

May 15, 2020

Volume XII, Issue 5

ITE MISSA EST



A Newsletter from the Missions Office/Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio

Mary deserves the entire month of May in her honor

***To monthly mission donors:
Thank you for your support!***

On behalf of His Excellency Robert J. Brennan, the Bishop of Columbus, and Very Rev. Father Andrew Small, OMI, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, I would like to thank you for your prayers, sacrifices and financial support for the missions.

Every month of the year has its own beauty. The world seems to sleep during the winter months and seems to wake up in May. We start thinking about planting gardens and flowers, family picnics and making vacation plans.

The month of May is also a month dedicated to Mary. May brings back many of my beautiful childhood memories in my church in Balilihan, Bohol, Philippines. We have a beautiful May tradition to honor the Blessed Mother. During the day, children gather flowers from the fields and neighborhoods and in the evening, they offer them to Mary in a solemn ceremony with songs and prayers to the Holy Mother of God. The ceremony is concluded with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. At the end of May, Mary is crowned queen.

Why is May a month dedicated to Mary?

A brief explanation: For centuries, the Catholic Church has set aside the entire month of May to honor Mary, the Mother of God. Not just a day in May, but the entire month.

The custom spans both centuries and cultures, with roots going back as far as the Ancient Greeks. In Ancient Greece, May was dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of fertility.

In Ancient Rome, May was dedicated to Flora, goddess of blooms and blossoms. They celebrated ludi florales, or floral games. They asked the intercession of Flora for all that blooms.

In medieval times, similar customs abounded, all centering around the practice of expelling winter, as May 1st was considered the start of new growth. During this period, the tradition Tricesimum, or “Thirty-Day Devotion” to Mary came into being.

The idea of May specifically dedicated to Mary, can be traced to baroque times. The custom became widespread during the 19th century and remains in practice today.

The ways that Mary is honored in May are as varied as the people who honor her. It is common for parishes to have daily recitation of the Rosary during the month of May. It is a long-standing tradition to crown the statue of Mary during May – “May Crowning”. Often, the crown is made of beautiful blossoms, representing Mary’s beauty and virtue. This is to remind us to strive to imitate our Mother’s virtue in our own lives. May Crowning, in some areas, is a huge celebration. It is done before, during, or after Mass.

But May altars and crownings are not just “church” things. We can

and should do the same in our homes. When we echo the customs and traditions of the Church in our homes, we participate more fully in the life of the Church. Our homes are domestic churches.

It is a good thing to erect a prayer corner in our home, no matter how fancy or how simple it is. The main point is that it is designated for God, more specifically, for spending time with Him. Just as we need a proper atmosphere to sleep, we also need a proper place to pray.

It is a good thing to give Mary a special spot in your prayer corner. It can be a statue or a picture. Make it appealing. Make it a tribute to her beauty and virtue.

Then crown Mary in May. You can give her an actual, or spiritual crown. It could be a subtle gesture, or an ornate ceremony. The meaning is more important than the action. It can be in the beginning, or at the end of May, or in between. Just do it!

Why do it? Not because it is a long-standing tradition of the Church – though it is. Not because there are special graces connected to it – though there are. You do it because Mary is mother – your mother, my mother, everyone’s mother.

Do it because she cares for us, day in and day out. She cares for us without fail. She is interceding for us, even in tiniest matters. For these reasons and many others, Mary deserves the entire month of May in her honor.



What kind of memories our children will have of the year of the Coronavirus

An anonymous author wrote this imaginary future conversation between an old man, who was a child in 2020, and his grandchild.

Grandchild: "How old are you, Grandpa?"

Grandpa: "I'm 81, dear."

Grandchild: "So does that mean you were alive during the Coronavirus pandemic?"

Grandpa: "Yes, I was."

Grandchild: "Wow. That must have been horrible, Grandpa. We were learning about that at school this week. They told us about how all the schools had closed. And moms and dads couldn't go to work so didn't have as much money to do nice things".

"They said that you weren't able to go and visit your friends and family and couldn't go out anywhere. They told us that the shops and stores ran out of lots of things so you didn't have much bread, and flour, and toilet rolls".

"They said that summer holidays were cancelled. And they told us about all those thousands of people that got very sick and who died. They explained how hard all the doctors and nurses and all essential workers worked, and that lots of them died, too. That must have been so horrible, Grandpa!"

Grandpa - "Well, that is all correct. And I know that, because I read about it when I was older. But to tell you the truth, I remember it differently..."

"I remember playing in the garden for hours with mom and dad and having picnics outside and lots of barbecues. I remember making things and fishing with my Dad

and baking with my Mom. I remember making forts and learning how to do hand stands and back flips. I remember having quality time with my family".

"I remember Mom's favorite words becoming 'Hey, I've got an idea...' Rather than 'Maybe later or tomorrow I'm a bit busy'. I remember making our own bread and pastry. I remember having movie night three or four times a week instead of just one. It was a horrible time for lots of people - you are right. But I remember it differently."

Remember how our children will remember these times. Help them create happy memories of these times, so that through the awful headlines and emotional stories that they may come to read in future years – they may remember the happy times.

It was tough as child in the Philippines during WWII. But I have happy memories with my family. Thanks to my Mom and Dad.

I pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. God bless you!

Pope Francis invites all Christians to pray the 'Our Father'

Amid the global crisis triggered by the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis invites all the Christians of the world, to pray together the Our Father, the prayer that Jesus taught us.

This is his prayer:

"As trustful children we turn to the Father. We do it every day, several times a day; but right now we wish to beg mercy for mankind, so sorely tried by the Coronavirus pandemic. And we do this together, Christians of every Church and Community,

of every tradition, of every age, language and nation.

We pray for the sick and their families; for health workers and those who help them; for the authorities, law enforcement agencies and volunteers; for the ministers of our communities.

Today many of us celebrate the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary, when her humble and total "Behold" reflected the "Behold" of the Son of God. We too entrust ourselves, with full confidence, to the hands of God, and with one heart and one soul we pray: "Our Father..."

Pope Francis' May Prayer Intention:

For Deacons: We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

A joke a priest can tell... LOL!

In the foyer of a church, a young boy was looking at a plaque with the names of men and women who had died in various wars.

He asked the pastor, "Who are these people?"

The pastor said, "Those are members from our church who died in service."

The boy asked, "The early service or the second service?"

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