

Celebrating Mary IN THE MONTH OF MAY

A Resource for the Domestic Church



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INTRODUCTION

In the Catholic Church, the month of May traditionally marks a time of special devotion to the Blessed Mother.

Since the earliest centuries of Christianity, men, women, and children throughout the world have prayed to Mary, asking her intercession in times of need, and seeking her guidance in drawing closer to her Son, Jesus. One of this month's most popular Marian devotions is the May Crowning, in which members of a parish or community gather to honor Mary by crowning a statue of her or adorning an image of her with a garland of flowers, and often carrying the image in procession while praying and singing together. In the absence of such public or communal celebrations, the May Crowning can also be done in the home as a family devotion. Those who participate prayerfully in this beautiful and tender act place themselves under Mary's maternal protection, joyfully claiming her as their patroness and model of faith in God.

Whether we are experiencing times of rejoicing or times of sorrow in our lives, we can always turn to Mary. She who knew the joy of raising Jesus also knew the anguish of uncertainty and the pain of watching her only Son suffer and die. Yet, through it all, Mary's trust in God never wavered, and her faith in God's plan for her life sustained her at every moment. She witnessed the glory of Jesus' Resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and when her life on earth was completed, Mary received God's greatest blessings for her steadfast obedience to his will as God took her up into heaven body and soul, and crowned her as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

In crowning or adorning an image of Mary, we thank Jesus for giving us his Mother to be our own. We pray that God will fill us with grace as he did Mary, so that we might imitate her in saying "yes" to God's plan for our own lives, and one day join her in heaven to sing God's praises forever.

MATERIALS

You will need the following materials for this May Crowning:

- ◆ **Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

This can be a statue, either placed in the home or in a garden, or it can be an icon or other image of Mary, but it should be large enough so that it can be suitably adorned.

- ◆ **Crown for the statue or garland for the image**

Metal crowns for Mary statues are available for purchase through many Catholic vendors, but crowns woven from flowers are also perfectly appropriate. Real flowers are always preferable, but if these are unavailable, artificial flowers can be used.

- ◆ **Flowers (real or artificial)**

If real or silk flowers are unavailable, [this brief video](#) provides a tutorial on making flowers out of tissue paper and pipe cleaners. Just as any mother would delight in a bouquet of dandelions or paper flowers offered by her child, the Blessed Mother will always accept any sincere offerings made in love.

- ◆ **Candles (optional)**

If the May Crowning is taking place indoors, candles are a lovely way to honor an image of Our Lady in addition to flowers. Always exercise caution in lighting, burning, and extinguishing candles.

- ◆ **Holy water (optional)**

- ◆ **A leader**

- ◆ **Up to three readers**

PREPARATION


This simplified May Crowning is drawn from the Rite for Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). You can adapt it further if need be to fit your particular situation.

The sidebar texts in gold are ritual instructions and should not be read aloud.

If possible, making a small procession with the image either in the home or outside is a beautiful addition to the May Crowning. If a procession is not possible, the prayers and crowning of Mary can take place wherever the image of Mary normally stands in the home, or, you may wish to consider setting up a special location where the image can be placed for all of May. Then, you can continue to use that space for prayers and devotions to Mary throughout the month.

For families with younger children, several elements of the ritual have been listed as optional to prevent it from becoming too long. Some Additional Resources, such as the litanies and alternate scriptural readings, could be used throughout the month of May during times of family prayer. Saturdays, in particular, are designated for devotion to Mary and would provide an opportune time to gather again before her image and offer prayers for her intercession.

Finally, the crowning of Mary is intended to cultivate devotion to the Blessed Mother, but the ultimate intent of *all* Marian devotion is to point us to her Son, Jesus. To this end, if the image of Mary used is of the Mother and Child (for example, if Mary is holding Jesus in her arms), then the image of Jesus should also be crowned.

The hymns suggested throughout the ritual order are linked to YouTube videos, indicated by the  icon. You can either use these videos to learn the hymns, or sing along with them during your May Crowning.

ORDER FOR CROWNING AN IMAGE OF MARY

▶ **Opening Hymn:** *Immaculate Mary*

Opening Prayer

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: We have gathered here in joy to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary,
our Queen and our Mother.

Mary is a model for all of us
because of her perfect obedience to God.
The more we are devoted to Mary,
the more she will help us to become like her Son, Jesus.
May we always honor Mary with love and devotion,
and imitate her faithfulness to God's will in all things.

Let us listen to the Word of God.

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-2; 5-6

Reader: A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
Upon those who lived in a land of gloom
a light has shone.
You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing;
they rejoice before you as people rejoice at harvest,
as they exult when dividing the spoils.

▶ When all are assembled, the leader invites everyone to stand and join in song. Another suitable Marian hymn may be sung (see Additional Resources).

All make the Sign of the Cross.

▶ If space permits, all may be seated to hear the readings proclaimed by either the leader or a designated reader. For a shortened form of the May Crowning, the First Reading and Responsorial Psalm may be omitted, but the Gospel should always be proclaimed.

One of the following readings may also be used: Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Zechariah 2:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a (see Additional Resources).

