



# THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 26

February 2020

## Our Lady's Dowry

The feast of Candlemas is a good opportunity to speak of our Lady. Catholics in England should have a very special devotion to Mary since we belong to her in a very special manner. Whereas other countries gift themselves to our Lady through dedication and consecration, England belongs to Mary as her rightful and proper possession. England is our Lady's dowry.

A dowry is a gift or wedding portion brought by the wife to her new husband. This gift represents all that the new wife owns and thus signifies the gift of herself to her husband in lifelong marriage. In return, the husband pledges himself to his lady and promises to love her as himself.

Similarly, in the old days, a woman entering the religious life would come with a dowry, which was her contribution to the financial needs of the convent where she would become a bride of Jesus Christ. In return, her divine Spouse gifts Himself to her and pledges life-long care, protection and love.

The dowry, therefore, is a symbol of the woman's gift of herself to her spouse. It represents everything she has and everything she is. Her spouse's acceptance is the seal of his loving custody and care.

As the dowry of our Lady, England is, therefore, Mary's special gift to God in exchange for her divine espousals, through the operation of the Holy Ghost. The consequent birth of Her Divine Son is the sign that her offering was accepted and sealed in divine union. Mary is God's bride, the Mother of the Son of God. She, and all she owns, is His.

The first recorded use of the term "dowry" was by Arundel Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1399 he wrote: "The contemplation of the great mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Eternal Word chose the holy and Immaculate Virgin, that from her womb He should clothe Himself with flesh, has drawn all Christian nations to venerate her from whom came the first beginnings of our redemption. But we in England, being the servants of her special inheritance, and her

dowry, as we are commonly called, ought to surpass others in the fervour of her praise and devotion."

Note that in Arundel's time, England is "commonly called" our Lady's dowry. This indicates that the title was of a much older origin, which is unsurprising since England has always harboured a special devotion to Mary. Before the Reformation, English Marian devotion was legendary. England was intensely Marian, no doubt thanks to centuries of prayer and veneration. As far back as the 8th century, Bede the Venerable was able to write: "To her we sing - who bore in time the world's eternal king - and peerless in the human race has found - a mother's joys by virgin honours crowned."

Devotion alone, however, is not the reason why England is called our Lady's Dowry. In 1381, at a time of great political unrest (the Peasants' Revolt), King Richard II turned to Our Lady's for guidance and protection. On the feast of Corpus Christi in Westminster Abbey, he solemnly dedicated England to Mary with these words: "Dus tua Virgo pia haec est. Quare leges O Mariae - This is your Dowry, O Holy Virgin, therefore, do thou rule in it."

Mary's Dowry, therefore, is a title of England, established by an act of the King, which has never been rescinded by Monarch or Parliament. It remains, therefore, in effect and entitles England to a special call on our Lady's intercession.

In 1893, the bishops of the Province of Westminster solemnly reconsecrated England to our Lady and dedicated to her as her Dowry. The spirit of the consecration is clear. We must revitalize and renew our devotion to Mary if we hope for better things for our country. There is much to pray for, but also much to be obtained by prayer. Let us, dear parishioners, be very devoted to our Lady. It was and should remain the mark of an English Catholic.

**Fr. John Brucciani, Prior**

## Consecration and Dedication of England to the Mother of God

By Cardinal Vaughan and the Bishops of Westminster  
Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, 1893

*The final prayer is one formerly used in Saxon times, found in the Book of Cerne, which belonged to Ethelwald, Bishop of Sherbourne, A.D. 760.*

O, Immaculate Virgin Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ ! Mother of Grace, and Queen of the Kingdom of thy Son! Humbly kneeling before thee, we offer thee this country in which we live ! It once was thine. Before it was robbed of the holy Faith all its children were thy children, and thou wert honoured throughout its length and breadth as its Protectress and its Queen.

Again do we consecrate it to thee ; again do we dedicate it as thy own Dowry. We offer our own hearts, that their love and service may ever grow and increase. We offer all our brethren those multitudes who know thee so little or know thee not at all. May thy prayer bring back the country's ancient Faith ! May thy intercession lead us to a closer union with thy Divine Son. We consecrate ourselves to Him through thee. Obtain for us, and for England, thy Dowry, every grace and blessing, O clement, O loving, ) sweet Virgin Mary !

*V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.*

*R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

LET US PRAY.

Holy Mother of God, Virgin ever blest, O Mary Immaculate, pray for us, intercede for us, disdain not to help us. For we are confident and know for certain that you canst obtain all thou wilt from thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty, the King of Ages, who liveth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.



## England's Devotion to Mary in recent times

On the 20th May 1893 the Bishops of England and Wales issued a Pastoral Letter on "**The Consecration of England to the Mother of God and to the Prince of the Apostles.**"

On the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 1893, the Bishops of England and Wales, in response to the wishes of Pope Leo XIII, consecrated England to the Mother of God and Saint Peter the Apostle in the Oratory Church in London. The action was a direct result of an audience with Pope Leo XIII in which he recalled that this country had long been known as our Lady's Dowry, thereby giving papal approval to what had been a hallowed tradition.

Leo XIII spoke of: "the wonderful filial love which burnt within the hearts of your forefathers towards the great Mother of God... to whose service they consecrated themselves with such abundant proofs of devotion, that the Kingdom itself acquired the singular title of Mary's Dowry." He also recalled the special devotion paid to St Peter as the principal patron of the country.

The Pope expressed his desire that devotion to these "two patrons of the Faith" and "guardians of all virtue" be revived and a new consecration made by a solemn rite. He foresaw it bringing great benefit on the people at that time which marked a new beginning for the Catholic Faith in England.

As Cardinal Vaughan wrote in his Pastoral Letter: "To sum up all, it may be said that, in the mind of the Holy Father, and in our mind, the object and purpose of this solemn consecration of England to the great Mother of God and to Blessed Peter is to obtain an abundant outpouring of blessings upon the whole country and people of England, the blessing of unity in Faith, Hope and Charity, the blessing of such temporal plenty and prosperity as may redound to the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

In 1948 in Walsingham, Cardinal Griffin again consecrated England to our Lady, this time to her Most Immaculate Heart.

Paul VI, Jean Paul II and Benedict XVI have also recalled the England's special claim to our Lady's protection as her Dowry. \*

## Walsingham, Home to Our Lady

*“When England goes back to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England”* These prophetic words of Pope Leo XIII seem to indicate that Walsingham is intimately associated with the spiritual health of England.

Established in 1061, Walsingham was not the first Marian shrine in England. From as early as 701, pilgrims venerated our Lady at Evesham where she appeared to a poor peasant there, and then to St Egwin, bishop of Worcester, who founded Evesham Abbey at her request. The abbey would become one of the greatest Benedictine abbeys in the land.

Walsingham's story is as follows.

In the mid-11th century, Little Walsingham was a thriving village located halfway between the major city of Norwich and the wealthy town of King's Lynn. The lady of the manor was Lady Richeldis de Faverches, a Saxon noblewoman. Lady Richeldis was known for her piety, devotion to Mary, and good works.

In 1061, the Virgin Mary appeared to Lady Richeldis in a vision, showing her the Holy House in Nazareth (not yet in Loreto) and requesting that an exact replica be built in Walsingham and dedicated to the Annunciation so that *“all could share in the joy of my Annunciation.”*

Within the newly constructed Holy House was placed a wooden image of the Blessed Virgin and Child.

Lady Richeldis' son, Geoffrey de Faverches, who may have participated in the First Crusade (1096-99), left instructions in his will for a priory to be built around the Holy House. This was done by the Augustinians in the mid-12th century. The Slipper Chapel was built around 1340 as the last pilgrim chapel before Walsingham.

Helped by widespread enthusiasm for the Holy Land and devotion to Mary in medieval England, the shrine and priory at Little Walsingham steadily grew in popularity among pilgrims and monarchs alike. From Henry III (†1272) onwards, almost every English monarch paid their dues to our Lady of Walsingham.

King Henry VIII was the last monarch to visit the shrine. His first wife, Catherine of Aragon, was a frequent visitor as well. Tragically, it was under King Henry VIII that the shrine was suppressed, in 1538. The image of Our Lady of Walsingham and the Holy House were both burned in the presence of Cromwell, Chancellor of England.

In 1890, Charlotte Boyd bought the Slipper Chapel. Originally an Anglican, Miss Boyd converted to Catholicism after visiting the Marian shrines of Europe. In 1897, she donated it to Downside Abbey, the chapel was refounded by Pope Leo XIII, and it received the first Roman Catholic pilgrimage since the Middle Ages. In 1934, the Slipper Chapel was named the Roman Catholic National Shrine of Walsingham.

Walsingham is called "England's Nazareth" and, as its international fame grew, England gained the title of "Holy Land, Our Lady's Dowry". Whether the title originated in Walsingham (to be later confirmed by Richard II's dedication) is not known, but Walsingham became and remained the greatest Marian shrine in the land.

The oldest known record of the Walsingham story was written down in about 1465 in the reign of King Edward IV. It is called the Pynson Ballad.

