

Message on the Month of the Blessed Mother His Grace Most Reverend Francis Leo

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

May Jesus and Mary be in your souls.

In our Catholic devotional life, Holy Mother Church, for many centuries now, has assigned special devotions to each month of the year to help us grow closer to the Lord and advance along the path of holiness. May, of course, is the month dedicated entirely to the Mother of Jesus, Mary most holy. Let me begin my reflection by highlighting the inspiring words of Pope St. Paul VI with respect to this extraordinary month of grace: “The month of May is almost here, a month which the piety of the faithful has long dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God. Our heart rejoices at the thought of the moving tribute of faith and love which will soon be paid to the Queen of Heaven in every corner of the earth. For this month during which Christians, in their churches and their homes, offer the Virgin Mother more fervent and loving acts of homage and veneration; and it is the month in which a greater abundance of God’s merciful gifts comes down to us from our Mother’s throne.”

Consequently, we intentionally and wholeheartedly honour, celebrate and venerate the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary, who was entrusted to us by Our Lord on the Cross as our spiritual Mother and entrusted us to her as her beloved children (cf. Jn 19:25-27). The tradition of dedicating the month of May to Mary goes back as far as at least the thirteenth century. Pilgrimages, prayers, various devotional practices, and liturgical rites in veneration of Our Lady during this month have long been a mainstay of Catholic piety, including **May crownings**: As Pope St. Paul VI had intuited: there is an even greater outpouring of God’s graces showered upon us this very month thanks to Divine Providence who wills that these blessings come to us through the Mother of Christ. It is truly significant and vital to have filial recourse to The Mother so as to benefit more abundantly from the mercy, generosity and help of the Lord.

Consecration to Our Blessed Mother is another meaningful form of Marian piety. When we consecrate ourselves to Mary, we offer the entirety of ourselves along with the merits of our prayers to her as Mother and Queen, Intercessor and Advocate, Sister and Companion. The reason we offer Our Lady all our works is so that we can belong more fully to Jesus, knowing that she can do greater things with our small offerings than we can on our own. She wants only the best for us, and we give her everything, so she can present it all to Jesus. Let us be reminded that true devotion to the Mother of Jesus “consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters, during the entirety of this blessed month, I encourage you to take the time to re-read and mediate upon this Marian reflection whether alone or with others in community asking ourselves what kind of relationship we have with Mother Mary and what are the next steps we are prompted to take on this journey. Finally, I humbly urge all the faithful in the Archdiocese of Toronto, our families and parishes, schools and other faith, religious and ecclesial communities and institutions, to get to know Our Lady in a deeper, personal way; to approach her with filial devotion, speaking with her daily with all our hearts; to experience her motherly closeness as we share everything with her; and to emulate her virtuous life in faith, so that in spending time pondering with complete faith and trust the great things that the Lord accomplishes in our lives and thought out the archdiocese, we may truly, with her, magnify Him each day joyfully.

Blessings upon you in Jesus with Mary!

Sincerely yours in Jesus and Mary,

Most Rev. Francis Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto