

54 Day Miraculous Rosary Novena for family, life and a renewal of the faith in Ireland

Wed 21st Aug – Sun 13th Oct 2019

140th anniversary of the Miracle of The Knock Apparition –
102nd anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun in Fatima

The Faith Of Our Fathers

Saint Patrick, tells us in his confession, “From the time I came to know Him in my youth, the love of God and the fear of Him have grown in me, and up to now, thanks be to the grace of God, I have kept the faith”. And for centuries, the people of Ireland kept the faith that Saint Patrick brought to us, even in times of great persecution. ¹

The Vatican archives record the assault on the Downpatrick cathedral in 1539, “it has monks of the Cistercian order, whose revenues are greatly diminished on account of the ravages of heretics, who at the beginning of this year, removed the relics of Saint Patrick, Saint Brigid and Columba and burnt their bodies”. ² Thankfully, the holy relics of our patrons were retrieved centuries earlier in 1196.

Not even Cromwell could break the catholic faith of the Irish. Cromwell who arrived in Ireland on 15 August 1649, reported back to the House of Commons, “All is not well with Ireland yet. You gave us the money, you gave us the guns. But let me tell you that every house in Ireland is a house of prayer and when I bring these fanatical Irish before my guns, they hold up in their hands a string of beads and they never surrender”. The Rosary was prayed in every catholic home and people walked for miles for Confession and Holy Mass.

In Ireland, in the early 1900s, the deep faith of the Irish was described as a puzzle to all disbelievers. “They see a nation in the past that clung to its faith and its traditions through seven centuries of the bitterest persecution, that steadily and steadfastly rejected every bribe to sacrifice its beliefs, and patiently endured every kind of suffering to preserve them; a nation that never murmured, never complained, but suffered in silence, like the Divine Master who it worshipped, a nation that passed through fire with the calmness and fortitude of the martyrs...” ³

Dark days lay ahead for Ireland, The Easter Rising, The War of Independence and the Irish Civil War that tore families apart. The Holy See, at the request of the Irish Bishops, granted a special favour to Ireland in 1921, a Litany of the Irish Saints to be prayed publicly in every church in the land for peace and to be included in all future prayer books so that our people could become familiar with the names of the Irish Saints. ⁴ People say that the faith is stronger in the North than the South, perhaps because the stone that was rejected is the cornerstone and, of course, the terrible suffering we endured through the years of “The Troubles”.

In 1979, Pope St. John Paul graced our shores, on the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel . He said, “standing for the first time on Irish soil, on Armagh soil, the Successor of Peter cannot but recall the first coming here, more than one thousand five hundred years ago, of Saint Patrick. From his days as a shepherd boy at Slemish right up to his death at Saul, Patrick was a witness to Jesus Christ. Not far from this spot, on the Hill of Slane, it is said that he lit for the first time, the Paschal Fire, so that the light of Christ might shine forth on all of Ireland and unite all of its people in the love of the one Jesus Christ. ³ Pope St. John Paul prayed: “Christ, Prince of Peace, Mary, Mother of Peace, Queen of Ireland; Saint Patrick, Saint Oliver and all the Saints of Ireland, I, together with all those gathered here and all who join me, invoke you, watch over Ireland. Protect humanity”.

The Knock Apparitions

The goal of Pope St. John Paul’s visit to Ireland was Knock. For here, 140 years ago today, heaven lifted its veil and the Holy Family of Nazareth appeared to a poor people, rich in the treasures of the faith.

On the evening of the 21st August 1879 at around 8 p.m, in the pouring rain, the light of Christ shone forth when Jesus appeared as The Lamb of God together with Our Lady, St Joseph and St. John the Apostle, at the gable wall of the parish church in Knock. The apparition was witnessed by 15 people of all ages – men and, women and four children - Patrick, Catherine, Patrick and John.

Mary O’Connell (nee Byrne), was 26 at the time and lived until October 1936; she advised on the sculpture of the

statues we pray in front of now in the Apparition chapel. Interestingly, the statues arrived in Ireland on the 15th August 1963, the feast day of The Assumption. ⁶ She spoke frequently of “the heavenly expression on Our Lady’s countenance and of the light that seemed to come out of her figure, much brighter than the light that came from Saint Joseph and Saint John, but not as bright as the light the Lamb”. ⁶ Brigid French, 75 years said, “When I arrived there, I threw myself on my knees, and exclaimed, a hundred thousand thanks to God, and the glorious Virgin, for giving us this manifestation!” ⁷ Patrick Hill, 15 years old said, that he “saw with Our Lady, Saint Joseph and Saint John, and an altar with a lamb on the altar, and a cross behind the lamb. The figures were full and round, as if they had body and life. As we approached, they seemed to go back towards the gable”. ⁷

It is said that there were several further supernatural occurrences at Knock. Lights, orbs and stars of extraordinary brilliance were seen around the place of the apparition on 6th January 1880, the feast of the Epiphany. On the 10th February 1880, the eve of the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Immaculate Virgin appeared surrounded by silvery clouds and red tongues of fire shooting down from the sky and three figures seen with Our Lady in the centre. And on 24th March 1880, the eve of the Annunciation, Jesus crucified. Our Lady was also seen with Saint Joseph, holding the Infant Child in his arms. These later occurrences were not part of the official investigation. ⁷

In 2018, Pope Francis, visited Knock as part of his visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families and presented a golden rosary as a gift to Our Lady. He spoke later of the deep faith he found in Ireland.

