

SoulSpace

SERIES: GREAT CATHOLIC PRAYERS

Season colour: GREEN

In this series, **Brendan McConvery CSsR** looks at great Catholic prayers and their stories and meaning.

Once, an eighteen year old student called Francis de Sales, was plagued by religious doubts about whether he might not be one of those destined to hell. For months, he lived under a cloud of depression until, going into a church, he knelt before the altar of Mary and said the Memorare. As he recited the words, the torrent of despair ended forever. He would become known as a canonised saint.



THE PRAYER

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection,

implored your help, or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen

THE MEANING OF THE PRAYER

There are three themes in the prayer. The first, announced by the opening word, is a call to memory. In the Jewish-Christian tradition, memory and prayer go hand in hand. At the beginning of the Jewish Passover meal, the participants are reminded that "this night, each of us must remember that they themselves have come out of the land of

Egypt." In the Eucharist, the words and actions over the bread and cup are done "in memory of me." Although Mary is being asked to remember how she deals with prayer, the person who is praying is also engaging in memory. They have to recall that Mary is a most "gracious virgin." There is an affirmation of belief that no-one who turned to Mary was ever turned away. Three phrases are more or less synonyms for prayer to Mary ('fled to your protection... implored your help... sought your intercession'). "Never was it known" suggests that any change to that pattern, any rejection by Mary or refusal to listen to a prayer would be utterly unbelievable.

Second, the person praying is inspired with the confidence that their past experience of Mary's intercession inspires in them. Two traditional titles of Mary are used here – "virgin of virgins" and "my mother." Virgin and mother might seem contradictory terms. The use of a phrase like "virgin of virgins" or "king of kings" is a biblical way of expressing uniqueness or superiority. When the tradition speaks of Mary's virginity, it would be misleading to see it in exclusively sexual terms. Virginity is a symbol of total self-giving and humility. The person making the prayer now turns to their own situation – they are "sinful and sorrowful" – in other words, they are aware of their need for help for they can do nothing of their own accord.

The third part of our prayer begins with an appeal to the Mother of the Word Incarnate. Mary assists those who pray to her because she is the mother of Jesus, the Word made flesh. At the Wedding Feast of Cana, she went discreetly to the aid of a couple in need and drew her son's attention to their need. When we speak of Mary and mercy, it is always in the context of the mercy of God, revealed in the human mystery of her son. ■



Today's readings

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Is 8:23-9:3
1 Cor 1:10-13. 17
Mt 4:12-23

Today's Gospel describes the beginnings of the ministry of Jesus.

Why did Jesus leave home? One likely explanation is that he wanted to be closer to a greater number of people. Nazareth was a poor village in the hills. Capernaum was a large fishing village on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew wants to show how in this move Jesus is fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah. Matthew sums up Jesus' preaching in one short phrase: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand." Repent means turn away, to adopt

the new mind and heart that will be needed if people are to see the kingdom. The kingdom is not a place – it is a time when God will usher in his kingly rule of justice and peace.

The stories of the call of the first disciples are startlingly brief. Those who are called are two pairs of brothers who are engaged in the fishing business. What is striking is the abruptness with which Jesus enters their lives with little by way of introduction and makes an astonishing claim on them, and how they literally drop everything and follow him. So strong is the force of Jesus' personality that these hardened fishermen follow him even though they don't know where it will lead or what its implications will be.

STORY OF THE PRAYER

The prayer is generally known by the first word of the Latin version, Memorare, "remember." It was commonly believed to have been composed by St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), the Cistercian abbot, theologian and preacher. Although Bernard composed many sermons on Our Lady and many of them contain prayers, there is nothing among his writings that corresponds directly to our prayer.

It is more likely that St Bernard has become confused with another Bernard. He was a French priest called Claude Bernard (1588-1641). Father Bernard's devotion to the poor won him their affection and their admiration. He had a special devotion to the Memorare which he claimed he had learned in his family, and to it he attributed a cure from a serious illness. He had more than 200,000 leaflets printed which he distributed to popularise the prayer.



THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME.
Today, Sunday, 22nd January 2017
Sunday within the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
(18th - 25th January)
 God has given to each of us a potential to be developed. There is a promise in us yet to be fulfilled. Jesus came to bring this fulfilment to everyone and it will be ours when we follow like Peter and the others who lived in Galilee.

WORDS from POPE FRANCIS on the FAMILY "In the family too, we can rethink our habits of consumption and join in caring for the environment as our common home." (Amoris Laetitia, Par 277)

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK - JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 4 2017
 There will be a special celebration to mark the opening of the week at **12 Noon Mass**, Sunday next January 29th. This annual celebration gives us all the opportunity to be more aware of the unique contribution that our Catholic schools make to Irish life. This year's theme is 'Learning with Pope Francis to care for our common home'. During this week we invite you to take time to reflect on the service that Catholic schools give to children, parents, families and communities. We ask you to consider how best you can offer support to the service that your child's Catholic school provides in so many different ways. The daily themes for the week are:
Monday: Seeing the beauty of our common home.
Tuesday: Caring for our common home.
Wednesday: Grandparents watching over our common home.
Thursday: Protecting our common home.
Friday: Sharing our common home.

SAINT BRIGID'S CROSSES Reeds are gathered with work underway on the preparation of St. Brigid's Crosses for her feast Day, February 1st. Those able to help should contact the Sisters of the Presentation on 071 9160740. All volunteers most welcome.

CATHEDRAL REPAIRS This week we have received a further update from Chris Southgate, Conservation Engineer with Southgate Associates Cork who are overseeing the repairs to our Cathedral. Once again we invite you to view this on our website under the heading [Essential Repair Works Underway](#). Mr Southgate is scheduled to make a further site inspection in one month's time. The Conservation team will then move on to assess St. Joseph's Altar which is also suffering from the ingress of water through the fabric of our Cathedral. Further updates will be made available as we receive them. Thank you for your continued patience and support.

READINGS FOR SUNDAY NEXT, 29th January 1st Reading: Zeph. 2:3,3:12-13; 2nd Reading: 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Gospel: Matt. 5:1-12
PRAYER FOR THE WEEK Loving God, your Spirit renews humanity & sustains us always; continue to support us by your grace. Amen.
FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK: **Tuesday 24th** St Francis de Sales Bishop of Geneva **Thurs 26th** St Timothy and Titus **Saturday 28th** St Thomas Aquinas

BINGO - GILLOOLY HALL - tonight Sunday, 22nd January at 9.00 p.m.
 With a jackpot of €3,050.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES
 SUNDAY 15th JANUARY PARISH ENV: €2850 PL/STAND. ORD: €1322
 THANK YOU for your contribution.
 ST MARY'S PRESBYTERY ☎ 071 9162670 SACRISTY ☎ 071 9161261

WEDNESDAY 25th JANUARY 2017
CHURCH UNITY WEEK
Theme " CROSSING BARRIERS"
 Dean Arfon Williams invites us to join his community in St John's Church of Ireland Cathedral, John St., Sligo on Wednesday, 25th January at 8pm.
 The Preacher will be Pastor Steffan Arras of the Lutheran Church in Ireland. **All are Welcome.**
*God, spring of living water,
 make us witnesses to unity by how we live our lives.
 Transform our hearts that we might be
 bearers of the Good News
 Lead us to encounter the other as an encounter with you.
 In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen*

DEAF LOOP It has been brought to our attention that the deaf loop is not working to capacity we are in the process of repairing it and would be grateful if anyone who is hard of hearing would let us know if the system is improved. Thank You for your patience.

DIOCESAN VOCATIONS "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks..." If you think that God is calling you to serve the Lord of the harvest as a priest, Contact: Fr. Jim Murray at 071 9162136, or email vocations@elphindiocese.ie

CITIZENS ASSEMBLY - Copies of the Irish Catholic Bishops submission to the Citizens Assembly on the 8th Amendment are available at the entrance to our cathedral. Please take a copy.

COLLEGE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, SUMMERHILL ENROLMENT
 The Principal and staff of the College of the Immaculate Conception Summerhill invite you to their enrolment and Information Night for incoming first year students for 2017/2018. It will take place on Thursday 26th January in the General Purpose Hall (inside the main entrance of the school) beginning at 7.00p.m. If you are unable to attend please contact us on 071 9160311 or email info@summerhillcollege.ie .

THE PRIORY INSTITUTE Bringing theology home! Join our supportive student community and study theology by distance learning this Spring. Application deadline 28th February. Email: enquiries@prioryinstitute.com, Website: <http://www.prioryinstitute.com>, Tel: 01 4048124.

