

Thought for the Week
29th March 2020
Fifth Sunday in Lent (A)

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales decided that on this Sunday, 29th March, the re-dedication of England as the "Dowry of Mary" would take place.

The "Dowry Painting" of Our Lady of Walsingham, by Amanda de Pulford, was blessed by Pope Francis in preparation for the re-dedication at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

The first dedication was done by Richard II when England was in a state of turmoil and revolt; he visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Puy in Westminster Abbey to seek her guidance and protection. In thanksgiving, he gave the country as a gift - a dowry - to Our Lady for her continued protection and guidance.

The rector of the Shrine at Walsingham has reflected that the rededication of England as the "Dowry of Mary" will help the country face the personal and national challenges of our day.

Our Lady, who said "yes" to God, is our role model of what it is to have faith.

This weekend's Gospel is the third lesson of faith told by St John in this period of Lent. The accounts of the Samaritan woman at the well, the blind man's sight being restored and the raising of Lazarus show how faith is tested and then grows. .

Apart from the wonderful miracle of raising his dear friend, Lazarus, from the dead, what really struck me in this Gospel, was Martha's faith. She believed, even in the depths of her grief, in the resurrection.

So now in this testing time of "lockdown", it is ever more important to have faith and to turn to Mary, Our Mother, and hold each other in prayer.

Mary Lewis