

# Family Links

April 2020

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## Prayer to Combat the CORONA Virus Pandemic

Most merciful and triune God,  
we come to You in our weakness, we come to You in our fear,  
We come to You in trust.  
We place before You the disease present in our world  
and turn to You in our time of need.  
Bring wisdom to doctors.  
Give understanding to scientists.  
Endow caregivers with compassion and generosity.  
Bring healing to those who are ill.  
Protect those who are most at risk.  
Give comfort to those who have lost a loved one.  
Welcome into Your eternal home those who have died.  
Stabilize our communities.  
Unite us in our compassion.  
Remove all fear from our hearts.  
Fill us with confidence in Your care.  
Jesus, I trust in You.  
Jesus, I trust in You.  
Jesus, I trust in You.

Author unknown. Posted on [AscensionPress.com](http://AscensionPress.com)



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# Remaining in Silence – a Reflection



We, members of the Holy Family, are celebrating this year the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Foundation of our “Family”. Could we do better than to “stop for a moment, remain in silence and remember” ... allow memories to come before us and to hear God’s message for today. Creative sparks rarely come to us when we are thinking hard about something. Creativity requires above all the silence of a “non-thinking” mind. Meister Eckhart said: *“Nothing in all creation is so like God as silence.”* – And the Good Father *P.B. Noailles* said: “The Word of God is a seed: to produce fruit it has to be meditated in silence”.



Pierre Bienvenu Noailles was a talented young man, a born leader and very creative. When we allow his life story to unfold in our memory, we wonder how it was possible for him to create and organise a vast Religious Family of 5 Vocations! He enjoyed life as a young man, tried many things, yet there was also something deep in his searching, he had a generous and kind heart. We know that he received three mystical experiences, the first on the eve of his first Communion, probably just after his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was not a complete conversion, but a beginning, God touched him in the silence of the chapel of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Cathedral of Bordeaux. From then on, he received the sacraments every month but continued his varied leisure activities. The priest who prepared him for his first Communion, Fr. Dinéty, said to him: “One day you will be a priest”. These words must have been working in Bienvenu, for on an occasion when he arrived late at night, he said to his mother: *“cheer up, one day I will be a priest”*.

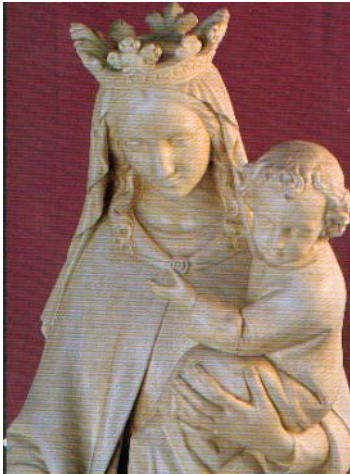
He wanted to study Law and for that he had to go to Paris. When he arrived there his behaviour was strange. He wanted to be alone in his room, ‘thinking’ ... Then he went out and made his way to the Church of St. Sulpice and prayed quietly behind a pillar until his attention was drawn towards a confessional. There he found a priest to whom he opened his heart and made an appointment for the next day. In this Church, he had another mystical grace. He saw people going towards a chapel and he followed them. *“His eyes were drawn towards a statue of the Blessed Virgin who was holding in her arms the Divine Child whom she seemed to be presenting to those who were praying ... He said: I heard her voice. She was calling me, showing me the way. I understood all.”* God does things in his own way, in his own time, a gentle breeze! *“Be still and know that I am God.”* (Psalm 46:10)



He returned the next day to St. Sulpice and met the Superior General. It was decided that he could enter the seminary. Jesus Christ had touched him deeply and always in the silence of a chapel before a statue of the Blessed Virgin. For his seminary studies Bienvenu was sent to Issy-les-Moulineaux and it was here while praying in the chapel of Our Lady of Loreto that he received another mystical grace, the idea of the Association. He resolved to give himself totally to its realisation by spreading everywhere the spirit and virtues of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. His own experience was that of a loving and united family.

