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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
BB53EZ

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Sunday 16th May 2021
Seventh Sunday of Easter

Dear brothers and sisters,

I've recently come across a poem written by St. Therese of Lisieux that I never knew existed. It's called '*Why I love you, O Mary!*' and was written in May 1897 from the infirmary bed where she was dying. I'm struck by the prayerfulness of St. Therese who obviously took time to ponder and mediate on the life of Our Lady, which in doing so naturally brought her closer to Jesus.



When a loved one is ill and preparing for death it is such a difficult time, not only for them, but for the friends and family all around them. There can be a sense of powerlessness, not wanting to let go, anxiety about the future and of course profound sadness. It was at this painful time in her own life that St. Therese, full of hope, said: '*I am not dying, I am entering into life!*'

This 24 year old Carmelite nun did not see death as the full stop to life. She did not understand it to be an eternal end that led to darkness. No. For St. Therese whose faith was in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord, the Son of Mary, she saw it as a transition that brought her ever closer to the God of the Living. She was not dying but being born into the new life promised by Our Lord.

St. Therese's faith, hope and love in Jesus was nurtured by her relationship with Our Lady. It was on the way to Calvary that Jesus gave us, through John the beloved disciple, the gift of Mary.

'Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother'. And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.' (John 19:27)

Our Lord knew the love of a mother; He knew the care and tenderness a mother poured out on her children; He knew the wisdom and consolation that a mother freely gave. So it was only natural that He wanted us to experience Mary, His own Mother, especially in those times of distress, isolation and confusion. It was this personal gift, from Jesus, of His mother Mary that gave St. Therese joyous faith and certain hope in the Lord. Throughout her life she felt Mary's presence and guiding hand drawing her ever closer to Jesus Christ. It was the gift of Mary that allowed Therese to face death with hope and confidence.

As we continue through this month of May, dedicated as always to Mary, I have cited part of St. Therese's poem, '*Why I love you, O Mary!*' Through our Marian devotions and reading Therese's words we continue to foster our relationship with the Lord. For the full poem please visit: www.therese-de-lisieux.catholique.fr/en/therese-2/her-spirituality/her-family/poetry-of-saint-therese/why-i-love-you-o-mary/



Oh ! I would like to sing, Mary, why I love you,
Why your sweet name thrills my heart,
And why the thought of your supreme greatness
Could not bring fear to my soul.
If I gazed on you in your sublime glory,
Surpassing the splendour of all the blessed,
I could not believe that I am your child.
O Mary, before you I would lower my eyes !...

If a child is to cherish his mother,
She has to cry with him and share his sorrows.
O my dearest Mother, on this foreign shore
How many tears you shed to draw me to you !...
In pondering your life in the holy Gospels,
I dare look at you and come near you.
It's not difficult for me to believe I'm your child,
For I see you human and suffering like me...

When an angel from Heaven bids you be the Mother
O the God who is to reign for all eternity,
I see you prefer, O Mary, what a mystery !
The ineffable treasure of virginity.
O Immaculate Virgin, I understand how your soul
Is dearer to the Lord than his heavenly dwelling.
I understand how your soul, Humble and Sweet Valley,
Can contain Jesus, the Ocean of Love !...

Oh ! I love you, Mary, saying you are the servant
Of the God whom you charm by your humility.
This hidden virtue makes you all-powerful.
It attracts the Holy Trinity into your heart.
Then the Spirit of Love covering you with his shadow,
The Son equal to the Father became incarnate in you,
There will be a great many of his sinner brothers,
Since he will be called : Jesus, your first-born !...

O beloved Mother, despite my littleness,
Like you I possess The All-Powerful within me.
But I don't tremble in seeing my weakness ;
The treasures of a mother belong to her child,
And I am your child, O my dearest Mother.
Aren't your virtues and your love mine too ?
So when the white Host comes into my heart,
Jesus, your Sweet Lamb, thinks he is resting in you !...

You make me feel that it's not impossible
To follow in your footsteps, O Queen of the elect.
You made visible the narrow road to Heaven
While always practising the humblest virtues.
Near you, Mary, I like to stay little.
I see the vanity of greatness here below.
At the home of Saint Elizabeth, receiving your visit,
I learn how to practice ardent charity.

There, Sweet Queen of angels, I listen, delighted,
To the sacred canticle springing forth from your heart.
You teach me to sing divine praises,
To glory in Jesus my Saviour.
Your words of love are mystical roses
Destined to perfume the centuries to come.
In you the Almighty has done great things.
I want to ponder them to bless him for them.

When good Saint Joseph did not know of the miracle
That you wanted to hide in your humility,
You let him cry close by the Tabernacle
Veiling the Saviour's divine beauty !...
Oh Mary ! how I love your eloquent silence !
For me it is a sweet, melodious concert
That speaks to me of the greatness and power
Of a soul which looks only to Heaven for help...