*Walsingham – in you is built new Nazareth  
where shall be held in great memory,  
the great joy of my salutation,  
first of my joys – their foundation and origin,  
root of mankind's gracious redemption.  
When Gabriel gave me this news:  
to be mother through humility  
and God's Son conceive in virginity.*

(...)

*“England great cause have you to be glad, to be  
Compared to the land of promise, Sion.  
You attain by grace to stand in that degree  
Through this glorious Lady's support,  
To be called in every realm and region  
The Holy Land, Our Lady's Dowry;  
Thus are you name in old antiquity.*

*(Extracts)*

In the wake of the Reformation, the notion of England enjoying a special association or relationship with Mary became an important aspect of recusant Catholic spirituality. St Gregory's Seminary in Seville, had a painting of Our Lady with arms outstretched over the heads of English seminarians with the inscription, *“Anglia Dos Maria” - England is the Dowry of Mary.* At the base of the picture there is a further Latin inscription that reads; *“Britain, once converted, was the first one to give the scepter to Our Lady's Son, and from then on England has been known as the Dowry of Mary. Thus, we give back the gift, Holy Mother, and pray you to defend, mercifully and with justice all those who are trying to recover it.”* \*

## Ancient Walsingham Prayers

O gracious Lady, glory of Jerusalem, Cypress of Sion and Joy of Israel, Rose of Jericho and Star of Bethlehem, O gracious Lady, our asking do not repel, in mercy all women ever thou dost excel. Therefore, Blessed Lady, grant then thy great grace, to all that thee devoutly visit in this place. Amen

O alone of all women, Mother and Virgin, Mother most happy, Virgin most pure, now we sinful as we are, come to see thee who are all pure, we salute thee, we honour thee as how we may with our humble offerings; may thy Son grant us, that imitating thy most holy manners, we also, by the grace of the Holy Ghost may deserve spiritually to conceive the Lord Jesus in our inmost soul, and once conceived never to lose Him. Amen



### WEEKLY CONFESSIONS

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

### BENEDICTION & ROSARY

Sunday 18:00

**CHAPEL CLEANING - VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED.**

Supporting St. Michael's School

*Sunday Cake Sale*

SUNDAY 9TH FEBRUARY AFTER BOTH MASSES

## STOLE FEES

Stole fees (also called stipends) are offerings in consideration of expenses incurred by a chapel or priest in the course of ministering to the faithful. The stole fees are waived at the discretion of the priest in cases of hardship.

**Mass: £10 - Novena of Masses: £100**

**Gregorian of Masses: £400**

**Weddings £100 - Funerals £100 - Baptisms: £40**

	Liturgical Calendar February 2020	Masses
1	St. Ignatius of Antioch (1st Saturday)	7:30 / 12:00
2	<b>Purification of the BVM</b>	7:30 Low
	Candlemas Procession at 9:00	9:00 Sung
	<b>2nd Collection for District seminarians</b>	18:00 Benediction
3	Feria (Mass of 4th Sunday after Epiphany)	7:15
4	St. Andrew Corsini, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
5	St. Agatha, Virgin & Martyr	7:15
6	St. Titus, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
7	St. Romuald, Abbot (1st Fri - Holy Hour 6pm)	7:15 / 19:00
8	St. John of Matha, Conf.	7:30 / 12:00
9	<b>Septuagesima Sunday</b>	7:30 Low
	<b>Cakes Sale after both masses</b>	9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
10	St. Scholastica, Virgin	7:15
11	Our Lady of Lourdes	7:15
12	Seven Holy Servite Founders, Confessors	7:15
13	Feria	7:15
14	Feria	7:15
15	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30 / 12:00
16	<b>Sexagesima Sunday</b>	7:30 Low
	Priests absent (on retreat) from 17th - 22nd Feb.	9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
17	Feria	8:00
18	Feria	No mass
19	Feria	No mass
20	Feria	No mass
21	Feria	No mass
22	Chair of St. Peter	17:30
23	<b>Quinquagesima Sunday</b>	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
24	Feria	8:00
25	St. Matthias, Apostle	8:00
26	<b>Ash Wednesday (Fast Day)</b>	<b>8:00 / 19:00 (sung)</b>
27	Lenten Feria	8:00
28	Lenten Feria	8:00
29	Lenten Feria	7:30 / 12:00
1	<b>First Sunday of Lent</b>	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction



## Rosary for St. Michael's School

Thanks to parents' initiative, the holy rosary will be recited between Masses each Sunday for the protection and welfare of St. Michael's School. This extra spiritual help comes at a time when State intervention seeks to erode the fundamental parental right to their children's education.

Evening benediction and rosary will continue as usual.