He spent many long hours in prayer and silent meditation in this chapel of Loreto which was an imitation of the Chapel in Italy believed to be the house of Nazareth brought to Italy by angels.

After his ordination, Father Noailles was curate at St Eulalie and God's call was beginning to bear fruit. The spiritual Family he founded was growing and he wanted to procure a property away from the noise of the town for a Novitiate. The Curate of Martillac proposed what we now know as "La Solitude". It was quite marshy with a dry gravelly part where vines were planted but the dwelling was very rudimentary. However, the creative eye of Fr. Noailles saw great possibilities and he decided to buy the property. He himself planned the layout. Like Jesus, he often prayed and meditated in a solitary place to the south of this property and the idea came to him to consecrate this place to the Holy Family of Nazareth. The realisation of this project has given us the 'Island of All Graces'. It was in the silence of this Island, before the Grotto of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that he wrote the Rules. Fr. Noailles also wanted a Chapel here, dedicated to Our Lady of All Graces, which would serve as thanksgiving for the Miraculous Benediction.



Our Apostolic Community and Contemplative community of La Solitude are composed of different nationalities, different cultures, and we weave together the threads of our differences, to give Communion a human face in the simplicity of daily tasks, in prayer and in work, in silence and solitude. Located in the heart of the vineyards, La Solitude is a place of calm and restful natural beauty, conducive to reflection, prayer and renewal. In 1959 Mgr. Richaud, Archbishop of Bordeaux, wrote – *"The Solitude is a pearl and we quickly appreciate its discreet value. We are always delighted to come, and would like to come back often... It is not surprising that there is a SOLITUDE for the members of the Holy Family. Silence, withdrawal in peace and prayer are deeply embedded in their spirituality..."*

The Pope Paul VI said at Nazareth: The Holy Family is "*silence*". Silence of "*presence – intimacy- communion – listening*". We are sure that Pierre Bienvenu Noailles is rejoicing with us today because of the life that is generated in La Solitude, where there is a 'welcoming home', a place of renewal, for all the Holy Family members and also for all those around us and all who seek silence, peace and prayer.



Sr. Teresa McElhone, Martillac

*Helping Frontline Workers in the Covid-19 Emergency*



A group in Dublin, led by Lynda Ennis, responded to the Television News about some women in a community centre in Donegal who responded to the need for protective masks for people at the 'frontline'.

Sr. Pauline Harney was invited to join the effort and Pauline, in turn, invited Sisters of her community who wanted to join with her. She also invited women from outside who might wish to be part of the project in making the masks.



The masks are made of cotton and therefore washable and re-usable. Special filters are inserted into the masks and are regularly replaced after use.

Thanks to the devoted efforts of seven women in the sewing team, as well as several of our community, seventy completed masks have already been sent to Donegal to be distributed throughout Ireland.





Pauline contacted the community Garda to help with transporting materials.

Bikers also joined the project to deliver material and completed masks to different nursing homes and to servers. Pauline also invited her nephew, Shane, who is a biker, to pick up material from the Convent and deliver it to the ladies involved in the sewing.



Pauline coordinated this effort via WhatsApp and texts.



As a Community, we donated towards the cost of buying some material. There were also donations from people outside.



Those of us involved are convinced it is a worthwhile project, not only for hospitals and nursing homes, but also for ourselves - simply because instead of feeling helpless we know our community is making its own contribution to the struggle against Covid-19.

**Holy Family Community, Newbridge**

*Taking part in the Papal Cross Award Programme*



#### POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD

The Pope John Paul II Award is a faith achievement award for young people between the age of 16 and 18. It is non-competitive, inclusive, flexible, and voluntary.

The Award enables participants to take an active part in the life of their Church – in the life of their community and society. It enables young people to become more aware of the teaching and role of the Catholic Church in the world and to engage at a deep level with Christ.