Later in Bethlehem, O Joseph and Mary !
I see you rejected by all the villagers.
No one wants to take in poor foreigners.
There's room for the great ones...
There's room for the great ones, and it's in a stable
That the Queen of Heaven must give birth to a God.
O my dearest Mother, how lovable I find you,
How great I find you in such a poor place !...

When I see the Eternal God wrapped in swaddling clothes,
When I hear the poor cry of the Divine Word,
O my dearest Mother, I no longer envy the angels,
For their Powerful Lord is my dearest Brother !...
How I love you, Mary, you who made
This Divine Flower blossom on our shores !...
How I love you listening to the shepherds and wise men
And keeping it all in your heart with care !...

Funeral Restrictions

The following information was emailed by the Bishop's office to the priests of Salford Diocese on Friday afternoon:

In yesterday's email regarding the number of attendees at funerals, it was suggested that some parts of the Diocese should exercise caution due to high transmission rates of the Indian variant of COVID-19. With the news this morning that the transmission rate is continuing to increase in Hyndburn, Bolton and Blackburn it is requested that churches in these regions limit the number of attendees at a funeral to 30 until we get further guidance from the Bishops' Conference. There is also the possibility that the government may introduce local restrictions before too long but until then it is asked that all churches in these areas keep to the limit of 30 so that there is parity throughout those regions.

In light of these directives from the diocese all Requiem Masses and Funeral Liturgies will continue to be restricted to 30 people.

Private Prayer at St. Mary's

I'm hoping to have some time with family this week and therefore I will not be celebrating the Holy Mass publicly, but as ever, thanks to the good will of parishioners the church will be open for private prayer. If you would like to spend sometime in the Lord's real presence before the Tabernacle then please note the following times:

Wednesday 10am -10:45am

Thursday 10am -10:45am

Friday 6pm – 6:45pm

Saturday 6pm – 6:30pm

If you need to speak to a priest over the phone urgently then Fr. Stamp at St. Ann's, Accrington can be contacted on the following number: (01254) 232 920.

Litany of St Joseph

On Saturday, 1st May, Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, the Holy See added seven new invocations to the Litany of St. Joseph. In addition, provision was made for other intercessions to be added at a local level, via the Bishops' Conference. Until the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales approves a translation of the new invocations, an unofficial translation is attached. Bishop John Arnold has added two further invocations to be used within the Diocese to reflect St. Joseph's role as one of the Principal Patrons of our Diocese and our Diocese's commitment to caring for Creation as our Common Home.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Illustrious son of David, pray for us.

Light of the patriarchs, pray for us.

Spouse of the Mother of God, pray for us.

Guardian of the Redeemer, pray for us.

Chaste guardian of the Virgin, pray for us.

Foster-father of the Son of God, pray for us.

Watchful defender of Christ, pray for us.

Servant of Christ, pray for us.

Minister of Salvation, pray for us.

Head of the Holy Family, pray for us.

Joseph most just, pray for us.

Joseph most chaste, pray for us.

Joseph most prudent, pray for us.

Joseph most valiant, pray for us.

Joseph most obedient, pray for us.

Joseph most faithful, pray for us.

Mirror of patience, pray for us.

Lover of poverty, pray for us.

Model of workers, pray for us.

Glory of domestic life, pray for us.

Guardian of Creation, pray for us.

Guardian of virgins, pray for us.

Pillar of families, pray for us.

Supporter in difficulties, pray for us.

Solace of the afflicted, pray for us.

Hope of the sick, pray for us.

Patron of refugees, pray for us.

Patron of the afflicted, pray for us.

Patron of the poor, pray for us.

Patron of the dying, pray for us.

Terror of demons, pray for us.
Protector of Holy Church, pray for us.
Patron of the Diocese of Salford, pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
V. He made him lord of His household,
R. And prince over all His possessions.
Let Us Pray.

O God, Who in Your ineffable providence were pleased to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Your most Holy Mother, grant that as we venerate him as our protector on earth, we may be worthy to have him as our intercessor in Heaven, You Who live and reign forever and ever.

R. Amen.

His Holiness Pope Francis writes: *Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds I have recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. It expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph: "Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that I commend to you, that they may have a happy outcome. My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power. Amen.*

Song for St Joseph

Fr Kevin Murphy, a Salford diocesan priest, has written a Song for St Joseph as part of the year of St Joseph and the Feast of St Joseph the Worker on 1st May. Alex Patterson, Cathedral Director of Music, has recorded Fr Kevin's song - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYEn06thM-o>
Sheet music will be available online in due course.

The God who Speaks through Mark

As we return to Ordinary Time after Pentecost, the Department for Formation is pleased to offer four online evenings on the Gospel according to Mark.