Last week, on the feast of The Assumption, Pope Francis said, “every time we take the Rosary in hand and pray it, we take a step towards the great goal of life. May the Blessed Virgin, Gate of Heaven, help us to look every day with trust and joy toward Heaven, where our true home is, where she is waiting for us as a mother”.

Fatima

On 13th October 1917, the Miracle of the Sun was witnessed by an estimate 100,000 people when Our Lady appeared in the sky with St. Joseph holding the Child Jesus in his arms. St. Joseph and the Infant Child blessed the world three times, each making the Sign of The Cross. God sent Our Lady to three little shepherds, St. Jacinta, St. Francisco and Lucia, with His plan for the salvation of humanity. Our Lady appeared 6 times from May to October, on the 13th of each month. At each apparition she told the children to continue to pray the Rosary every day, for peace in the world. She also showed the children a vision of hell and asked them to pray and make sacrifices to save souls. Our Lady also showed them her Immaculate Heart that ungrateful men pierce with thorns seeking reparation for the sins of mankind.

Pompeii

On 13 October 1875, Apostle of The Rosary, Blessed Bartolo Longo, while walking through the valley of Pompeii, was inspired to start a Rosary Confraternity. He was gifted with a miraculous painting of The Virgin of The Rosary. While praying in front of the painting, he wrote a special novena prayer and was miraculously cured of typhoid, in August 1879, the same month as the Apparition of Knock. Pope St. John Paul visited Pompeii on 21 October 1979 and attributed the success of his visit to Ireland to The Virgin of The Rosary. In 1884, a young girl, Fortunatina Agrelli was healed after Our Lady Queen of the Rosary appeared to her in Naples and asked her to pray six novenas of The Rosary, 3 novenas in petition and 3 novenas in thanksgiving. Pompeii shrine say that Our Lady asked for this prayer by Bl. Bartolo Longo along with The Rosary for the first 27 days of the novena. ⁸ (See website for copy of prayer).

54 Day Miraculous Rosary Novena

You are invited to join in a 54 day rosary novena to pray for family, life and a renewal of the faith in Ireland starting today. St. Louis de Montfort said that we should pray the full Rosary every day and for children to pray five decades of The Rosary. Pope St. John Paul advised that while praying the full Rosary is



The Apparition Chapel, Knock

54 Day Rosary Novena Calendar

AUGUST	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
				1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	
SEPTEMBER	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
							1
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30						
OCTOBER	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
		1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31			

27 Days in Petition27 Days in Thanksgiving

commendable, that people may not be able to recite more than a part of the Rosary and five decades daily is acceptable. ⁹ What is important is prayer from the heart.

When the Rosary is prayed as a group, e.g. family, in church, each person can request a plenary indulgence for a holy soul; usual conditions of Confession, Eucharist and a prayer for the Holy Father, to include an Our Father and Hail Mary, apply. Please also offer your Masses, Adoration, Stations of the Cross and all prayers and sacrifices for a miracle for Ireland, at this time. Please consider fasting on bread and water twice a week on Wednesday and Friday (if able) and ask family and friends at home and overseas to unite in praying the novena. Please ask priests to offer Masses for Ireland. Encourage children and young people to pray for their country and for every child, born and unborn. The family that prays together stays together.

A bouquet of roses will be presented to Our Lady on 13 October 2019 on behalf of all participating in the novena. The Lamb will Conquer!

An Teaghlach Naofa (The Holy Family)
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References

- 1 Saint Patrick’s Confession
- 2 McGrady FP. The Background and history of the relic and shrine of the jaw-bone of Saint Patrick 2009.
- 3 Sheehan P.A. The Apostle of Ireland, Mariae Corona – Catholic Truth Society 1902:90-91
- 4 Irish Ecclesiastical Record Vol 18 (1921) 433-435-532-36.
- 5 Homily of His Holiness John Paul II, Drogheda Saturday 29 September 1979
- 6 Coyne Judy. Providence my Guide. Mercier Press 2004
- 7 Carey FP Knock and its Shrine, Story of a Famed Irish Shrine, The Catholic Truth Society 1940
8. Shrine of Pompeii. Novenas and petition to the Virgin of Pompeii.
- 9 Rosarium Virginis Mariae. 16 October 2002

“YOU ARE ALL BEAUTIFUL O MARY, YOU ARE THE GLÖRY, YOU ARE THE JOY, YOU ARE THE HONOUR OF OUR PEOPLE”.