

May

Month of Mary

May has traditionally been the month Catholics devote to honoring Mary. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says of her:

From among the descendants of Eve, God chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of his Son. "Full of grace," Mary is "the most excellent fruit of redemption" (SC 103): from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin, and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life. Mary is truly "Mother of God" since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself. Mary "remained a virgin in conceiving her Son, a virgin in giving birth to him, a virgin in carrying him, a virgin in nursing him at her breast, always a virgin" (St. Augustine, Sermon 186, 1: PL 38,999): with her whole being she is "the handmaid of the Lord" (Lk 1:38). The Virgin Mary "cooperated through her free faith and obedience in human salvation" (LG 56). She uttered her yes "in the name of all human nature" (St. Thomas Aquinas, STH III, 30, 1). By her obedience she became the new Eve, mother of the living. (CCC nos. 508-511)

The Rosary

The rosary is a blend of contemplative and vocal prayer. While saying the prayers, we meditate on the mysteries of the lives of Jesus and Mary. There are 15 mysteries divided distinctly into 3 parts, each containing 5 mysteries.

The rosary is usually prayed on a string of beads. The practice of using a string of beads as an aid in meditation and prayer is an ancient one. Early monks, wishing to say a certain number of prayers, counted the prayers by moving small pebbles or stones from one container to another. Later, strings of beads were used for counting. During the Middle Ages, the rosary (which we know today as the Dominican Rosary) evolved and became one of the most popular sacramentals of the church. The word "rosary" is from the Latin *rosarium*, or rose garden. It signified a wreath or garland and was seen as a special favor or presentation to our Lord and our Lady.

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation of the Angel to Mary

The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth

Jesus Is Born in a Stable in Bethlehem

The Presentation of the Child Jesus in Jerusalem

Jesus Is Lost in the Temple and then Later Found by Mary and Joseph

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden

Jesus Is Scourged at the Pillar

Jesus Is Crowned with Thorns

Jesus Carries His Cross to Calvary

Jesus Is Crucified and Dies on the Cross

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection of Jesus

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven

The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the Apostles

The Assumption of Mary into Heaven

The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

The Litany in Honor of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Holy Mother of God,*

Holy Virgin of virgins,

Mother of Christ,

Mother of divine grace,

Mother of the Church,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most amiable,

Mother most admirable,

Mother of good counsel,

Mother of our Creator,

Mother of our Savior,

Virgin most prudent,

Virgin most venerable,

Virgin most renowned,

Virgin most powerful,

Virgin most merciful,

Virgin most faithful,

Mirror of justice,

Seat of wisdom,

Cause of our joy,

Spiritual vessel,

Vessel of honor,

Singular vessel of devotion,

Mystical rose,

Tower of David,

Tower of ivory,

House of gold,

Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of angels,
Queen of patriarchs,
Queen of prophets,
Queen of apostles,
Queen of martyrs,
Queen of confessors,
Queen of virgins,
Queen of all saints,
Queen conceived without original sin,
Queen assumed into heaven,
Queen of the most holy rosary,
Queen of peace,

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

That we may be made worth of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Grant, we beg you, O Lord God, that we Your servants may enjoy lasting health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary ever virgin, be delivered from present sorrow and enter into the joy of eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

* *Pray for us* is said after every invocation.

May Crowning

A favorite memory of many adults is the May Crowning processions that they witnessed in their childhood. Statues of Mary can be crowned with simple crowns made of paper or real flowers. The crowning can be accompanied by songs from the missalette in honor of Mary or with a decade of the rosary recited together. Children could be encouraged to keep flowers in front of the statue of Mary during the month of May.

Letter to Mary

The children can write a letter to Mary, seal it in an envelope and place it at the feet of the statue in Church.

Ascension

When Jesus ascended into heaven, forty days after his resurrection, his humanity entered irreversibly into divine glory where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand. Christ has opened to us access

to the "Father's house" so that we, his members, might have confidence that we too shall go where he, our Head and Source, has preceded us. As "high priest of the good things to come" he is the center and the principal actor of the liturgy that honor the Father in heaven.

"Being seated at the Father's right hand signifies the inauguration of the Messiah's Kingdom, the fulfillment of the prophet Daniel's vision concerning the Son of man: 'To him was given dominion, and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.' After this event the apostles became witnesses of the 'kingdom [that] will have no end.'" (CCC no. 664)

Call your parish and find out on what day the Ascension is celebrated. This is an important day to participate in Mass.

Sharing the Good News

Pretend you lived around the time Jesus lived. You saw Jesus ascend into heaven. He was your friend. You had listened to him preach. You had been at the Last Supper. You had seen him risen from the dead. Write a letter to a friend who had never met Jesus. How would you explain to him who Jesus was and what he meant for the world? How did knowing Jesus change your life?

Go and Preach--Where?

Make a list of ways or draw pictures showing how you can tell others about Jesus. (e.g., say prayers before meals, tell a friend to say a prayer when he/she is lonely, etc.)

Where Did They Go?

Research the lives of the twelve apostles and find out where they went to tell people about Jesus after he ascended into heaven. You'll be surprised where they ended up!

Pentecost Sunday

Seven weeks after Easter we celebrate Pentecost when Christ's Passover was fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and Mary. Since that day the Kingdom of Christ has been open to those who believe in him. By his coming, which never ceases, the Spirit causes the world to enter into the "last days," the time of the Church, the Kingdom already inherited but not yet consummated. This is the Birthday of the Church.

Before the Holy Spirit came, the Apostles were huddled in prayer with Mary in the Cenacle. They were afraid and uncertain of what was going to happen. When the Holy Spirit came, tongues of fire appeared above each of their heads. The apostles suddenly became brave and courageous. Peter went right out to a huge crowd of people from many different countries who spoke many different languages and began to boldly preach about Jesus. Everyone understood Peter in their own language! Since the coming of the Holy Spirit the Church has always spoken like Peter, telling people of every nation and every language that Jesus is alive and inviting them to be his followers.

Headline News

Read the story in Acts 2: 1-11 and rewrite it as if you were a journalist present in the crowd. Interview a few people and even ask Peter what happened when he was inside before coming out to speak to the people.

Spirit of Courage

Write a one-line prayer you can say to the Holy Spirit when you are afraid (e.g., afraid of the dark, afraid of bad dreams, afraid of walking home from school). Put it in a special place where you can find it whenever you need it.



