

6th Sunday of Easter (B)

10th May 2015

'May is the month of Mary'

Acts 10: The Holy Spirit has been poured out on the pagans Ps 97: The Lord has shown His salvation to the nations
1Jn 4: God is love Jn 15: 9-17: A man can have no greater love than to lay down His life for His friends.

I really love it that this beautiful month of the year, May, is dedicated to our Lady. The name of the month, "May," is not linked in any way originally to the Virgin Mary, but comes from an older Roman — and even Greek — tradition of connection with a mythical pagan goddess, *Maia*. But, as is often the case in the Church, there was a Christianization of the culture which happened as the Roman Empire became increasingly more Catholic from the 4th c. onwards. And so it is right and fitting to give the month of 'May' a special devotion to 'Mary,' given the closeness of the two names.

It is important to honour Our Lady. It is important first of all simply because she was God's choice, of all women of all time, to be the 'God-bearer,' the mother giving flesh to His eternal Son, Jesus. God chose her; and we respect, honour, and rejoice in that choice He made; to ask one of us, one of our lowly human race, to have that incredible privilege, to offer her womb as the place where

God became man, where "the Word became flesh." We thank God for this choice of Mary of Nazareth; for the incredible honour He does to us in coming to us in this humble, human way, by the willingness and humility and faith of this young woman of 1st c. Galilee.

The second reason we should honour her is that she is our greatest intercessor. She prays for us continually, for she is the Mother of the Church and the Queen of Heaven. And therefore she is a powerful ally in our spiritual battle of life. She both knows the trials of a human life — the challenges of daily toil in this world — and yet at the same time she is sinless by a special grace of God. She both understands our condition, therefore, and also sees the necessity of living a holy life as the only solution to our problems. She assists us in that life's great task. We should love her, then, as our own blessed Mother just as much as Jesus Himself loves and honours her as His Mother. On the Cross, Jesus chose to share her with us. As He completed His divine Sacrifice, dying for our sins, He wished also to extend the care of His Mother. She, who

was there with Him from start to finish of His earthly existence — standing there at the foot of His Cross — was to be the mother also of all of His followers. In words addressed to Mary and the apostle John who accompanied her, Jesus stated: “Woman, behold your son ... Behold your Mother.” She becomes the Mother of the Church from its beginnings; she is there at Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit at its outset; and from her place in heaven she cares still for all the disciples of her Son.

So, this is why alongside Jesus Christ, the risen and eternal Son of God, we also place Our Blessed Lady, the ever-Virgin Mary ... not because *we* have placed her there, but because *He* has placed her there. It is His choice to have her take up this exalted role as Mother of the Christian people. He has chosen, then, to give that feminine dimension to the Church and to its devotions; the maternal love and care of Mary for us; and I think that we all need that, and respond to it. It’s why the Lady Chapel is burning bright every Sunday with the candles lit as signs of our prayers to her; our request for her prayers for us.

May is full of devotions to Our Lady, and we should add to them ourselves. The Rosary is a good place to start. We offer the one decade a week here before Sunday Mass in this month; but we would be better, each of us, in offering the rosary daily, for our needs. The Rosary is a powerful way of bringing Our Lady in on our prayers; as the mysteries of the Rosary show her participation in the mission of her Son. Likewise, she wishes above all things to assist us in our prayers — her powerful prayers accompany our own, perhaps weak prayers. The Rosary is the heart of our May Procession this evening — so please come. I imagine that everyone here has intentions and prayers they wish to offer to God; why not invoke, with me, the loving prayers of the Queen of Heaven, to help you in the needs that are close to your hearts? With her perfect maternal instinct, and her closeness to the Lord, she will come to our assistance, and help fight our cause. The devil is fearful of this woman’s love and humble service; may she pray for us and protect us. *Holy Mary — Mother, Virgin, Queen — assist us in all our necessities.*