

Living the Spirit
Mary, Our Mother

As we come to the end of May our hearts turn for a brief time to Mary, our Mother. It is a part of our Catholic life to pay some attention to this compassionate and powerful Mother. We turn to her when we need special graces and aid in difficulties that touch our spiritual life. Our doing this never takes away from the love and confidence that we place in Jesus. Indeed, when we pray to Mary we focus on the mysteries of Christ.

It was my good fortune to visit Lourdes a number of times. I came away aware that the whole experience of Lourdes centered on the Eucharistic presence of Jesus. At least for me. I was privileged to offer Mass at the grotto only once. There, I was suddenly chosen to distribute Communion. Mary, it seemed to me, was bringing me to a deeper understanding of who I was, and what I was. I was to share Jesus with His loving followers.

If there are problems that you have that invade your peace of soul, living the Spirit may require you to turn to all the Saints, and Mary in particular, to reinforce your prayers to Jesus. In their company you are well-armed and bring petitions worthy of God's favor. But if you do so, realize that every prayer is offered with the proviso – if it be God's will.

As I was going through a paper I saved, I found this prayer, ascribed to St. Anselm.
Mary, I beg you, by that grace through which the Lord is with you and you willed to be with him, let your mercy be with me.

***Let love for you always be with me, and the care of me always be with you.
Let the cry of my need, as long as it persists, be with you, and the care of your
goodness, as long as I need it, be with me.***

***Let joy in your blessedness be always with me, and compassion for my wretchedness,
where I need it, be with you. Amen.***

Here is another short prayer. It has meaning to me, for it was on a card commemorating my retreat at the Seminary before Ordination. [The retreat was given by Fr. Justin McManus, a famous Dominican preacher at that time.]

AVE MARIA!

***Dear Blessed Mother,
You can't say 'I can't',
You won't say 'I won't',
You will say 'I will',
Won't you?,
Dear Blessed Mother.***

I see in our prayers to Mary a description of our relationship to this Mother. We rely on her grace and closeness to Jesus, her mercy and compassion, and her care for us. We rely on her goodness, her blessedness and her motherly compassion in times of difficulty. Do not let May end without speaking to Jesus through Mary. Live the Spirit!

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Memorials

From ages past we have found it necessary to honor those who have died and gone before us. We recall in many ways both their great deeds and their ordinary ones. In our country we honor them on Memorial Day. In a special way we honor those who have fallen in the defense of our nation. But we also honor our own loved ones.

May I ask of you the favor of your prayers for your priests, those who have contributed to your spiritual life? In most cases, you were baptized by a priest. Most of us hardly recall his name. We received from a priest our First Communion. These gifts of God were given through the hands of our priests. I cannot even imagine all the ways I have benefited from the priests who were (and still are) a part of my life. I suppose that you could say the same.

As I recall the priests who touched my life and are now with God, I would note that on the whole they lived rather private lives in a public way. They were not often hailed for their work or their many good deeds. Indeed, in my judgment their lives followed an ordinary pattern of quiet fidelity to the ideals of their priestly calling. In worldly terms their work would be seen as forgettable. Yet, I know they gave me a sense of that reality that is eternal.

As our Diocese continues to grow in age and grace, we should not forget the great work that began with priests dedicated to building up and securing the faith for all of us who have lived in this part of the Church. Indeed we priests of today walk in the shadow of our predecessors. It is a path marked with an aura of many bright graces from the past.

I do hope that you will observe Memorial Day with at least a few prayers for all those you loved and who loved you. I also would like to believe that you are patriotic enough to ask God to bless with mercy all the fallen heroes of our nation. Finally, say a prayer for the unknown and forgotten. Let heartfelt prayer be your memorial for them all.

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In May we enter a time when our parish calendar is filled with multiple activities. Parish life is important to spiritual growth. Certainly we contribute to that growth when we make available the means for what the parish and diocese provide. Parish activities help us grow in our sense of community among us. There are some who give many hours for its success, and we thank them. [How I wish I could name them here!] Remember that many are experiencing hard times and we must do the best we can to assist them.

Students will soon be bringing an end to the scholastic year. In my day this meant final exams. I am not sure this is as important as it was in past days. There is the usual graduation at different levels. We are proud of our students who fulfill their mission by being students as good as they can possibly be.

Our Bishop's Annual Appeal meets its zenith at this time. There are goals for the parish, and we desire to meet them. I hope you will have that special good feeling that participation in the Appeal brings. Your charity is a charity blessed by the Lord.

Finally, there will be many individual and personal agendas to get through in the next weeks. What we need is patience, courage and energy to share our time and talents. It will help make life worth living if we face each day with gratitude for what God gives us. So, again I remind you, despite our being busy, we must turn to prayer. Through prayer we will have the presence of Jesus in our lives. We will truly live the Spirit!

At the end of every Mass the priest celebrant gives you the Church's blessing - (worth staying for). This is the prayer of your priests for you.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God love you always!

Monsignor David Morrison