

From the Pastor
May 1, 2022
The Third 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. The feast of the Ascension is always in May (except one or twice every forty years or so) and more often than not, 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 feastsdays 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.

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.*

This wonderful month will bring many graces and activities to our parish:

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: Our second graders received First Holy Communion on May 7th. God bless them and their families.

CONFIRMATION: On Saturday May 21st, our confirmation students will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Bishop William Murphy, the Bishop-Emeritus of Rockville Centre will administer the sacrament.

The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Next Sunday May 8th at the 1030AM Mass the children who have made their First Holy Communion this year will be enrolled in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The scapular is Our Lady's own gift to us. On July 16th 1253 she appeared to St. Simon Stock in Aylesford, England, and presented the scapular to him. She promised many graces to those who would wear it faithfully. (I will write more about the scapular near the fest of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in July). May our little ones always be under the patronage and protection of the Holy Mother of God. They will also crown the statue of Our Blessed Mother after the Mass.

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.

Marian Guild and Knights of Columbus Communion Breakfast: Immediately after the 10.30 Mass on Sunday May 15th we will have our Communion Breakfast. Our guest speakers will be the Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist. Please make every effort to attend.

All in all, May will be a beautiful month at St. Paul's both in the supernatural and natural order:

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda