



## Religious Education News and Calendar

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### ***Why is May Mary's month? Here is a brief explanation:***

For centuries, the Catholic Church has set aside the entire month of May to honor Mary, Mother of God. Not just a day in May, mind you, but the entire month. The custom spans both centuries and cultures, with roots going back as far as the Ancient Greeks and Ancient Rome... During baroque times devotion to Mary continued although it wasn't always held during May, Mary Month included thirty daily spiritual exercises honoring Mary.

It was in this era that Mary's Month and May were combined, making May the Month of Mary with special devotions organized on each day throughout the month. This custom became especially widespread during the nineteenth century and remains in practice until today.

### ***The ways Mary is honored in May is as varied as the people who honor her. Some ways include:***

- Daily recitation of the Rosary during May,
- Erecting a special May altar with a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of Mary's month.
- Crowning a statue of Mary during May – a custom known as May Crowning.
- The month of May also serves as a reminder to the faithful to strive to imitate our Blessed Mother's virtue in our own lives.

***So, What Can You Do at Your House?*** May altars and crowning's aren't just "church" things. We can and should be doing the same in our homes. When we echo the customs and traditions of the Church in our homes – our domestic churches – we participate more fully in the life of the Church.

I encourage your family to:

- ***Make a prayer corner in your home.*** No matter how fancy or simple it is. The main point is that it is a place designated for God, and more specifically, for spending time with him. Just as you need proper atmosphere to sleep, you also need proper atmosphere to pray.
- ***Give Mary a special spot in your prayer corner.*** It can be a statue or picture, but place there some representation of our Blessed Mother. Make it appealing and a real tribute to her beauty and virtue. I have included coloring pages on the website that the children can download and color to use in their May Altar to Mary in your home or in their bedroom.
- ***Crown Mary.*** Our parish May Crowning was set for Mother's Day – Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. Sadly, we will not be able to gather as we have in the past. So, make a special time with your family – maybe after watching Mass online, to place some flowers at your home May Altar, or have the kids color or make flowers and put on and around the altar. The meaning is far more important than the action.

***Why?*** Not because it's a long-standing tradition in the Church, although it is. Not because there are any special graces connected to it, although there is. No, do it because ***Mary is Mother – your mother, my mother, everyone's mother – and because she cares for all of us day-in-and-day-out without fail, interceding for us in even the tiniest matters.*** For that, she deserves an entire month in her honor.



*\*Some of the above text was excerpted from an article by Marge Fenelon in The National Catholic Register (May 1, 2016).*