The Award was created to commemorate the late Pope Saint John Paul II who was so committed to young people and who had such belief and confidence in them. The Award was launched by the Papal Nuncio to Ireland, His Excellency Most Rev Dr Giuseppe Lazarotto on 7th November 2006 in the Diocese of Derry, Ireland.

More information here: <https://thepopejohnpauliiaward.com/the-pope-john-paul-ii-award-explained/>

**Sarah McGrane, a 5<sup>th</sup> Year student at Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, and Holy Family Youth member shares her experience of what it has meant to her to be part of this programme as she takes part in the annual Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.**

“Tonight, we were reminded that the Novena Mass was taking place. I always used to hate the Novena when I was younger but, since I was introduced to the concept of Adoration, I have found a new meaning in looking to our Lady of Perpetual Help and especially in these times of need.

I carefully convinced my family to join in the live stream, even my 14 year old brother, under much duress, joined. We all seemed to find an hour of peace and a break away from the horror that surrounds us during our current situation. I appreciate the fact the Bishop spoke about how we all, as tech savvy as we are, need that personal touch and some things such as Mass are never the same digitally. I loved the readings of some of the Petitions and so did my parents because the worries they face by losing their own jobs are the same worries in many households.

I really enjoyed it and my family and I all filled out an online Petition and now have something personal to pray for.”

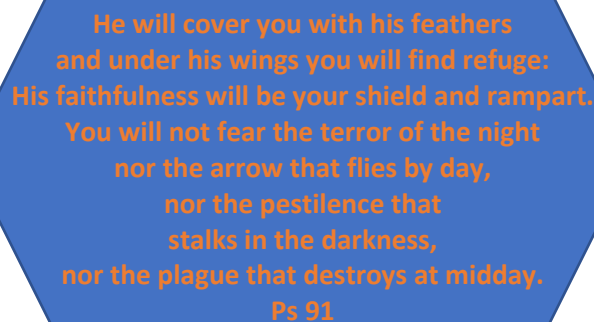
## Some further remarks from Sarah to her Youth leader, Charlotte Vard:

"Just wanted to say thank you so much for sending my reflection on. I feel like I have learned a lot about myself and what Mass is, these last few days during this novena. I started off this journey apprehensive about what would happen over the 9 days because, as I said, I used to not really like it, but since doing adoration, and even the confirmation retreats and a few other things I've completed in my journey through my Papal Cross Award, I can safely say I really enjoyed it.

I was so happy that my family got involved and, as I am my brother's confirmation sponsor, I felt like I was showing him the right way to be a good Christian. I did not actually think my family would be as engaged with the Masses and Readings but even now that it's over they are all sad and said we will continue to watch Mass on the webcam a few times a week.

As a young person, like you told us before, it can be hard to sometimes practise your faith but there is one thing these last few days have shown me and that is, no matter what age you are or where you are praying from, God hears you and we can lead others and help them see that, too.

I hope to be back at Mass soon to see everyone and actually be present. I hope that I can continue growing in this new way that I have realised is exactly the point of the Papal Cross Award."



He will cover you with his feathers  
and under his wings you will find refuge:  
His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.  
You will not fear the terror of the night  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the pestilence that  
stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.  
Ps 91

THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN



As lockdown continues, we are blessed to have a beautiful garden to walk around. I see nature with new eyes the many new buds and blossoms that daily appear. Our apple tree that last year was knocked with the wind has now got new growth, this year probably no apples but that is not important. During these days of so much sadness, fear and anxiety I give thanks for all the new life

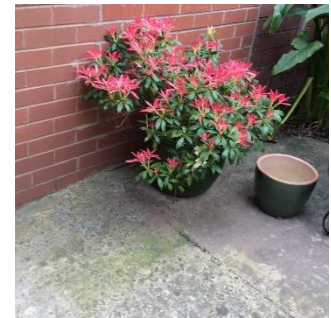


To Earth,  
our life – sustaining planet,  
For the wisdom, comfort, and hope  
I daily receive  
From her generous bounty,  
And her astonishing beauty  
And  
To the Holy One,  
Great dancer of the Cosmos,  
whose presence I often sense  
as I move among the treasures  
of our beloved planet  
Joyce Rupp



### Reflection on trees

I've learned how not to be broken from life's unwanted things by watching trees in the wind tossing and bending rather than pushing back against the storm. It's taught me that I can't always have everything go my way. Sometimes I need to bend a bit.



