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My dear parishioners:

In Catholic tradition, the month of May is dedicated to Mary, the Blessed Virgin Mother of God and the Mother of the Church. There is no human person in all of salvation history that deserves our devotion, honor and imitation more than St. Mary, the mother of our Lord. As the bishops of the Church stated at the Second Vatican Council, "Devotion to Mary proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God, and by which we are moved to filial love toward our mother and to imitation of her virtues" (Lumen Gentium, 67). There are three elements which enter into our devotion to St. Mary: 1. **Veneration**, or the reverent recognition of the dignity of the Virgin Mother of God; 2. **Invocation**, or the calling upon our Lady for her motherly and queenly intercession; and 3. **Imitation**, or the desire to conform our lives to that of the Blessed Virgin by following in the path of her holiness.

Veneration: Mary lived a degree of supernatural holiness that was most extraordinary. Both the scriptures and the teaching of the Church indicate that Mary received spiritual gifts in an unparalleled manner. The Archangel Gabriel told her that she was "full of grace", a salutation reserved only to her in all of Sacred Scripture. As Pope Pius IX stated in his encyclical on Mary entitled *Ineffabilis Deus*, "God's grace was bestowed on Mary in such a wonderful manner that she would always be free from absolutely every stain of sin, and that, all beautiful and perfect, she might display such fullness of innocence and holiness that under God none greater would be known".

By a unique grace of God, Mary was kept free from the stain of original sin. This singular gift would allow her to be the perfect vessel for the incarnation. However, her freedom from the assaults of concupiscence alone would not have been sufficient for her to remain sinless throughout her life, for the angels were also free from the stain of Adam's sin yet they were still able to revolt against God, as we see in Satan and his minions. Two other special factors enabled Mary to live the fullness of her life with impeccable holiness. The first was her reception of special and extraordinary graces and the second was her constant living in the awareness of God in her life. Mary, as "full of grace" was the perfect vessel for the Christ to be born into the world and her fiat (total yes) allowed her to remain spotless throughout her life. This extraordinary life of grace would have an equally grace-filled extraordinary ending as at the moment of her death she would be assumed body and soul into heaven. We must never cease to venerate St. Mary for her unique place in all of history.

Invocation: In Catholic spiritual theology, we make a distinction between "adoration", "devotion" and "veneration". Adoration belongs to God alone. It is God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit whom we adore in our private devotions as well as our public sacramental celebrations. We venerate or reverence the saints and angels. By having a free will, the saints and angels have chosen to follow God with heroic virtue. Our veneration to the saints and angels is the means by which we call upon the holy ones of heaven to assist us in our daily lives here on earth. Because of Mary's unique status of grace, we have a heightened veneration or **devotion** to Mary; in Latin a *hyperdulia*, to distinguish it both from *latria* (adoration) and *dulia* (veneration).

We express our devotion to Mary in particular practices of piety, both liturgical (feasts, litanies, etc.) and non-liturgical (the rosary, novenas, pilgrimages, private prayer, the scapular, etc.). In each of these devotions we are expressing our deep and abiding love of the Mother of our Lord and invoking her protection and guidance in our lives.

The writings of both the Second Vatican Council and recent popes (Pius XII, Paul VI and John Paul II) have cautioned the faithful to ensure that we have a correct balance in Mariology (the theological study of Mary) and Marian devotion (the means by which we express our love of Mary). Though God has used the mother of his son to remind the faithful of the message of salvation through apparitions and allocutions, these must be approved by the Church (to whom Christ left the gift of the Holy Spirit to "lead us to all truth"). The faithful must be very cautious not to be drawn into the personal spiritualities of people who believe they are receiving "messages" from the Blessed Mother. Our devotion to Mary, the Mother of God is secure when we are engaged in the most traditional Marian devotions handed down to us by the Church.

(Continued in next column)

May 5 – May 13, 2018
Readings and Mass Intentions

Saturday, May 5 4:30pm—Mass
 Acts 16:1-10/Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 5/Jn 15:18-21
Mass intention for Nellie Leger

Sunday, May 6 9:00am—Mass
 Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 [cf. 2b]/
 1 Jn 4:7-10 or 1 Jn 4:11-16/Jn 15:9-17 or Jn 17:11b-19
Mass intention for the People of the Parish

Monday, May 7 4:30pm—Mass
 Acts 16:11-15/Ps 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b [cf. 4a]/Jn 15:26--16:4a
Mass intention for Lammy Sittig

Tuesday, May 8 No Mass
 Acts 16:22-34/Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8 [7c]/
 Jn 16:5-11

Wednesday, May 9 4:30pm—Mass
 Acts 17:15, 22--18:1/Ps 148:1-2, 11-12, 13, 14/
 Jn 16:12-15
Mass intention for Thelma Drouet

Thursday, May 10 8:30am—Mass
 Acts 18:1-8/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [cf. 2b]/Jn 16:16-20

Friday, May 11 9:30am—Communion Service
 Acts 18:9-18/Ps 47:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 [8a]/Jn 16:20-23

Saturday, May 12 4:30pm—Mass
 Acts 18:23-28/Ps 47:2-3, 8-9, 10 [8a]/Jn 16:23b-28
Mass intention for Thelma Drouet

Sunday, May 13 9:00am—Mass
 Acts 1:1-11/Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 [6]/Eph 1:17-23
Mass intention for the People of the Parish

**The Lord has revealed to the nations
 his saving power. (Ps 98)**

(continued)

Imitation: The Blessed Virgin Mary is titled not only the Mother of God but also the Mother of the Church. The conception of the Church occurred when Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit and our Lord began his earthly life within the loving embrace of her womb. Christ is the head of the Church, which is his body. By the very fact that Mary is the mother of Christ the head, she is truly the mother of the whole Body.

