



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Office of Sacred Worship

LITURGY NOTES



MAY, THE MONTH OF OUR MOTHER

By: Father Shane Deman, Vice Rector for Formation, Kenrick-Glennon Seminary

During the month of May, we are surrounded by many new forms of life. Budding trees and fresh flowers can be readily seen, and the arrival of spring gives the Easter season a sense of freshness and vitality. This time of year is also the beginning of the planting season for rural communities, during which Christians often turn to the Blessed Mother for her maternal protection over fields and gardens, asking that through her prayers, the Lord will grant us an abundant harvest. Yet many other Marian traditions also mark this month of May, including public recitations of the Rosary and May Crowning liturgies.

Given the symbols of new life that are abundant during the month of May, it is fitting that this time be dedicated to Mary. For as the Mother of the Redeemer, she is the source of new life that comes through Christ our Savior. Through Mary's obedience, she undid the disobedience of Eve, the original mother of the human family, and opened the pathway for the Messiah. Through her purity, she preserved herself as a temple of the Holy Spirit. And in her "yes" to Gabriel's invitation, she also gave her consent to our redemption and the ongoing expansion of her Son's eternal kingdom. The celebration of new life that is present during this Easter season has its origins in the generous obedience of Our Lady, who through her consent to be the mother of Jesus, opens the door for us to enjoy eternal life.

It is hard to overstate the esteem that the Catholic Church gives to the Blessed Mother. For as Pope St. John Paul II pointed out, we cannot overdo our love of Mary, since God has already blessed her more than we ever can. It was God the Father who chose her above all creatures to be the mother of His Son. And it was God who anointed her with grace to be the Immaculate Conception, in whom divinity would reside and take on our nature. Such a dignified vocation demands our admiration for God's generosity to the human race, and also our gratitude to Mary for her cooperation with the Lord's plans of salvation.

The respect that we show to the Blessed Virgin is needed now more than ever. We certainly count on her intercession for peace among all nations and for the Church's work of evangelization. Yet devotion to Mary is also needed today as a firm witness to the dignity of women. As we see in our contemporary culture, women are compromised in countless ways. They are often objectified for their sex appeal, or treated as inferior to men, in which their gifts and talents are not respected nor admired. Yet in holding up the Blessed Mother as a role model of holiness, the Church reminds the world of the true value of femininity. For in Mary, we see one who was not used by God, but rather, one who was blessed beyond all others and remained open to everlasting union with God. In her gratitude for the blessings bestowed upon her, she understood that God was fulfilling His promises of sending us a Messiah. How humbling it must have been to realize that such promises would be fulfilled through her!

As we enjoy Marian devotions this month, we recognize the need to let new seeds of faith take root within us. For the gift of new life during this season should not simply be seen in our local fields and gardens. The truest symbols of life should be seen within our minds and hearts as believers, with new signs of faith expressing greater devotion and clarity. Mary's entire life was defined by her "yes" to God. She agreed to be the Mother of Jesus, and by extension, to also be the Mother of the Church. In our devotions to her this month, we ask for the grace to make our lives a consistent "yes" to God, so that His providential plans for each of us may bear fruit for His glory and the good of others. How blessed are we to have this month of Marian devotions, which order us toward new life in our desire to accomplish the will of God.

MONTH OF MAY RESOURCES

As we prepare to transition out of the Easter Season on Pentecost Sunday (May 19th) and desire to honor the Blessed Virgin in the month of May, please feel free to use the resources below.

- 33 days to Morning Glory: A DoIt-Yourself Retreat. Use the link to learn more about a Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary.
<https://www.thedivinemercy.org/articles/33days-morning-glory-introduction>

- Plant a Marian Garden this spring. This is an ancient tradition in the Church of creating **Marian Gardens**. Many of us have statues of Mary in our yards, but did you know that there are many beautiful plants that are symbolic of the life of Mary? For example, ferns are symbolic of Mary's hair, and pansies (with their three petals) are a reminder of the Trinity and sometimes referred to as "Our Lady's Delight." There are many online sources for such gardens, and it is a fun way to include the entire family.
- Have a May crowning. Many parishes of course, have a May crowning, but if you have a statue of Mary in your home or yard, have a May crowning. It doesn't take much talent to create a small crown (I know this from experience!) with small flowers purchased from a craft store. If you have children, include them! Crown Mary, perhaps sing a Marian hymn or pray the Hail Mary of **Regina Caeli** together.
- One of the most obvious but neglected Marian Devotions: Pray the Holy Rosary. Visit this link from the USCCB to learn more: <https://www.usccb.org/howto-pray-the-rosary>
- Pray the Angelus! This is another often neglected Marian Devotion. A simple and brief prayer that is traditionally prayed at 6:00 am, 12:00 pm, and 6:00 pm to call to mind one of the greatest mysteries of the faith, the Incarnation, throughout the day. Visit this link from the USCCB to learn more: <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/angelus>

Additional resources used: <https://www.stjosephwakefield.org/may-is-the-month-of-mary-5-ways-to-honor-her/>

SAINT QUOTE

"If you ever feel distressed during your day, call upon our Lady, just say this simple prayer: 'Mary, Mother of Jesus, please be a mother to me now.' I must admit, this prayer has never failed me."

