

MAY: THE MONTH OF OUR MOTHER MARY

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence. I beg your pardon for my sins and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

We are in the month of May which is arguably the most beautiful month of the year. It is the month when flowers blossom and the weather is nicest. It is springtime. And it is therefore very appropriate for us to celebrate this month as the month of our Mother. In fact, we celebrate Mother's Day for a very good reason in May, in the month of May, and it is also therefore very appropriate for us to celebrate Mary during this month. It is the month of Mary, the month of our Heavenly Mother. Whenever our mother has a birthday or she celebrates some important anniversary, kids- the children usually want to give her something, maybe a flower, maybe a rose, maybe a picture that they drew. And usually it is the kids, however, that get a lot more on their mother's birthday than what they give. If you think about it, the- the cake that is used to celebrate the mother's feast day or mother's anniversary or mother's birthday is made by the mother herself, and she toils all day baking this cake. And who gets to eat it? It really is the kids. She's the one that bakes her own cake and she's the one that gives it to her children so that they can enjoy it, so that they could celebrate her. And that's exactly what happens whenever we celebrate a feast of Mary, that she is the one that is looking out for us. And she is the one that gives us a lot more graces than the ones that- than anything we could possibly do for her.

If you look at the gospel closely, that's exactly what she does. She anticipates the asking, as Dante would say. She anticipates our needs. When she went to- when she heard about her cousin Elizabeth from the angel, she didn't wait for the angel to tell her, go visit your cousin Elizabeth because she needs help. She just went straight to Ein Karem running in haste through- to the hill country through hardship, perhaps because it was difficult and she was pregnant and she was only a girl, but she didn't wait because she needed to share the joy of Jesus that she carried within her womb with her cousin and then serve her for three months as she ended her pregnancy with the birth of John the Baptist. All the way through- she couldn't just do it for a week or two weeks or a month. She did it until- until she gave birth. She really anticipated the needs of Elizabeth and she doesn't count the cost. She is there for others. She is there for us as well.

And the same thing happens at the wedding at Cana. She is there like a good mother paying attention as to what's going on and she realizes that there is no wine. And Jesus says to her, we've read this so many times which is so moving, it's such an amazing scene. Jesus says, "What would you have me do woman? My hour has not yet come." And Mary kind of ignores that negative answer and just tells the servants, "Do whatever

he tells you." And they do. And we know what happens, that Jesus transforms water into wine and it's the best wine and it's in abundance. But when Jesus says, "My hour has not yet come," he kind of implies that when his hour does come that he is going to give us much more, right, because it is now the hour, it is now the right moment to actually do a lot of things in favor of mankind. And if we fast forward in the Gospel of St. John to Chapter 19 which is when the hour is happening, the hour of Jesus, when he's being glorified on the Cross, what do we find there? We find that he gives us something very special to him, that he gives us not wine but his very mother- but his very mother. He gives Mary- entrusts Mary to St. John.

It's funny because in the Greek text, the word *to give* is really- or *to take*, *to accept*, you know, is not used for people except in two- on two occasions. It is used to accept someone only in the prologue of St. John where he says to the- he came to his own, but his own accepted him not. But to those who did accept them, he gave the power to become children of God. And in- at the crucifixion where he- where St. John says that John accepted Mary into his things, into his things. Well, the word *to accept*, and specifically to accept the person and also things- into his things or his own things, is only used in those two- on those two occasions in the prologue where they accepted- he came to his own, his own things, his own people, his own home and they accepted him not, but those who accepted him into their things, he gave the power to become children of God and then also at the Cross when John accepts Mary into his things.

Well, the coincidence of these two words, being used in that- in those contexts, implies or suggests that by accepting Mary into our things, we are also accepting Jesus into our things so that we can become children of God. If we become children of Mary, therefore, we can also become children of God. That's what's implied and that's what we want to do this month of May. We want to show Mary that we are her children because we accept this gift of Jesus which is her herself, his very mother, into our things and that way we too can become children of the Father. This really is beautiful, and- and how do we do that? Well, we- we want to do that by turning to her intercession.