Others have strong and fibrous roots, counselling me to sink strong webbing roots of love and faith so that I will be nourished in dry times.

Old dead trees in the woods show me that life can come through death as their decaying bodies nurture soil and seeds. A new green shoot assures me of new life no matter what my woundedness.

Trees teach us about hospitality as they house animals and birds. They show compassion as they shade and protect us with their wide reaching arms. When I see clumps of trees together supporting one another I've learned about unity and community.

Seeing trees like humans gracefully aging is a graceful process with an inherent dignity.

Joyce Rupp



Sr. Joan Farrell, Rock Ferry

## BOOK REVIEW



## MEETING JESUS AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME

This is a book which is highly learned and deeply reflective. It is a lovely combination of contemporary biblical scholarship and profound personal contemplation. In it the author draws on his own journey from a naïve unquestioning belief in Christ, through doubt and agnosticism, to a mature and contemporary Christian faith. He illustrates how a true understanding of the historical Jesus can lead to a more authentic Christian life not based on creeds, dogmas or doctrines but on a life of spiritual challenge, compassion and community. In it we are challenged to move beyond inherited belief, a dogmatic image of Jesus as the divine saviour of the world and a moralistic image of Jesus as a person teaching us how to be good. The Christian life is “ultimately not about believing or about being good” but about “a relationship with God that involves us in a journey of transformation”. If we mature in our faith, far from remaining something static rooted in the past, it will evolve, develop and be transformed.

We discover Jesus as a “spirit person” mediating the sacred, as a subversive teacher of wisdom and as a prophet who criticised the religious, social and political elite of his day.

Borg’s treatment of Jesus’s questioning and rejection of the conventional wisdom of the religion, society and politics of his time is a real challenge to our often-unthinking acceptance of such “wisdom” in our twenty-first-century Church and world. Living according to this conventional wisdom leads us into a state of “exile and bondage”.

We are shown how the three macro stories of Scripture – the Exodus story, the story of the exile and return and the priestly story – were used by the New Testament writers to shed light on Jesus’s ministry. Reading this book will lead us to the conviction of how important it is to go beyond the words and surface meaning of Scripture using the best of biblical scholarship and our own critical intelligence.

Finally, Borg shows how both Jesus’s life and the Christian life are journeys of transformation, a relationship with God which becomes richer and fuller as we travel through life.

This is a book well worth reading, written as it is by an eminent scripture scholar with deep faith who uses the tools of contemporary biblical criticism to lead us beyond the surface into the depths of informed and reflective understanding of what the Scriptures are really saying.

Áine Hayde  
(Integrated Spirituality Team)

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This book is by Marcus J. Borg and is published by Harper One (1994). It is available in Hardback, Paperback and Kindle from [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 2020						
Sun-	Mon-	Tues-	Wedn	Thurs-	Friday	Satur-
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3 The Good Shepherd – Founder's image for Divine Providence	4	5	6 *St. Francis Laval (1623- 1708)...	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Int. Day of Families	16
17 World tele- communica- tions Day	18 **Blessing of the Asso- ciation...	19	20	21	22 International Day for biodi- versity	23
24	25	26	27	28 Actual- Foundation Date - Trinity Sunday 1820	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

\* He was the first Bishop of Quebec and the first bishop to celebrate a feast of the Holy Family in his diocese.

\*\* and the Councillors' Crosses by Pius IX (1851)