

May- Month of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God



Mary As the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary has a unique position among the saints, indeed, among all creatures. She is exalted, yet still one of us

"Redeemed by reason of the merits of her Son and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God, by which account she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. At the same time, however, because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all those who are to be saved." (USCCB)

Mary embraces God's will and freely chooses to cooperate with God's grace, thereby fulfilling a crucial role in God's plan of salvation. Throughout the centuries, the Church has turned to the Blessed Virgin in order to come closer to Christ. Many forms of piety toward the Mother of God developed that help bring us closer to her Son. In these devotions to Mary, "while the Mother is honoured, the Son, through whom all things have their being and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, is rightly known, loved and glorified and all His commands are observed." The Church honours her as the Mother of God, looks to her as a model of perfect discipleship, and asks for her prayers to God on our behalf.

May as a month of our Lady was strengthened especially by the Rosary Encyclicals of Leo XIII beginning in 1883 and concluding in 1889, the Pontiff wrote twelve encyclicals and five apostolic letters on the Rosary.

"The May devotion [to our Lady] in its present form originated at Rome where Father Latomia of the Roman College of the Society of Jesus, to counteract infidelity and immorality among the students, made a vow at the end of the eighteenth century to devote the month of May to Mary. From Rome the practice spread to the other Jesuit colleges and thence to nearly every Catholic church of the Latin rite (Albers, "Bluethenkränze", IV, 531 sq.). This practice is the oldest instance of a devotion extending over an entire month." (Catholic Encyclopedia, "Special Devotions for Months")

For the Grace of Love

O Mary, my dear Mother, how much I love thee! And yet in reality how little! Thou dost teach me what I ought to know, for thou teachest me what Jesus is to me and what I ought to be for Jesus. Dearly beloved Mother, how close to God thou art, and how utterly filled with Him! In the measure that we know God, we remind ourselves of thee. Mother of God, obtain for me the grace of loving my Jesus; obtain for me the grace of loving thee!

An Explanation of a Prayer for the Grace of Love

This prayer was written by Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930), the secretary of state for Pope Saint Pius X. It reminds us that Mary is the perfect example of the Christian life, who in her own actions shows us true love for Christ.

To Mary, Refuge of Sinners

Hail, most gracious Mother of mercy, hail, Mary, for whom we fondly yearn, through whom we obtain forgiveness! Who would not love thee? Thou art our light in uncertainty, our comfort in sorrow, our solace in the time of trial, our refuge from every peril and temptation. Thou art our sure hope of salvation, second only to thy only-begotten Son; blessed are they who love thee, our Lady! Incline, I beseech thee, thy ears of pity to the entreaties of this thy servant, a miserable sinner; dissipate the darkness of my sins by the bright beams of thy holiness, in order that I may be acceptable in thy sight.

An Explanation of the Prayer to Mary, Refuge of Sinners

This prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary sounds a familiar theme: Mary as the font of mercy and forgiveness, through whom we obtain forgiveness of our sins and protection from temptation.

A Petition to Mary (by St. Alphonsus Liguori)

Most holy Virgin Immaculate, my Mother Mary, to thee who art the Mother of my Lord, the queen of the universe, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I who am the most miserable of all sinners, have recourse this day. I venerate thee, great queen, and I thank thee for the many graces thou has bestowed upon me even unto this day; in particular for having delivered me from the hell which I have so often deserved by my sins. I love thee, most dear Lady; and for the love I bear thee, I promise to serve thee willingly forever and to do what I can to make thee loved by others also. I place in thee all my hopes for salvation; accept me as thy servant and shelter me under thy mantle, thou who art the Mother of mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or at least obtain for me the strength to overcome them until death. From thee I implore a true love for Jesus Christ. Through thee I hope to die a holy death. My dear Mother, by the love thou bearest to Almighty God, I pray thee to assist me always, but most of all at the last moment of my life. Forsake me not then, until thou shalt see me safe in heaven, there to bless thee and sing of thy mercies through all eternity. Such is my hope. Amen.

Act of Reparation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

O blessed Virgin, Mother of God, look down in mercy from heaven, where thou art enthroned as Queen, upon me, a miserable sinner, thine unworthy servant. Although I know full well my own unworthiness, yet in order to atone for the offenses that are done to thee by impious and blasphemous tongues, from the depths of my heart I praise and extol thee as the purest, the fairest, the holiest creature of all God's handiwork. I bless thy holy name, I praise thine exalted privilege of being truly Mother of God, ever virgin, conceived without stain of sin, co-redemptrix of the human race. I bless the Eternal Father who chose thee in an especial way for His daughter; I bless the Word Incarnate who took upon Himself our nature in thy bosom and so made thee His Mother; I bless the Holy Spirit who took thee as His bride. All honor, praise and thanksgiving to the ever-blessed Trinity,

who predestined thee and loved thee so exceedingly from all eternity as to exalt thee above all creatures to the most sublime heights. O Virgin, holy and merciful, obtain for all who offend thee the grace of repentance, and graciously accept this poor act of homage from me thy servant, obtaining likewise for me from thy divine Son the pardon and remission of all my sins. Amen.

An Explanation of the Act of Reparation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Since the Protestant Reformation, many Christians have not simply downplayed devotion to Mary but have attacked Marian doctrines (such as her perpetual virginity) that are attested from the earliest days of the Church. In this prayer, we offer praise to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the Holy Trinity in reparation for offences against the Mother of God.

Invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Thou who wast a virgin before thy delivery, pray for us.

Hail Mary, etc.

Thou who wast a virgin in thy delivery, pray for us.

Hail Mary, etc.

Thou who wast a virgin after thy delivery, pray for us.

Hail Mary, etc.

My Mother, deliver me from mortal sin.

Hail Mary, etc. (three times).

Mother of love, of sorrow and of mercy, pray for us.

Remember, O Virgin Mother of God, when thou shalt stand before the face of the Lord, that thou speak favorable things in our behalf and that He may turn away His indignation from us.

Thou art my Mother, O Virgin Mary: keep me safe lest I ever offend thy dear Son, and obtain for me the grace to please Him always and in all things. Amen.

An Explanation of the Invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary

This short prayer is very similar in structure to the Angelus, and, like the Angelus, it includes repetitions of the Hail Mary. In it, we invoke the Blessed Virgin Mary for her help in safeguarding our virtue. The first verses recall Mary's own chastity (through the doctrine of her perpetual virginity), setting her up as our example. Then the prayer turns to our request: that Mary may obtain for us the grace to avoid mortal sin. This is a very good prayer to pray at times when we are feeling tempted and afraid of falling into sin.