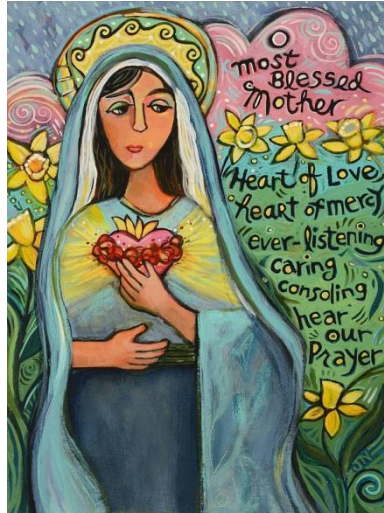


MAY, THE MONTH OF

Who was Mary?

Mary was born in the north of Palestine, in a small village called Nazareth. She brought Jesus into the world. She became the most amazing thing a person can be: **The Mother of God**. She is now known as a Mother to us all, a spiritual Mother.

MARY



What Pope Francis says....

In March 2015, Pope Francis visited Naples. As he addressed his congregation, he told them that the best way to make sure Jesus remained at the centre of their lives was to "ask His mother to take you to him". In this simple phrase, Pope Francis, captures Mary's role within the Church.

Two Special days during May....

May 13 - Our Lady of Fatima

May 31 - Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary

Prayers to Mary

Hail Mary
The Angelus
Hail Holy Queen
The Magnificat
The Memorare
Loving Mother of the Redeemer

Why is May the Month of Mary?

In the northern hemisphere and in classic western culture, May is when Spring begins and the earth blooms. In ancient Greece May was dedicated to the goddess of fertility, Artemis, and in ancient Roman culture, May was dedicated to Flora, the goddess of blooms, or blossoms. The ancient traditions celebrating May as a time of new life provided a connection to motherhood. This connection eventually led Christians to adopt the month of May as the time to celebrate our mother, Mary.

In 1965, Pope Paul VI published an encyclical, *Mense Maio* ("The Month of May") which details the Church's special devotion to Mary during May.

How is May, the Month of Mary marked in churches?

- Daily recitation of the Rosary
- Creating a special May altar with a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of her special month
- The statue of Mary is crowned during May - a custom known as May Crowning. Often, the crown is made of beautiful blossoms representing Mary's beauty and virtue.
- Special prayers to Mary are said (see prayers to Mary above)

Why is Mary important?

Mary holds a special place in the life of the Catholic Church because she displayed exceptional qualities and is therefore an ideal role model to follow. Mary's 'yes' made it possible for Jesus to enter the world. She was his first disciple and at the wedding in Cana we see that she was the first person to believe that he could perform miracles. At the cross when Jesus said to John "Here is your mother" Catholics believe Jesus is presenting Mary as a Mother to us all, a spiritual Mother. Mary lived a life of faith and trust in God, despite great suffering. She is an example for those who wish to follow Jesus, and as a Mother, she is honoured.

NOTE: Many people believe that Catholics worship Mary. This is not the case. Only God can be worshipped. Instead, Catholics can, and should, revere (honour and admire profoundly and respectfully) Mary.

