

## FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are going to start the beautiful month of May this week. The month of May is dedicated to Mary. She is Our Lady. Is she your Lady? Let us give her due honor in our devotions, but especially through our lives. I wish for all our families to make this month special in your homes by gathering every day to recite the Holy Rosary, or even a decade, or praying together the Litany to the Virgin Mary, or even just singing some hymns to her. I invite you to put a statue or image of Mary in a prominent place in your homes or front lawns. You can put some flowers or make a special home crowning of Mary in each family. Any type of veneration is pleasing to Mary. Every Wednesday in May after the 8:30 a.m. daily Mass, we can make a special tribute to Our Lady in front of her statue outside the 'Annex' by reciting the Holy Rosary. Let us witness to all those passing by that it is her month and that we are hers. Does it sound like a good idea? We will have our Mary Crowning on May 5, during the 10:30 a.m. Mass.

The Easter season is a fitting time to recall Mary's immense joy over her Son's Resurrection and to rediscover her role as mother and teacher in our lives. Mary was Jesus' first disciple, humbly following Him during every step of His journey and mission. She trusted in God completely and lived by His grace. She is our model of true discipleship and of complete faith. During the Easter season we are more aware of Mary's motherly presence and love. It is perhaps for this reason that popular tradition has dedicated the month of May, which falls during this liturgical season, to Our Blessed Mother.

Here is a great insight into St. Bernadette Soubirous, the young woman whom the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to in Lourdes, France. She was so famous and yet she did not attempt to trade her call for fame. People were openly skeptical about why the Blessed Virgin would appear to a girl who was functionally illiterate, who at the time of the first apparition had not even made her First Communion. Bernadette was so unimportant! She lived with her family in a one-room cottage that had once served as a jail!

But Bernadette was spiritually indifferent to the doubts and verbal rocks thrown her way. With unfailing simplicity and calm, Bernadette shared what had happened - nothing more and nothing less - about the eighteen times in six months that she saw Our Lady. When investigators changed her words or tried to add to them, she corrected them. When they asked what it meant when Our Lady said, "I am the Immaculate Conception," she said it was not her responsibility to explain these things, only to share the message.

And when the visions ceased, Bernadette did not make a single attempt to trade on her fame. She entered a convent - not leaving even for the dedication of the Lourdes Basilica. When someone asked why she herself, sickly her entire life, was not cured by the waters, Bernadette responded: "The Blessed Virgin perhaps desires for me to suffer. I need it."

It can be tempting to do some self-promotion, to inflate our own importance to the well-being of our family, our parish, or our employer. Yet we are all only vessels for God's work in the world. May we, as Bernadette did, respond to the profound gifts we are given with humility, modesty, and clarity. "From this moment on, anything concerning me is no longer of any interest to me. I must belong entirely to God and God alone. Never to myself." -St. Bernadette Soubirous

Peace,