

From the Pastor
May 2, 2021
The Fifth Sunday of Easter

MAY - THE MONTH OF OUR LADY

Dear Parishioners of Our Beloved St. Paul:

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 once 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 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.

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: Just yesterday our second graders received First Holy Communion. May God bless them and their families.

CONFIRMATION: On Saturday May 22nd , our confirmation students will receive the sacrament of Confirmation reward our catechists and aides who give so much of their time to the formation of our young people. May God bless Br. Joseph Bellizzi, S.M., principal of Chaminade High School and Director of Religious Education here at St. Paul's. May God bless Mrs. Louise Shannon our Faith Formation Administrator.

The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Next Sunday May 9th 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 today we will have our Communion Breakfast. Our guest speaker is Father John Crozier. 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:

Finances: We all know how Covid has impacted every facet of our lives: society, culture, sport, the nation, and world. Many find themselves in financial hardship. Many of our parishioners have

lost their employment. Many of our parishioners who have their own businesses have seen them diminish, if not totally collapse. That is also the case with St. Paul. At the end of Fiscal Year 2020 (August 31, 2020) our operating deficit was **\$81,940**. This reflects six months of Covid since FY 2020 began September 1, 2019. We are now at the same point. We are 6 months into FY 2021 which began on September 1, 2020. Our current operating deficit nearing the close of the second quarter is **\$33,888**.

The major components of this Revenue deficit to date are three:

1. \$43,000 decrease in offertory collections and
2. \$47,000 loss from our canceled Fund-Raising Events. Each autumn we have our Gala Casino Night and each Spring our Golf Outing. These fundraisers are necessary for the health of our parish.
3. In addition, our Christmas collection was down over \$31,000.

I am most grateful to all of you. Our Easter Collection was the best we had in over five years, **\$68,787**.

I would ask all of you to prayerfully consider this request I made about a month ago. Please increase your offering 25%. That means if you are putting a dollar in the envelope, you would consider putting in a dollar and a quarter. If you are putting in five dollars you would put in six dollars and 25cents if you are putting in \$10, \$12.50 and if you are putting in \$20, you would put in \$25. Such an increase in our donations to the Church would help the parish enormously.

In my forty years as a priest, I have never spoken in such a plain way about what we need. So many of our good parishioners ask me, "What can I do?" **I HAVE JUST TOLD YOU WHAT YOU COULD DO, INCREASE YOUR OFFERING BY 25%**

May God reward you and bless you. Your sacrifice will ensure the financial health of the parish and allow us to remain a light on this *little hill for generations to come*.

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda