

A Message To Parishioners

April 7, 2020

Prayer to Virgin Mary

Dear Parishioners,

A parishioner had recently given this prayer to me and I am sharing it with you for your own meditation and prayer during these days of Holy Week.

Pope's prayer to Virgin Mary for Protection

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, we are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us: He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrow to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of Resurrection. AMEN.

This prayer is in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Salus Populi Romani (Protectress or Solace of the Roman People). This icon was brought from the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (St. Mary Major) by Pope Francis on Friday, March 27, 2020 for the prayer service he conducted from St. Peter's Square, seeking her intercession during this time of crisis.

Santa Maria Maggiore is the oldest church in the west dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, built on the Esquiline Hill in Rome in the 5th century. This image is enshrined within the Basilica and revered as an image of faith and hope for the Roman people, particularly during times of crisis and conflict, such as plagues and war. Therefore Pope Francis had the image brought to St. Peter's for the prayer service, seeking her intercession for the world at this time of global crisis.

The origins of the icon:

According to tradition, after the crucifixion, Our Lady moved to the home of John the Apostle, taking a few personal belongings, one of which being a table from Joseph's workshop built by

Jesus. Pious women of Jerusalem asked St. Luke to paint a portrait of Mary. He did so on the top of that table. As he painted he listened to Mary speak of Jesus' life, facts which he later

recorded in his Gospel account. The image is believed to have remained in Jerusalem and discovered by St. Helena in the 4th century. It was transported to Constantinople where her son, Emperor Constantine, erected a church. The image arrived in Rome in 590 and was enshrined in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. While on sabbatical in Rome in the fall of 2010 I concelebrated Mass with our sabbatical group in the chapel in Mary Major where the icon is enshrined.

During these very difficult days let us turn to Our Lady for assistance as we negotiate through this crisis, seeking deliverance from this pandemic.

Mary, Salus Populi Romani, pray for us.

God Bless you and Happy Easter!

Father Joe