

May the Month of Mary

I recall when I attended Catholic school as a young child how during the month of May the entire school would gather in the school yard and the Sisters would arrange for a ceremony of the crowning of Mary. We would sing hymns and a special girl was chosen to place the floral crown on the head of the statue of Mary. I am not sure we really understood the significance of this ceremony but we did understand that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was special in our Church and in our lives.

Most recently Pope Benedict XVI in his visit to Mexico and Cuba emphasized the importance of Mary for the Church. At the shrine of Our Lady of Charity in Cuba the Pope said: "Following the example of the Most Holy Virgin, I encourage all the sons and daughters of this dear country (Cuba) to continue to build their lives on the firm rock which is Jesus Christ, to work for justice, to be servants of charity and to persevere in the midst of trials." These words, directed to the people of Cuba, are also words that can guide us in our faith journey. Mary is the example for us of how we are to trust in the Lord, to follow his directions or commandments, and to bear witness to Him in our daily lives.

Jesus is the firm rock upon which we, as a Church community, build the kingdom of God here on earth. Mary was the one who made this possible in her willingness to open herself to the Holy Spirit and to allow herself to be an instrument of God's grace when she accepted to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Her willingness and her trust in God, not knowing all that it would entail, is an example for us, especially when we are placed in situations that challenge us or are trials for us. These situations could be in our homes, our workplace, our schools, even in our work in the Catholic Women's League. We continually seek the guidance of Mary, our Lady of Good Counsel, to inspire us and to help us find our way.

During the month of May, I am not sure there will be many celebrations of the crowning of the statue of Mary in our communities. However, this month does remind us to recall Mary and her role in our Church and in our lives. The feasts of Mary in May are usually Our Lady of Fatima (May 13) and the Visitation of Mary (May 31). As we end the Easter season during this month and enter into Ordinary time in our Church year, may Mary always be an inspiration for us. She understands how our lives must cope with special events and ordinary responsibilities in our households and in our work. She can be a model for us of duty and dedication, a model of prayer and trust, and above all a model of love and caring compassion. May Mary be the example that guides us, as she leads us to Jesus her Son. 'Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us'.

Bishop Fred J. Colli
Diocesan Spiritual Advisor