



Archdiocese of Boston

**Media Summary Articles Behind Paywalls**  
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*Note: wherever possible, we **highlight** references to the Archdiocese, the Cardinal and other affiliated organizations.*

**Boston Globe: Prayer service held at Virgin Mary statue burned in Dorchester**

By Jeremy Fox / July 15, 2020



Parishioners and community members gathered at St. Peter's Church in Dorchester on Wednesday evening to pray the rosary and ask for the intercession of the Virgin Mary after a statue depicting her was partly burned over the weekend.

"Mary's response, which is our response, is to call out in love and with mercy and forgiveness to whoever did this," the Rev. John Currie, pastor of St. Peter's, told the crowd of about 75, which included parishioners of many ages and backgrounds, as well as priests, nuns, and monks.

"Mary does not want us to respond in anger," Currie continued, "but rather to offer kindness and compassion to someone who is clearly a troubled soul. In essence, this is what Mary does every day. She brings us, her children, to encounter the abundant love and mercy found in her son Jesus."

To the person or people who set the fire, Currie said, "We love you, we forgive you, and we are here to serve and help you in any way you may need."

Plastic flowers set in the statue's praying hands were set aflame Saturday night, burning the face and upper body of the statue, officials said. The statue sits at the entrance to a parking lot for a teen center and therapeutic day school across the street from St. Peter's Church.

On Wednesday, the statue had been decorated with flowers that covered much of the damage, though charred areas were visible as the crowd recited the rosary in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Some held candles as they prayed.

Most wore face masks as they gathered around the statue in a fenced-in area. They lit candles, passed copies of the prayers and clutched rosary beads.

The vandalism, Currie said, provided “an opportunity to us as people of faith, united with people of goodwill in our neighborhood and beyond, to be an example in shining light of peace, hope, and love for our nation, our state, our city, and our neighborhoods during these very contentious and challenging times.”

Meanwhile, Boston fire and police are continuing to investigate the fire. Brian Alkins, a fire department spokesman, said investigators had spoken to neighbors and hoped to find surveillance cameras that may have captured that may have provided clues to the fire.

“We’re working with the church and the neighborhood trying to find out what happened,” Alkins said.

Police detectives assigned to Dorchester, arson investigators, and members of its civil rights unit are investigating the fire, according to Officer James Moccia, a department spokesman. As of Wednesday night, there had been no arrests, Moccia said.

Police ask anyone who has information to contact detectives at 617-343-4335 or call the anonymous tip line at 1-800-494-TIPS.