

ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

May 2014 – Issue 34

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Tears of Sorrow and Tears of Joy

However you interpret or indeed look upon the many prodigies, supernatural events, miracles and apparitions it is essential never to underestimate the importance of Mary in Redemption. She has been especially chosen to bear the Saviour and to nurture her son, Jesus, so that he would fulfil his rôle as such. Like any mother she nurtured Him fed Him, played with Him and loved Him. She saw Him grow up and leave home to serve others. We know that she often seemed to miss him and wanted to see Him... *Your mother and brothers are waiting outside and want to see you...* (Matt 12 46-50) We also know that after all this she also had to endure the final suffering of seeing Him walk to Calvary – and how painful was that meeting we can only guess as it is painful for us to think about, finally watching Him being pierced through with huge nails and crucified.

Then the Resurrection; how utterly delighted and consoled she must have been to see this and what did she do- she stayed with the Apostles to console and teach them. She, a woman, encouraged them and was with them at the coming of the Holy Spirit. A true mother to them she became a mother to us. When St John received her and she him at the foot of the Cross – we too became *her children* but do we accept her?

Throughout history our Mother revealed herself to many. She like any Mother guards her children and protects them. Countless are the titles by which she is known. Countless are the people who have shown/have a special love for this valiant woman. It is very sad that there is a kind of downplaying of her rôle. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception did and in 1854, before she announced herself under this title to St Bernadette, clarified this mystery of being born sinless to prepare her for being the Mother of the God/Man. The Dogma of the Assumption in 1950 confirmed her inestimable place in Heaven where she reigns as Queen. Do we not pray this as one of the mysteries of the Rosary... The Coronation.



She has many titles and accolade as we see in the Litany of Our Lady, Mother most admirable, Mother most gentle, Virgin most pure, Queen of Apostles of Martyrs, of Patriarch, Prophets. These are beautiful titles indeed and worthwhile praying, pondering about and contemplating their meaning.

Yet today as she said to mother Mariana in Quito Ecuador four hundred years ago ‘ I will be known by many names and titles’ but we are very impervious to them or frightened when she speaks as Mother to us today. Now no one is obliged to accept the veracity of any apparition that is the teaching of the Church. But let us consider the opposite statement. If they are true

as many countless millions of pilgrims testify by faith and visit places like Lourdes, Fatima Betania, Banneux, Beauraing, Kibeho, Quito, and Częstochowa,(all approved) and the list grows in recent history such as Medjugorje twenty-nine in the last century should we totally discount them. Are all those who visit misguided pilgrims and ignorant people?

Should we not stand back from such views especially when we have Popes in recent times who have visited and prayed at such not to mention having special devotion to Our Lady under some title. Are they too misguided or naïve? Pope Francis has a special devotion to ‘Our Lady Untier of Knots’ as of course she is! Why does she appear then in these places? Each place has a special charism. Some to encourage peace, some prayer and conversion of heart indeed this is common to all, some healing of mind, body and soul.

Miracles of grace are reported in all these places. Some, when visited bring great reconciliation and encouragement and brings people of various traditions and faith together such as Zeitun in Egypt. So in all places she acts as Mother as this is her *fundamental title*. She acts as any mother does to bring her children peace, joy and happiness. Mothers gather their children together. Well she certainly does that! People of all tongues and countries praying as one. Can she do anything else.?

“Let us run to Mary and as little children cast ourselves into her arms with perfect confidence.” St Francis de Sales

But why so many apparitions? If you try to do something and tell someone something what do you do if they do not believe you and you care for them.. Usually you keep trying. You may repeat yourself and try different means of persuading them. You may even wait and try again later. How many times do we as mothers do that with our own children if they are on the wrong path or in trouble? Can Mary do any less? She is sent by her Son – she has a mission to bring people to her Son. There is a title which was given to Venerable Mother Mariana in Ecuador in the 16th century as Mother of Good Success. It was approved by the Bishop and in 1611 and he dedicated the whole country to her patronage under that title. It does not translate well into English but broadly it means Mother of a positive outcome or change. She told the Foundress and Abbess, that in the 20th Century she would be known by many titles. Indeed many things were revealed to this Religious four hundred years before they have now occurred. For example she was given the name of a very Holy exemplary priest by name, St John Vianney, The Curé of Ars who lived two hundred years after her death. There are many others. Such is the giftedness of Mary our Mother.



Perhaps one of the things that challenges us most are the many places that have seen the tears of Mary and statues that ‘bleed’. These phenomena are extraordinary to our rationalistic western minds, a cause for dismissal, derision and even scorn. Yet is it really surprising that a mother weeps over her children? If it is not statues then how many times has she appeared crying? For example in La Salette in France in 1842. She was found by two visionaries, two little children sitting and crying with her hand over her face because of the ‘fate’ of her children. France was to undergo a famine and loss of faith. Any mother weeps if she feels that her children suffer or are lost. Do not today mothers weep for their children in broken marriages, addictions, ill-health or out of touch or who seem to have lost faith and are in darkness or cynicism of some kind.

But there is also Joy for her smile illuminates many dark corners. And those who pray through Mary have their hearts lifted and prayer heard. She has promised that those who appeal through her will be helped. Is she not known as the Mother of Perpetual Help? Does she not rejoice over one sinner who repents as does all of Heaven?

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May is traditionally the month of Mary. Fitting, as it is often a month when flowers bloom. Soon the Holy Spirit will descend to renew us with grace and blessing. Let us appeal to her for her help. Perhaps we can use the litany to help us pray or the rosary, or use this month to stay under her mantle and protection as have millions throughout the ages. Maybe you could visit one of the Marian Shrines near you and spend a little time in her company.

Let us bring a smile to the heart and face of our Mother so carefully chosen for us.

Special Intentions for May.....

For those who suffer poverty and deprivation, isolation and fear.

For those in war situations especially Syria and the Middle East.

For those who are imprisoned unjustly and have not got religious freedom. That all Christian people may truly live out their Vocations.

For Children everywhere that they may grow in places of peace and love. H. H.

“Guard our lives in your Arms.”

“LET US INVOKE MARY’S INTERCESSION,” MAY SHE HELP US TO BE OPEN TO GOD’S SURPRISES, TO BE FAITHFUL TO HIM EACH AND EVERY DAY, AND TO PRAISE AND THANK HIM. BELIEVING IN JESUS MEANS GIVING HIM OUR FLESH WITH THE COURAGE AND HUMILITY OF MARY...

“MARY POINTS TO JESUS, SHE ASKS US TO BEAR WITNESS TO JESUS, SHE CONSTANTLY GUIDES US TO HER SON JESUS, BECAUSE IN HIM ALONE DO WE FIND SALVATION. HE ALONE CAN CHANGE THE WATER OF OUR LONELINESS, DIFFICULTIES AND SIN INTO THE WINE OF ENCOUNTER, JOY AND FORGIVENESS. HE ALONE



POPE FRANCIS 1. OCT 2013 ROME

Alleluia

Feast Days in May: 1st St Joseph the Worker
 3rd Sts. Philip and James Apostles.
 14th St Matthias Apostle. 26th St Philip Neri.
 27th St Augustine of Canterbury.
 31st the Visitation. Vocations Sunday 11th.