As the spiritual children of Mary, we must strive to imitate her holiness in our lives. Just as Mary was in perfect obedience to her Son and cared for him from the crib to the cross, so must we strive to follow her holy example by being perfectly faithful in our lives to Christ and his Church. We must ensure that there is no contradiction in our lives. We are not fully obedient to Christ if we choose not to be fully obedient to his Church.

During this month of May, let us make quality time for our spiritual mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through our prayer and imitation of her life may we be drawn ever more closely to the mother of our Lord, whose singular "yes" to God ushered in salvation for the world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Frank H. Rossi
 Pastor

Sun. May 6 <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i>	Mon. May 7 4:30pm—Mass	Tues. May 8	Wed. May 9 11:00am— <i>Stewardship Meeting</i> 4:00pm—Rosary 4:30pm—Mass	Thurs. May 10 8:30am—Mass 9:00 <i>Divine Mercy Chaplet</i>	Fri. May 11 9:30am— <i>Communion Service</i>	Sat. May 12 3:45-4:15pm— <i>Confessions</i> 4:30pm— <i>Vigil Mass</i> 6:30pm— <i>Spanish Mass</i> <i>Blessing of Mothers</i>
Sun. May 13 <i>Ascension of the Lord</i>	Mon. May 14 4:30pm—Mass	Tues. May 15	Wed. May 16 4:00pm—Rosary 4:30pm—Mass	Thurs. May 17 8:30am—Mass 9:00 <i>Divine Mercy Chaplet</i>	Fri. May 18 9:30am— <i>Communion Service</i>	Sat. May 19 3:45-4:15pm— <i>Confessions</i> 4:30pm— <i>Vigil Mass</i> 6:30pm— <i>Spanish Mass</i>

Honoring our Graduates

The parish would like to honor all parishioners graduating from high school and college/university this year, with a blessing at the 9:00 am Mass on Sunday, May 20. Please provide the pastor/parish office with the names of graduates and whether they are graduating from high school or university so that we can prepare a parish gift to honor our graduates.

Newman Connection

Statistically 80% of U.S. college-age Catholic young adults stop actively practicing their faith at some point in their college years. Only less than half of these Catholics will return to the practice at some time in their adult life. Newman Connection is a Catholic non-profit organization which attempts to support college enrolled Catholics in continuing to practice their faith by connecting them with the Newman Center of the college they are attending. Parishioners with children who will be attending college in the fall, or are presently attending college, are asked to provide the parish office/pastor with the parishioner names and colleges so that the Newman Connection can provide this information to the colleges. Let us do all we can to help keep our young adult parishioners connected to their Catholic faith.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for: Nelda Leathem, Maureen Peltier, Jared Dean, Emma Duncan, Laura Moore, Frank Cuccia, Sr., Michael Strother (Fr. Michaels' father), Rosemary Urban; Rick Vining, Merle Kucera, Rebecca Duckworth, Kiley Bourque, Chase Ellis, Kimberly Ellis, Lloyd Balestra, Father Bill Ryan, Avery Madison, Evelyn Schima, Billy Bowlin, Jr., Mitzi McElvain

Repose of the soul: Jim Higginbotham; Mandy Boudreaux, Todd Puckett

Names will remain on the prayer list for two weeks. You may list names in the Prayer book in the vestibule of the Church and your intention will be offered at daily Mass.

Weekly Stewardship

April 28 & 29 Weekly Offering \$ 3,256.75
 Average Weekly Cost \$ 3,152.00
 Excess/Deficit \$ 104.75

Thank you for your generosity.

Adult Faith Formation Classes

Sundays after Mass

4 Signs of Dynamic Catholics by Matthew Kelly
 Led by Madeline Arnett

The 26th Annual Third Age Day Celebration

Immaculate Conception Church and Hall
 4100 Lincoln @ Washington, Groves, TX
 Tuesday, May 15, 2018.

All who are 50 or older are invited to attend this diocesan-wide celebration for seniors. The day's events include Mass with Bishop Curtis Guillory, a living rosary prior to Mass, lunch, fellowship, entertainment, and door prizes. Registration will begin at 8:00am, the living rosary will start at 9:15am, Mass at 10:00am, and lunch will follow Mass. Tickets for the luncheon are \$12 each, and are available through your parish 3rd Age Coordinator or from Catholic Charities, [2780 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont](http://2780EastexFreeway.Beaumont). Ticket requests after May 1 are subject to space availability. For more information, please contact Coquese Williams at (409)924-4415 or cwilliams@catholiccharitiesbmt.org.