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – *Mark Time* – some of the main themes and ideas to look out for in our Sunday Gospels over the coming weeks and months (with Fr Christopher Lough)

Wednesday 2 June 2021- *The Humanity of Jesus in Mark* (with Fr Eamonn Mulcahy CSSp)

Wednesday 9 June 2021 – *The Disciples in Mark* (with Fr Michael Deas)

Wednesday 16 June 2021 – *The Little People in Mark* (with Fr Michael Winstanley SDB)

Each presentation will be from 7.00 to 8.30 pm and will include time for discussion and questions. They are offered free of charge. To reserve a place on one or all the evenings and to receive the Zoom link in advance, please email formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Gift Aid and Envelopes

On behalf of the parish I would like to thank Rob Harrison for all his voluntarily work concerning the gift aid scheme and donation envelopes. Over the next few weeks, as people book to come to the Holy Mass, those who have signed up to the gift aid scheme will receive their envelopes from a steward. In line with GDPR, envelopes can only be given to the individual whose name and address is printed on the box. If you do not contribute to the gift aid scheme but would like a box of donation envelopes then please ask a steward when you come to church. For more information about helping the parish through gift aid you can contact Rob: giftaid@stmaryoswaldtwistle.org.uk

Easter - Weekly Eco-Thought for Parishes

Seventh Sunday of Easter: In the third Eucharistic Prayer we pray '*all you have created rightly gives you praise.*' In these spring days how can we enable creation's song of praise to be heard more clearly?

Fire Safety Maintenance

On Wednesday 26th May Walker Fire will carry out the compulsory annual checks on all fire extinguishers both in church and the presbytery.

Tree Maintenance

Father O's favourite subject! Hyndburn Borough Council have carried out their regular review of all the trees on St. Mary's grounds. Acting on their legal recommendations, especially in regards to public health and safety, Special Branch Tree Surgeons Ltd will carry out the work in accordance with the local authority's requirements. Thank goodness the major work of two years ago has put the parish in a better standing. Work will begin on Thursday 27th May for one day.

Miles that Matter

Caritas is proud to have supporters, staff and volunteers who are walking in solidarity and in the 'virtual' footsteps of so many people who have fled war and conflict and seek a new life on these shores and in Greater Manchester and Lancashire in particular. Miles that Matter is running from 1st May until International Refugee Week in June. If you are interested in finding out more, or wish to participate, please call Rachel Taylor 0161 817 2285 or visit the website www.caritassalford.org.uk/miles-that-matter

Reopening of Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst

Theodore House, on the Stonyhurst estate, will be reopening from 11th June, and welcoming groups from 21st June in line with Government de-restrictions. A spacious and comfortable venue for retreats, away-days and conferences for any parish or diocesan group, in uniquely beautiful and historic surroundings and with access to St Peter's church next-door. For more information, please visit www.theodorehouse.com or contact bookings@christianheritagecentre.com

Christian Heritage Centre Event - Faith & Reason: A Catholic Integration

A short, residential summer course exploring the relationship of faith with philosophy, science and culture. Particularly helpful for catechists and teachers fielding commonly-asked questions around Catholicism, besides anyone wanting to deepen their understanding of the Faith. Runs 5th – 8th August. For more info and registration, www.christianheritagecentre.com/events/faith-and-reason

Online Parish Events

Parishioners from different parishes have been organising online rosaries, online sing-a-longs and virtual coffee mornings for their churches. I think this is a wonderful idea as many children and grandchildren have been stepping up to help older family members link up and use computers, mobile phones, iPads etc. Any parishioner here at St. Mary's who would like to facilitate this has my complete support and I am happy to put them in touch with diocesan safeguarding department so that all correct procedures and online safety protocol can be followed.

Lately Dead and Anniversaries

The parish website has a new section where people can submit the names of their own deceased loved ones where people can pray for them. The list of names and anniversaries will be changed each month.

Please follow this link to submit names:

[>>>>Submit<<<<](#)

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
Amen.*

Covid-19 Health and Safety Reminder

The government has allowed places of worship to remain open during this third national lockdown but we must not become complacent. The diocese have asked us to remind people of the following procedures:

- Please make sure you are wearing a face mask before you enter the church building. Nobody should be putting a mask on once they are sat down at a pew or in the entrance/foyer near the stewards.
- Please do not remove your mask to speak to a steward or another parishioner in church. This shows a lack of safe respect for others. We all need to care and look out for each other.
- Please wear your mask when you are coming forward to receive Holy Communion. Once, and only once, you are stood before the priest then you can remove your mask. Communion is not a race so please take your time and do not rush. Once you have received the Blessed Sacrament then replace your mask and leave the church building.
- Please do sanitise your hands at the stations provided at both entrances and exits of church.
- Please keep the Two Meter Rule. This new strain of Covid-19 is more easily transmitted therefore it's important that we all keep to this practice.
- Please do not congregate to socialise on church property before or after Mass/Liturgy.
- Please do not come to church if you have Covid-19 symptoms, have tested positive for Covid-19 or are in isolation.

Mass Bookings

To book a place at Mass via our telephone service then please ring (01254) 232 433 on Wednesdays between 5pm – 6pm. To book a place at Mass online please visit the parish website www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk Sadly, some volunteers have had to return to work and therefore you will only be able to book online during the week (Monday to Friday).

God Bless and keep praying.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien

