



From the Deacon's Desk

It's May and with it comes our celebration of Mary under her patronage as the Queen of May. This devotion began as a one-day remembrance at one church in Italy in 1739. By 1803, the devotion had spread to approximately another 20 Italian churches. From there the devotion spread to France and then to the rest of Europe.

Home devotion followed very quickly. In 1747 the Archbishop of Genoa [Italy] recommended devotion to Mary for the home, then specific prayers for home use were published in Rome in 1838. The church-wide, one-month dedication to Mary became a standard practice in the 19th century, and Jesuit missionaries then brought the practice to North America. Very little about the devotion has changed over the years.

In the Miller household in the early 1960s making a Mary altar was part of the St. Mary's curriculum. We would place the altar on top of the bookcase in the dining room and gather around it to say the rosary each night. This might be a practice you could follow in your home.

Mary's role in the church is often misunderstood by our protestant brethren. We know we don't worship Mary. Her statue is no different than having a picture of your mother hanging on the wall. To it is surprising to many though that the controversy over Mary's role in salvation history reaches back to the Council of Ephesus in 431. This council's primary task was to endorse the Nicene Creed. The creed referred to Mary as *Theotokos* [God-bearer]. An opposing group believed she was the Christ-bearer [*Christokos*]. At issue is the interpretation of the Incarnation, and the nature of the union of Christ's human and divine natures between Christ's conception and birth. As we know from the creed we recite today, the council affirmed that Mary is the *Theotokos* -- Mother of God.

Mary as *Theotokos* is one of only four dogmas surrounding Mary; the others are: her Perpetual Virginity, her Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption.

In addition to May, we celebrate three Holy Days that honor Our Lady: Feast of the Immaculate Conception [8 Dec], Mary, Mother of God [1 Jan], and The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary [15 Aug].

How is your family going to honor Mary?

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