

From the Pastor
May 3, 2020
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY - THE MONTH OF OUR LADY

The Month of May: As everyone is well aware, the month of May is the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We may ask ourselves why is such the case? After all, each of the months of the year brings around her glorious feasts. Why is August not the month of Our Lady when we celebrate the Assumption? Why is December not the month of Our Lady when we celebrate her Immaculate Conception? What is it about May which makes it the month of Our Lady? Quite, simply it is because the month of May is the most beautiful month both in the natural and supernatural order. And Our Lady is the most beautiful of all the Good God's creation.

May is the most beautiful month in the natural order. It is in May that the season of spring is first perceived. Although spring begins at the vernal equinox toward the end of March, it is not until May that we see the days grow long, brighter and warmer. The earth breaks forth in full life and the birds sing for joy. And although even May sometimes may be quite harsh, nonetheless, we know that soon the warm weather will be with us. It is therefore the month of hope and promise.

May is also the most beautiful month in the supernatural order. Almost always the whole month of May is in the Easter season when the joy-filled alleluia rings through our churches. This year 2019 that is the case. All of May is in the Easter season. The feast of the Ascension is always in May (except once or twice every forty years or so) and often, the Feast of Pentecost is in May. May also brings with it the celebration of many of the saints. Three of the apostles have their feastdays in May: St. Philip, St. James and St. John. The Holy Archangel St. Michael's apparition on Monte Gargano is celebrated in May. And so dear to us here at St. Paul's, the feast of St. Philip Neri (May 26th) is celebrated in May. His holy image and relic adorn our Daily Mass Chapel. On May 24th we celebrate the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians. It is that statue of Our Lady which we see in the front of the Church.

During the month of May we should make every effort to offer a gift to Our Lady each day. Not the kind of gift one buys at the store. We should offer a spiritual gift. One day we could offer her the Rosary well said, another day a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, another day a visit to an elderly or lonely person, etc. You see there are as many gifts as there are days in the month.

St. Gabriel Possenti was a member of the Passionist order (Many may know the Passionists from their monastery in Jamaica) who died at the age of 24 in 1862. Here is his advice to us: Love Mary! She does not look to see what kind of person you have been. She simply comes to a heart that wants to love her. She comes quickly and opens her merciful heart to you, embraces you and consoles and serves you.

Mother's Day: As we know, next Sunday is Mother's day. May God bless and reward all the mothers in our parish. A mother gives of herself completely to her family and very often in unnoticed and unseen ways. The only one of the Ten Commandments which has a blessing

attached to it is the Fourth Commandment – Honor thy father and thy mother.

A mother is a person who receives a child into her own flesh, providing for him the stuff of his own body. And yet, the Christian mother is called to more: to receive the child in Christ's name.

So many of the saints of the Church were mothers who exemplified the beatitudes. St. Elizabeth of Portugal was a peace maker. She rode out between the warring armies of her husband and son and restored peace. St. Matilda meekly removed herself from her own home rather than stir up her son's anger. St. Margaret Clitherow, on the eve of her brutal martyrdom, sent her shoes to her daughter with the clear message, follow my path. St. Monica relentlessly prayed her son St. Augustine into the Church. Augustine wrote in his Confessions, "She wept more for me than mothers weep over their children's dead bodies." May these saints who were mothers ever intercede for our dear mothers!

Please be sure to enroll your mothers (living or deceased) in the Mother's Day Novena of Masses.

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda