass. There is a rose for every year of his life. That bouquet is an expression of the new priests love and affection for his mother. He acknowledges, in this gesture of roses, that she has been with him throughout his life supporting him, encouraging and sometimes reprimanding him for his own good!



We too should give a bouquet to our Blessed Mother. That bouquet should also contain roses, the spiritual roses of the Rosary. It is very easy to say we have a great love for Mary, and deep devotion to her but words are cheap if they are not carried out in actions. The Rosary is one of those devotions that the Church has always strongly promoted because it expresses an authentic love for Our Lady.

"Give me an army saying the Rosary and I will conquer the world."

Blessed Pope Pius IX

"The greatest method of praying is to pray the Rosary."

Saint Francis de Sales

"Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother. Love the Madonna and pray the rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother."

Saint Padre Pio

"Say the Holy Rosary. Blessed be that monotony of Hail Mary's which purifies the monotony of your sins!"

Saint Josemaria Escriva

"The Rosary is a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight and to keep oneself from sin...If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your country, assemble each evening to recite the Rosary. Let not even one day pass without saying it, no matter how burdened you may be with many cares and labours."

Pope Pius XI

"The Rosary is the most excellent form of prayer and the most efficacious means of attaining eternal life. It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all our blessings. There is no more excellent way of praying."

Pope Leo XIII

"The Rosary is a prayer both so humble and simple and theologically rich in Biblical content. I beg you to pray it."

Saint John Paul II

"There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot solve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary."

Sister Lucia, of the seers of Fatima

"The Rosary is a prayer that always accompanies me; it is also the prayer of the ordinary people and the saints... it is a prayer from my heart."

Pope Francis

"I take refuge, then, in prayer, and turn to Mary, and our Lord always triumphs."

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

As we can see from the above quotes, from Saints, Mystics and Pope's, the practice of the Rosary has been highly recommended and encouraged. However, that does not make it an easy prayer especially if we are tired, distracted and not confident in praying it.

I thought we could all help each other and through the month of May begin to pray the Rosary together as a parish. Taking it step by step and reflecting on the various mysteries and how through them we are brought closer to Jesus. Every day next week (starting Monday 11th May) and with the help of John, our parish webmaster, I'll give a reflection on one mystery a day beginning with the Joyful. Maybe as a parish we could give time to pray a decade each day with the intention of all those in our St. Mary's family. Why not pray that decade with other people in your home, over the phone with a friend or print off the reflection for someone you know who has no access to the internet.

I invite you to prepare yourselves for this *St. Mary's Parish Family Rosary* by simply picking up your beads and looking at them. As you do, ask yourself these questions: Who gave you these beads? Did you buy them and where from? When was the last time you used them? Was it during a difficult time or did you use them to give thanks to God for a blessing? Have you ever properly used them? Who taught you to pray? Who taught you the Rosary? Is Mary a part of your prayer life? Does she feel remote, distant and goddess like? Do you feel comfortable in her presence? Do you talk to her naturally about your worries and trust her with your troubles?



Let us now turn to Mary, Queen of Peace, to pray for those who are struggling at this time because of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Lord, may your mother pray for us.

Let us pray for those suffering from any form of abuse, hunger & need.

Lord, may your mother pray for us.

Let us pray for those who are not coping during this period of isolation.

Lord, may your mother pray for us.

Let us pray for each other that one day we will be reunited again at the foot of the Altar before the Presence of Christ in the Tabernacle.

Lord, may your mother pray for us.

Let us also pray today as VE Day is commemorated. We pray for all those souls who have died in war and conflict.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

I'll publish our first reflection of the Rosary on Monday. Though we may not be able to see each other at this time our prayers will join us together.

God Bless and keep praying

Fr. O'Brien