



The Blessed Father Michael J. McGivney Honoris

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A Tribute to Mary McGivney

Father McGivney's mother, Mary Lynch was born in County Cavan, Ireland. Part of the mid-19th-century migration to the United States during the island's potato famine, she crossed the Atlantic and settled in the busy manufacturing city of Waterbury, Conn. There she met Patrick McGivney, who also was born in Cavan and came separately to America, becoming an iron molder in a Waterbury factory. The two married in 1850 in St. Peter's Church (soon to become the present Immaculate Conception Parish), where their first child, Michael, was baptized August 19, 1852, a week after his birth.

Mary would give birth to 12 more children, six of whom died young. Neither of those numbers was unusual at a time when children were seen as a boon and a blessing and before the advent of antibiotics.

Though we have little documentary evidence from the life of Mary Lynch McGivney, we can infer the following:

- She had a devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A small Sacred Heart image was among the effects found in the McGivney home. The item is now on display in the Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center in New Haven.
- She taught her children well. Her son Michael aced his elementary school exam and was advanced a few grades.
- She was as strong as she was pious. Giving birth to 13 and grieving the loss of six of them indicates heroic virtue by any standard. Her husband died in 1873, when Michael was 20, and Mary continued as matriarch of the family for another 15 years.
- Her prayers were powerful. All three sons who reached adulthood became priests, with the eldest on the path to sainthood.
- She was loved by the Blessed Mother. She died December 8, 1888, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Let us pay tribute to Mary McGivney's immense strength and quiet witness, while holding a firm hope that she is enjoying eternity with her beloved and blessed son Michael.

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