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us;
upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.
His dominion is vast and forever peaceful,
Upon David's throne, and over his kingdom,
which he confirms and sustains
by judgment and justice, both now and forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16

*Reader first,
then All:*

The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Reader:

Hear, O daughter, and see; turn your ear,
forget your people and your father's house.

All:

The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Reader:

So shall the king desire your beauty;
for he is your lord.

All:

The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Reader:

They are borne in with gladness and joy;
they enter the palace of the king.

All:

The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Gospel: Luke 1:41-43, 46-55

Leader:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit,
cried out in a loud voice and said,
"Most blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

▶ Judith 13:18bcde, 19 may also be used (see Additional Resources).

▶ If seated, all should stand for the Gospel. An Alleluia may be sung if preferred, as in the Liturgy of the Word during the Mass.

Luke 1:26-38 or John 19:25-27 may also be used (see Additional Resources).

And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Crowning of Mary

Coronation Hymn: *Queen of the May*

Prayer Over the Image

Leader: Lord God, as we honor this image of Mary,
We ask that our hearts be filled with love for our heavenly Queen.
May our faithful devotion to the Mother of your Son
keep us always faithful to you.
As we offer this sign of our devotion,
help us to imitate the example of Mary
and to offer acts of love and kindness to our neighbors,
so that we might also win the crown
which you offer to all your faithful.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

▶ All should move to gather around the statue or image of Mary. If the image is being carried in procession, the leader or another member of the group should carry the image to the place where it will be crowned, while everyone sings a hymn. Flowers may be placed in vases or simply laid down in front of the image.

Another suitable Marian hymn may be sung (see Additional Resources). The prayer provided may be said over the image, or the group may offer a Hail Mary or other suitable Marian prayer (see Additional Resources).

Litany of Loreto

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**
 Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**
 Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, hear us. **Christ, graciously hear us.**

God, the Father of heaven, **have mercy on us.**
 God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**
 God, the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**
 Holy Trinity, one God, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**
 Holy Mother of God, **pray for us.**
 Holy Virgin of virgins, **pray for us.**
 Mother of Christ, **pray for us.**
 Mother of the Church, **pray for us.**
 Mother of divine grace, **pray for us.**
 Mother most pure, **pray for us.**
 Mother most chaste, **pray for us.**
 Mother inviolate, **pray for us.**
 Mother undefiled, **pray for us.**
 Mother most amiable, **pray for us.**
 Mother most admirable, **pray for us.**
 Mother of good counsel, **pray for us.**
 Mother of our Creator, **pray for us.**
 Mother of our Savior, **pray for us.**
 Mother of mercy, **pray for us.**
 Virgin most prudent, **pray for us.**
 Virgin most venerable, **pray for us.**
 Virgin most renowned, **pray for us.**
 Virgin most powerful, **pray for us.**
 Virgin most merciful, **pray for us.**
 Virgin most faithful, **pray for us.**
 Mirror of justice, **pray for us.**
 Seat of wisdom, **pray for us.**
 Cause of our joy, **pray for us.**
 Spiritual vessel, **pray for us.**
 Vessel of honor, **pray for us.**
 Singular vessel of devotion, **pray for us.**
 Mystical rose, **pray for us.**
 Tower of David, **pray for us.**
 Tower of ivory, **pray for us.**
 House of gold, **pray for us.**

► The leader sprinkles the crown or garland with holy water if it is available, and either the leader or another designated participant places it on the image of Mary. The Litany of Loreto may be prayed after the image is adorned, or, for a shortened form of the May Crowning, it may be omitted.

The leader prays the text in regular typeface, and all respond with the text in bold typeface.

This litany originated in Italy in the sixteenth century. Its many titles for Mary are each worthy of contemplation. If the litany is omitted during the May Crowning, its titles could be used as a starting point for reflection in prayer. For example, consider one of the many virtues attributed to Mary, and ask her to help you grow in that virtue.

Ark of the covenant, **pray for us.**
Gate of heaven, **pray for us.**
Morning star, **pray for us.**
Health of the sick, **pray for us.**
Refuge of sinners, **pray for us.**
Comfort of the afflicted, **pray for us.**
Help of Christians, **pray for us.**
Queen of Angels, **pray for us.**
Queen of Patriarchs, **pray for us.**
Queen of Prophets, **pray for us.**
Queen of Apostles, **pray for us.**
Queen of Martyrs, **pray for us.**
Queen of Confessors, **pray for us.**
Queen of Virgins, **pray for us.**
Queen of all Saints, **pray for us.**
Queen conceived without original sin, **pray for us.**
Queen assumed into heaven, **pray for us.**
Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, **pray for us.**
Queen of families, **pray for us.**
Queen of peace, **pray for us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **spare us, O Lord.**
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **graciously hear us, O Lord.**
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **have mercy on us.**

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the Resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
granted joy to the whole world, grant, we beg you, that, through the
intercession of the Virgin Mary, his Mother, we may attain the joys of
eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

General Intercessions

Reader: Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, that she may look to Mary as the model
of faithful discipleship in following Jesus, her Son.
Let us pray to the Lord.