THE U.S. EMBASSY DUBLIN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES unit will be in Sligo on January 25th, 2017 for U.S. passport renewals, U.S. consular report of birth abroad applications and notary services. Applications are accepted by appointment only, U.S. citizens wishing to schedule an appointment should send an email to DublinOutreach@state.gov. For more information please visit: <https://ie.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-u-s-citizens/consular-outreach-nationwide/>

Rest in peace Your prayers are asked for the repose of the soul of: MAUREEN O'DONNELL, Treacy Avenue. *May God grant her eternal rest and comfort and console her bereaved family and friends.*




CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
Upcoming EVENTS THE WEEK AHEAD
 Wed. 25th "Wednesday Tea" after 10.30am Mass
 Saturday 28th Confessions 2.00p.m. - 4.00p.m.
 Wed 1st Feb Feast of St Brigid
 Thursday 2nd Presentation of the Lord
 Friday 3rd St. Blaise

DATES TO REMEMBER
URSULINE NETWORK - Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 25th January in the Convent (opp Cathedral entrance) at 7.00pm. New members welcome.
NORTH WEST STROKE GROUP next meeting Wednesday, 25th January at 8pm at the Irish Wheelchair Association premises in Abbeyville, Sligo.
WEEKEND RETREAT ON ST JOHN PAUL'S TEACHINGS ON THE FAMILY
 A weekend retreat will take place in Star of the Sea Retreat Centre, Mullaghmore, Sligo on February 3rd – 5th to expound on St. John Paul's teachings on Family and Prolife issues. It will be a weekend of formation, prayer, intercession and fellowship. The retreat will be directed by Fr Maurice Colgan O.P. Full board €140 with own private room. Please contact Angela 086-3342289/Lisa 087-6284621 for more information.
EDDIE STONE—Bus to Emmanuel House, Clonfert on Saturday, 4th February as part of the five First Saturday devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. For details tel 086 8383725.
FAMILY CARERS IRELAND are providing the QQI Level 5 Healthcare Support Award in your area based on demand in February 2017. One Day workshops also available For more info contact 0579322920.
HEART SUPPORT GROUP MEETING arranged for Wednesday, 25th January in the Park Hotel has been cancelled and rescheduled for Wednesday, 22nd February.
ELPHIN DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES Monday 28th August to Saturday 2nd September 2017. For further information and to book contact JWT on 01 2410800.

A.S.I.S.T 2 DAY WORKSHOP (APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING) The following ASIST Workshops are delivered free of charge to both professionals and members of the public by the Health Service. The aim of these workshops is to increase awareness, develop skills and promote the prevention of suicide in our communities. Forthcoming Training Dates for Sligo in 2017 9am - 5pm: 14th & 15th February ASIST and 24th & 25th October ASIST. Please note that **ASIST** is not recommended for any participant that has been personally bereaved or affected by suicide in the previous 12 months. **Advance booking essential for both ASIST. Please contact Belinda Taylor, to book or for further information, on 071 9135061 or Belinda.Taylor@hse.ie**

SLIGO IS EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING CAPITAL FOR 2017. To mark the historic occasion, Sligo County Council is hosting a very special evening of music, song, dance, and spoken word in the Knocknarea Arena, IT Sligo on Friday 27th January 2017. Artists appearing include: Michael Rooney, Niamh Crowley, Kieran Quinn, Sligo Academy of Music Sinfonietta Orchestra, Sligo Gospel Choir and our finest traditional and classical musicians. Tickets: Adults - EUR10 / U-18 - EUR5. available from the Hawkswell Theatre Box Office (071 9161518) or www.evcsligo.eu

AN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING will be held at the Methodist Church Wine Street, Sligo on Thursday 26th January 2017 at 8.00 pm to honour all those remembered in connection with the Remembrance Tree erected by Sligo Rotary Club in O'Connell Street during Christmas week. All proceeds collected will be presented to the Sligo Branch of St. Vincent de Paul and North West Hospice. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Anniversary & remembrances		
DAY	8.00am	10.30am
MON 23 rd	THOMAS J MORAN	—
TUES 24 th	FRANCES LYNCH	1st Anniversary MARGARET CHURCH 
WED 25 th	GERTIE HEGARTY	MICHAEL GILMARTIN
THURS 26 th	PADDY & SHEILLA WATTERS & DECEASED FAMILY	Month's Mind BETTY NOONEY 
FRI 27 th	KEN MACKAY	Month's Mind KAY O'GRADY 
SAT 28 th	PETER SHOVLAN	ROSALEEN CUMMINS