

## May: The Month of Mary 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022

Life in the Catholic Church is very much a procession of seasons. We're still celebrating Jesus' Resurrection during this season of Easter, but today, 1<sup>st</sup> May, we also begin a month when we particularly honour the Virgin Mary. The reverence we Catholics have for Our Lady is often a mystery to our Protestant brothers and sisters: shouldn't such devotion be reserved for God alone?

Perhaps a very rough analogy will help here. Prince Philip was never given the same honour as his wife because she's Queen by birth. On the other hand, because he was married to her, he was given honours and respect that he wouldn't otherwise have received. Likewise, *worship* is due to God alone, but *honour* is due to Mary, Queen of Heaven, (and to the saints as well, although that's another reflection).

More importantly, she is Jesus' *beloved* mother, who both cared for him as a child and finally accompanied him to the foot of the cross. The risen and glorified Jesus loves his mother as much now as he did as a baby in the manger, or when she prompted him to work his first miracle at the wedding of Cana. Think of the way we celebrate if a friend gets engaged, or wins a competition, or gets a promotion at work. They're getting the glory, but we're happy for them. Our respect for Mary is something that delights Jesus because he loves her.

So, in this month of May, it's good to spend a bit more time with Our Lady. The most obvious thing to do is to say the Rosary, that most famous of devotions. You might say it on your own, or with your family, or here in the parish – please keep an eye on the newsletter. Keep in mind, you don't need to say the whole thing every time. If one decade is all you can manage, say one decade. It's much better than nothing!

There are other options though. If you have a statue or picture of Mary at home, you might get some candles and flowers and make a small shrine during May. I think having a particular place to pray is often quite helpful. You might also find a new prayer to Mary to learn and pray. Or you could explore some of the hymns or anthems to Mary. There's a cycle of traditional anthems, of which the *Salve Regina* (Hail, Holy Queen) is probably the best known. For those reading this online, there's a lovely version by a 450 strong [virtual choir on YouTube](#).

Finally, if you have anything specific that you need to pray for, ask Our Lady for help. Since Jesus has adopted us as brothers and sisters, Mary has taken us on as her children too. Don't be shy.

For centuries, Catholics have dedicated themselves to Jesus through Mary. May this month be a time for you to draw closer to both of them.