Some people who are not Catholic may have an objection as to going to the intercession of saints. They say, no, we shouldn't turn to saints, we should only turn to Jesus. He's the only mediator. And of course, Jesus is the mediator because he's both God and man. But throughout the Gospel and throughout the New Testament, we see that- that people go to the intercession of saints in order to find favor with God. I mean, think of, for instance, the- the Centurion in Luke 7 who built the synagogue for the- for the local Jewish community there in Capernaum. And the centurion, it says, "Hearing that- hearing of Jesus sent to him elders of the Jews beseeching him to come and save his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they entreated him earnestly saying to him, 'He is worthy that you should do this for him for he loves our nation and himself has built us our synagogue.'" Well, here are disciples of Jesus who are friends of Jesus, better friends of Jesus than the Centurion at that moment, who are interceding on behalf of the centurion, and they're kind of, you know, telling Jesus, hey, he has done a lot, he's- he's a good man, he has built our synagogue, he has done a lot of favors for us, he deserves for you to perform this miracle. And Jesus goes and saves the servant.

Well, the same thing happens with the saints. The saints are our friends of Jesus, our friends who have fought the good fight, who have struggled with, conquered, and they are in Heaven, they're alive, they can hear us, we can communicate with them, they're not dead. And so, we turn to their intercession because if they plead for our cause, and we believe that they can talk to Jesus right now, then Jesus will do us the favors that we are asking of him in part because he sees the- the graciousness, the righteousness, the just-adjustments of those saints that are praying on our behalf.

Look at what St. James says in his Letter, "For the unceasing prayer of a just man is of great avail. Elias was a man like ourselves, subject to the same infirmities and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain upon the Earth. And it did not rain for three years and six months. He prayed again and the heavens gave rain and the Earth brought forth its fruit." Here's Elias who is praying for- for some favor for the people of God. And the Lord listens to him because he is a just man. And the prayer- the unceasing prayer of a just man is of great avail. It has great power in its effects. So this is- if this is what the saints do, if this is the how powerful the prayer of the saints is, how much more will the prayer of Mary be on our behalf?

We have to think about that, and that's why we want to turn to her intercession. She, of course, is a human being, she has no Original Sin, but- and, you know, and as a human being, she- she doesn't have power to perform any miracle and so on. But as St. Josemaria called her, and I suppose the tradition of the Church calls her in Spanish, it's called, he called her the *omnipotencia suplicante*, which is kind of hard to translate, I suppose we could say the, in English, the *all powerful beggar*, you know, she begs- as a beggar, she has no power in and of herself, but because she is so favored by God and she's so pleasing to God because of her virtues and her love, that God can't say no to her, you know, and that- that's what we see at Cana, that even when she- when God does say no to her, that, you know, Jesus changes his mind if his mother wants, you know, if he has to obey his mother, it's the fourth commandment, and he won't violate that. And she does it in such a gracious way, in such a humorous way, that he kind of goes along with her because she is his mother.

Well, the same thing- we have to turn to her intercession for so many graces that we need for the Church right now. I mean, think of- yes, you could pray, you know, to pass an exam and all this stuff, those are good things to pray for, but we got to- we got to go higher than that. Yes, you have to pay the rent. You can pray for money, you can pray for a good job, you can- those are good things and those are necessary things and- and we need to pray for those things that in fact, somehow God allows hardship so that we can- we can actually realize that we are so needy and that he is in charge of our lives and illness or whatever it is. But think bigger, think bigger than- than favors just for me. Think of the Church, think of souls, think of conversions, think of vocations- vocations to celibacy, vocations to marriage, vocations to the priesthood, vocations to the religious life, vocations, as St. Josemaria would say, in the world, celibacy in the world, in the middle of the world without leaving their own state, just people who desire to take their baptismal call seriously. We need a lot of those people, the laity, you know. We need to ask for that because every vocation is a gift from God. And therefore, the only thing we can really do is ask- ask Our Lord- and ask the Lord of

the harvest to send laborers. That's what we want to do through the intercession of Mary, especially this month.

Think of the apparition of the Miraculous Medal in Paris, in Rue du Bac. Mary appeared there and the image that is venerated has rays coming out of her hands, you know, both hands. And the rays on the right hand represent the graces that Mary grants her children, grants us without asking her for them because she is our mother simply. Like Dante says, as I quoted earlier, she anticipates the asking, she sees our needs, and she comes to our need even before we ask her. Well, those are all the graces on her right hand. But then, she invites us to look at the left hand and look at all those rays that come out of her left hand which are the graces from Our Lord that she distributes, that- that are only given to those people who ask for them. And the implication, I think, is that we don't ask enough, and that a lot of graces are simply not given, you know, they're kind of wasted, so to speak, because- because we don't ask. And if we were to ask, we would- Our Lord says, he wants us to ask. You shall find, Our Lord says, he wants us to ask. He wants us to- to beg over and over again.

And this is, you know, what he says when he refers to the widow in the Gospel with the unjust judge, you know, the widow is just there hammering away at the unjust judge saying, do me justice, do me justice. And the unjust judge simply ignores her and just keeps insisting until he says, okay, fine, I'll do- I'll do her justice otherwise she's going to drive me nuts. Some people think that Jesus, when he made up this parable, that he was thinking of his Mother, you know, who was a Jewish widow and how, you know, in the way that she insisted, in the way she acted, you know, we could see that at the wedding at Cana she just doesn't take no for an answer.

Well, Jesus wants us to pray like that. And that is why a great tool for this is the Rosary. The Rosary is that repetitive prayer, that repetitive prayer when we say over fifty Hail Marys, and we keep going back to Our Lady with another Hail Mary and another Hail Mary. And some people may think, well, that's just boring. It's not true, it's not true. People in love, they never get tired of listening to their loved one even though their loved one may say the same things over and over and over again because every time that someone in love says something, even if it's the same thing, it's as if it were new because it has the newness of love, and that's how every Hail Mary should be for us. Every Hail Mary should be a new Hail Mary, as if it were the only time we really said the Hail Mary or the first time.

Yes, it is repetitive, but it shouldn't grow old. And it is repetitive, I think, also, Our Lord wants us to repeat it because he wants us to- he wants to test our desire, you know. He wants us to make our desire deliberate and make it grow. And when we repeat something, you know, it's just like these people who- who beg and beg and beg for a miracle, and he kind of ignores them like the syrophenician woman, he ignores the woman and she just keeps going at it until Our Lord kind of says, okay, because of your faith, because you have persevered in prayer, then I will do you this great- I will give you this grace or I will do- do you justice or faith or give you a favor or perform the miracle or the cure, whatever. Well, that's what- exactly what- what he wants us to do by repeating the Hail Mary over and over again with an intention in mind. He wants

us to inflame our desire even more. And that's what the Rosary does for us. It's such a powerful prayer because of that and it makes us humble too because it is- it really is a prayer that reminds us how to ask like little children who simply keep asking their parents for the same thing until they give up, you know.

The Rosary is repetitive, yes, but it's not boring. People may say it's boring, but as St. Josemaria says no, what's really boring are your sins and mine, you know, that's- that's what's boring in our lives, the repetition of sin. That's the only boring thing, not the repetition of the Hail Mary. No, because that is something that we do in love. It- every- every Hail Mary is like a bouquet or every decade is like a bouquet of ten roses that we give Mary. And, well, the fact that the Rosary is- is repetitive, it challenges us, it challenges us as well to struggle with Our Lord a little bit, to pay attention, to contemplate the mysteries of Our Lord's life which is what we have to struggle to do and to place intentions there. Well, we can struggle like- like the angel and Jacob struggled, you know, they struggled all night long. And we have to struggle with God that way. And with, you know, with the Rosary, we have to struggle to pay attention, we have to bargain with God like Abraham bargained with God, you know. If there is, you know, forty people or just people in, you know, in the city, are you going to destroy the city? No. If they're forty people and say, I won't destroy it, well, what about thirty? What about thirty? What about twenty-five? What about twenty? What about, you know, and Abraham bargains with God, he struggles with God. Well, we have to do the same in the Holy Rosary, we have to bargain with God.

Of course, that means that we have to pay attention. As St. Teresa of Avila would say, if you don't think of what you're saying and you don't think of- of who you're talking to in the Rosary, then you just moving your lips. And St. Josemaria would say the same thing, you know. What we have to do is contemplate the life of Jesus, contemplate the face of Christ. That's what John Paul II or St. John Paul the Great, I should say, says and recommends in his exhortation on the Rosary. Look at- look at these words, "The contemplation of Christ has an incomparable model in Mary. In a unique way, the face of the Son belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed, receding from her a human resemblance which points to an ever greater spiritual closeness. No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary."

Well, think- think of that gaze, that penetrating gaze of Mary as she goes through the mysteries of the life of Jesus which are the mysteries of the Rosary. St. John Paul even says that Mary prayed her Rosary by contemplating the life of Jesus. I'll read it here: "Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ treasuring his every word. She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. The memories of Jesus impressed upon her heart were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side." In a way, those memories were to be the Rosary which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.

Well, think how powerful the consideration of the mysteries of the Rosary could be for us. We're always carrying within us the life of Jesus in our mind. And St. Josemaria used to say, you know, when you guys watch a movie, you know, a day later you're playing it back in your mind, kind of savoring it, and going back through the scenes of a movie, because it's so good or whatever, and you're repeating the lines and, you

know, kind of imitating the actors there and all. He says, that's what we have to do with the life of Christ. We have to play it back in our minds as if it were a movie, you know. It has to stick as much as one of those movies that has these funny lines and that we- that, you know, become a fad or something like that, that we repeat over and over again and try to imitate well. The Gospel is the greatest of movies that we have to put into practice and not only imitate but live, you know, perfectly well with our own life, with our own choices. And that's what the Holy Rosary helps us to do, it helps us to contemplate this movie of the life of Jesus all the time, all the time.

I like to always put in relation this- this- the- this passage that I've just read from John Paul II with a passage that St. Paul talks about in his Letter to the Corinthians when he says, when he talks about contemplating with unveiled faces, you know. He says, "But we all with faces unveiled, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into his very image, from glory to glory, as through the Spirit of the Lord." What happens here is that when we contemplate the life of Jesus with unveiled faces, you know, just face to face, like children have gotten, then we are transformed- we are transformed from, you know, into his very image. We- we are transformed into that which we contemplate. And Mary was Christified, transformed into Jesus Christ, into the image of Christ interiorly in her soul, even though he was her image exteriorly, you know, because he is her son.

Well, we want to be transformed interiorly into the image of Christ by contemplating his life through the Rosary and going to the intercession of his Mother, from glory to glory, you know, as through the Spirit of the Lord. This is what we can do today and all this month. Think of someone that you want to invite on- on a pilgrimage, you know, to pray three parts of the Rosary. That's what same St. Josemaria did. He would go to an image of Our Lady, pray one part on the way there, pray the main part of the day in front of the image, and then on the way back pray another part of the Rosary. That's a beautiful way to honor Mary. Maybe take some flowers to that image, maybe offer up a mortification as well. Those are St. Josemaria's suggestions that we can take up in the month of May. Well, let us entrust these Apostolic goals, these resolutions- these resolutions to pray better and to pray more attentively during this month of Mary, the Holy Rosary. She will take anything we give her and she will look upon us with graciousness and she will give us all the strength we need in order to persevere in our prayer and thereby gain many graces from her son as she also helps us to intercede for our cause.



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