

May 9, 2010

I have always looked forward to the month of May. On the one hand, all of nature comes to life with buds on the trees and the appearance of spring flowers. More especially, during May we show particular devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother.

In my grade school, every classroom had a May altar honoring Our Lady. We brought fresh flowers from our yards (daffodils, tulips, lilacs) to adorn her image. Each day we sang Marian hymns and prayed decades of the rosary and other Marian prayers.

In our parish, each Monday evening we prayed the Novena of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal concluding with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In my bedroom, I prayed before a May altar with a statue of Our Lady of Grace, adorned with fresh flowers from the yard. In turn, Our Lady inspired within me a special devotion to daily Mass, no doubt, the inspiration for my vocation.

Two years ago, Father Dobrzynski and I led a diocesan pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France. This year, another diocesan pilgrimage in late October will return to Lourdes and include the Shrine at Fatima.

Recently, I led a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where we celebrated Mass and reflected upon the Sacred Scriptures at many shrines honoring the teachings or miracles of Jesus as well as other events in His life. At Cana in Galilee, where Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding, we invited the married couples to renew their marriage vows. I would like to reflect upon the role that Mary played in Jesus' first miracle at Cana.

Mary noticed the embarrassing situation for the newly married couple when they ran out of wine. Instinctively, she was sensitive to the predicament of this

couple and brought their difficulty to Jesus' attention. Mary was completely disinterested in herself. She placed herself in the position of intercessor, pleading on behalf of the newly married couple.

In his encyclical "Mother of the Redeemer," Pope John Paul II pointed out that the intervention of Mary at Cana demonstrates for us "a new kind of motherhood," that is, motherhood "according to the Spirit" and not just "according to the flesh." The pope suggests that the need for wine was symbolic of greater needs, the need for Christ's healing and saving power.

Pope John Paul II suggests that Mary "places herself between her Son and humankind in the reality of their wants, needs, and sufferings. She puts herself in the middle...Mary intercedes for humankind." The pope suggests that Mary's intercession at the wedding in Cana expresses her desire that Jesus manifest His saving power in our misfortunes, to free us from the evils and difficulties that weigh heavily upon us.

We learn from Mary at the wedding feast that her mediation is totally directed to Jesus and toward the revelation of His power. She places the need of the couple before Jesus and then surrenders to His will, confident that in God's own way and in God's own good time, His glory will respond to her prayer, "Do whatever He tells you."

Do we not do well to seek the intercession of Mary in our difficulties and then direct all our attention, our hopes, and our desires on Christ Himself? Can that not lead us to set aside our own preoccupations and fears, so that God can surprise us with the wonderful gifts that He wants to offer us?

During this month, let us honor Mary, seek her intercession, delight in her, and trust in her. After all, she is not only the Mother of Jesus, but our Mother as well. As Jesus was dying on the cross, He gave her to us as a gift when He said

to John: “Son, behold your Mother. Mother, behold your son.” In talking to John, the beloved disciple, Jesus was talking to each one of us. Let us embrace Mary as our Mother, turn to her in our needs, and learn from her to keep Jesus as the treasure in our heart.