

Our Lady of Fatima “Many Reasons to Celebrate”  
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Today is the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima. You all probably remember the story. Between May and October of 1917 Our Lady appeared to three children near Fatima, Portugal. Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia. The visions concluded with a miraculous event called the miracle of the sun that hundreds of people witnessed.

There are four reasons why this feast day is special to me today. The first is that it is Mary’s month and everything about Mary points to Jesus. That is how we read the Gospel reading today. When Jesus says, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and observe it” is a perfect description of our Lady. And, the last words we hear from Mary in the Bible are the famous words from the marriage at Cana when she tells the people there to “Do whatever he tells you to do” referring to son Jesus. Everything about Mary points us to Jesus. This is Mary’s month. This is the first reason why this feast day is special to me today.

The second reason is because this parish has a special connection to Our Lady of Fatima parish in Seattle in that our pipe organ was donated to us by that parish when they upgraded to a new one. And, as our parishioners know, this organ is quite amazing in that it has around 2200 pipes to it and has a wonderful sound to it.

The third reason is that the visions of our Lady of Fatima happened right before the pandemic of 1918 and towards the end of one of the most brutal wars our world has ever seen. A century later, Christianity has made a comeback in Russia and the prayer for world peace is as important today as it was back then. I think all of us could pray a rosary at some point for the world today.

The fourth reason that this day is special to me this year is that we are dedicating this mass for a wonderful lady Therese Crane who passed away this past April 13<sup>th</sup>. (I hope I am pronouncing her name correctly). Her family asked we offer today’s mass for her. Learning a little about her, she led an amazing live. Her parents were Portuguese and Eurasian and yet she was born in Macau. She was born on the feast day of St. Therese of Lisieux and so that is how she got her name. And, as it turned out, she had a devotion to St. Therese...I mean, in the Catholic world, who doesn’t right? However, her most profound devotion was to Our Lady of Lourdes.

And as an aside, I also find it special that the family asked us to remember their loved one here at St. Teresa of Calcutta parish in that our parish supports the annual Knights of Malta pilgrimage to Lourdes. A number of our parishioners have gone on this pilgrimage over the years. My own parents went on this pilgrimage not too long ago. We had a delegation set up to go this year, however, the trip was postponed due to the times we live in. Well, the good woman who we are celebrating the mass for today was of Portuguese decent and found herself living in Portugal for a time. And so, in addition to her devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes she also had a

devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. Of course, both devotions are to the same saint we celebrated, the Mother of our Lord. Everything about Mary, every approved apparition of her, and every devotion to her points us to her son Jesus.

It was fascinating to learn about her many adventures traveling all over the world with her family. And not every chapter of her life was easy, however, I am told that during it all she kept her family first and sacrificed a lot for them. Through all these chapters of life she kept her faith in Mary and the Church alive in her heart and this gave her tremendous strength. I know a number of her family members are participating in this mass from their homes and so, on this feast day of our Lady as we remember your mother, grandmother and dear friend, there can be an opportunity to reflect on how the gift of faith carried her throughout her life. Every so often the torch of faith is passed from one generation to the next, and this is in my mind one of those moments for your family. The invitation for her family today is to celebrate that gift of faith she gave you for this is perhaps your greatest inheritance.

And for the rest of us too, on this feast day of our Lady of Fatima, we are also given an invitation. This feast day invites us to be ever more committed what matters most to our Blessed Mother, a relationship with her son Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life.