- *Saint Mother Teresa*

MUSIC



SACRED MUSIC

By: Andrew Kreigh, Director of Sacred Music

As a sacred musician I find when I talk with colleagues that we approach a lot of our daily lives with a liturgical mindset. Sometimes it seems we live off of the liturgical calendar more than our monthly calendars. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying it is a negative thing, but rather just an observation. If someone asks me what month it is I have responded before, "it's Easter"! I may only be partially kidding. We find ourselves in the month of May and with that we are adding to our Easter season the focus of our Blessed Mother. So we find ourselves in the midst of May Crownings, Mother's Day, and Marian hymns to consider for these liturgies devoted to our Blessed Mother. The two Marian hymns I gravitate toward in this specific time of year are Regina Caeli and Be Joyful Mary (Tune: Regina Caeli). Though we are not limited to those two hymns I find they best capture our Easter Joy and our love for Mary all in one text. Any hymns referring to Mary's queenship is also perfectly acceptable in this month with May Crownings and as we also honor all of our mothers. Hymns to consider are Immaculate Mary, Hail Holy Queen Enthroned Above, Sing We of the Blessed Mother. Feel free to include your favorite settings of Ave Maria. Perhaps even one might consider some instrumental arrangements. Wishing all of our Mother's

a blessed day and wishing you all a wonderful close to your Easter season and an exciting start to your summer!

Please contact Andrew Kreigh with any questions regarding Sacred Music:
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CHRISTIAN INITIATION



Ongoing mystagogy

By: Joe Milner, Director of the Christian Initiation Office

The Lenten and Easter seasons gave a focus to those celebrating Christian Initiation at Easter. This was manifested in the Rite of Election, the celebration of the Scrutinies, the sacraments of initiation, and their presence in the Easter season. While this focus shifts as Ordinary time begins, the Christian community needs to continue to support them in their spiritual journey during the coming months.

The National Statutes for the Catechumenate in the United States states:
“After the immediate mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis during the Easter Season, the program for the neophytes should extend until the anniversary of Christian Initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.” (#24)

To achieve this, the focus from the beginning of the catechumenate should be on formation in Christian living and not just on attending classes. Formation in the teachings of the church is one element of formation in Christian living. Paragraph #75 in Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults outlines four areas of formation., teachings of the church, development of Christian virtue and decision-making, participation in personal prayer and liturgical prayer, and witnessing to the Gospel and participation in the life of the parish community.

These ongoing mystagogical sessions should have a different structure and focus. They can be gatherings for a meal and reflection on the Sunday Scriptures and how these address situations in their life, they can be supportive times for those who get married, welcome a new child into the family, or experience a death in the family. These life situations can be opportunities to talk about the church’s work in these areas and to share resources with them. These gatherings can also be participation in larger parish activities like picnics, food drives, or preparing the church for special celebrations. Each of these presents an opportunity to enter the Christian journey more deeply and to be incorporated more fully into the life of the church.

I have led several groups through the early months of their journey in the Catholic Church. It provided time to reflect on new experiences and practices, how a family prays, observes special seasons, and what new aspects of parish life each has experienced. These individuals also bonded together as fellow Christians and have supported each other through various challenges in life.

Please continue to keep these individuals in prayer in the coming months and strive to stay connected to them with messages, invitations, and interesting articles. Research shows that over 40% of adults who join the church are no longer active within 5 years. The parish needs to stay connected and offer support to them to ensure that they can continue to grow in Christ.

Congratulations to all the newly initiated and received. May God continue to draw them into the life of the church.

RECLAMATION



THE VIRGIN MARY

By: Deacon John Stoverink, Director of the Office of Reclamations.

The veneration of Mary in the Catholic Church encompasses various devotions which include prayer, pious acts, visual arts, poetry, and music devoted to her. Particularly significant is Mary's presence at the Cross, when she received from her dying Son the charge to be mother to the beloved disciple. Catholics interpret that through the disciple, Christ is giving care of Mary to all Christians.

The Reclamation Center has many prayer, pious acts, visual arts, poetry, and music devoted to her. Come visit the Reclamation Center on Wednesday's between 9am and 1pm or at our online catalog at <https://www.archstl.org/sacred-worship/reclamation-center/reclamation-center-online-catalog>

As always, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Sacred Worship with any liturgical questions or concerns at worship@archstl.org. May you have blessed ending to the Easter Season!



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