► Those gathered may offer
their own petitions in addition
to or instead of the General
Intercessions provided here.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all nations, that, through the intercession of the Queen of peace, all peoples may live together in harmony. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For those who endure illness, poverty, loneliness, imprisonment, persecution, or grief, that they may be strengthened by the tender love of Mary, the Mother of mercy. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all of us, that we may grow in our love for Mary our Mother and follow her example of humility and loving service, as she leads us to Jesus, her Son. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

► Additional petitions may be offered here if desired.

Closing Prayer

Leader: God of mercy, listen to the prayers of your servants who have honored your handmaid Mary as Mother and Queen. Grant that by your grace we may serve you and our neighbor on earth and be welcomed into your eternal kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

► All make the Sign of the Cross.

► **Closing Hymn:** [*Hail, Holy Queen Enthroned Above*](#)

► Another suitable Marian hymn may be sung (see Additional Resources).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Marian Hymns

- ▶ [Hail, Holy Queen Enthroned Above](#)
- ▶ [Immaculate Mary](#)
- ▶ [Queen of the May \(Bring Flowers of the Rarest\)](#)
- ▶ [Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly](#)
- ▶ [Hail Mary, Gentle Woman](#)
- ▶ [Ave Maria \(Hail Mary\)](#)
- ▶ [Salve Regina \(Hail, Holy Queen\)](#)
- ▶ [Regina Coeli, Laetare \(Queen of Heaven, Rejoice\)](#)
- ▶ [Ave Regina Caelorum \(Hail, Queen of Heaven\)](#)

Alternate Scripture Readings: First Reading

Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The LORD spoke to Ahaz:

Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God;
let it be deep as the nether world,
or high as the sky!

But Ahaz answered,

“I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!”

Then Isaiah said:

Listen, O house of David!

Is it not enough for you to weary men,
must you also weary my God?
Therefore the LORD himself will give you this sign:
the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Zechariah 2:14–17

A reading from the book of the prophet Zechariah.

Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion!
See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the LORD.
Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD
on that day,
and they shall be his people,
and he will dwell among you,
and you shall know that the LORD of hosts
has sent me to you.
The LORD will possess Judah as his portion
in the holy land,
and he will again choose Jerusalem.
Silence, all, in the presence of the LORD!
for he stirs forth from his holy dwelling.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Galatians 4:4–7

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians.

Brothers and sisters:
When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under the law,
to ransom those under the law,
so that we might receive adoption as sons.
As proof that you are sons,
God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts,
crying out, “Abba, Father!”
So you are no longer a slave but a son,
and if a son then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a

A reading from the book of Revelation.

God's temple in heaven was opened,
and the ark of his covenant could be seen
in the temple.

A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed
with the sun,
with the moon under her feet,
and on her head a crown of twelve stars.
She was with child and wailed aloud in pain
as she labored to give birth.

Then another sign appeared in the sky;
it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads
and ten horns,
and on its heads were seven diadems.
Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky
and hurled them down to the earth.

Then the dragon stood before the woman
about to give birth,
to devour her child when she gave birth.
She gave birth to a son, a male child,
destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod.
Her child was caught up to God and his throne.
The woman herself fled into the desert
where she had a place prepared by God.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
“Now have salvation and power come,
and the Kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Anointed.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Alternate Scripture Readings: Responsorial Cantic

Judith 13:18bcde, 19

Reader first,
then All: **You are the highest honor of our race.**

Reader: Blessed are you, daughter, by the Most High God,
above all the women on earth;
and blessed be the LORD God,
the creator of heaven and earth.

All: **You are the highest honor of our race.**

Reader: Your deed of hope will never be forgotten
by those who tell of the might of God.

All: **You are the highest honor of our race.**

Alternate Scripture Readings: Gospel

Luke 1:26–38

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God
to a town of Galilee in Nazareth,
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph,
of the house of David,
and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, he said,
“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.”

But she was greatly troubled at what was said
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her,
“Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne
of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his Kingdom there will be no end.”

But Mary said to the angel,
 “How can this be,
 since I have no relations with a man?”
And the angel said to her in reply,
 “The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
 and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born
 will be called holy, the Son of God.
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,
 has also conceived a son in her old age,
 and this is the sixth month for her
 who was called barren;
 For nothing will be impossible for God.”
Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word.”
Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

John 19:25–27

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother
 and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,
 and Mary Magdalene.
When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there
 whom he loved,
 he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.”
Then he said to the disciple,
 “Behold, your mother.”
And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Marian Prayers

Texts in regular typeface may be prayed by the Leader. Texts in bold typeface may be prayed by All.

Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of Virgins my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning, and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Regina Caeli

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, **alleluia.**
For he whom you did merit to bear, **alleluia.**
Has risen, as he said, **alleluia.**
Pray for us to God, **alleluia.**
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, **alleluia.**
For our Lord has truly risen, **alleluia.**
Let us pray.

O God, who gave joy to the world through the Resurrection of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life.

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Litany of Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, hear us. **Christ, graciously hear us.**

God, the Father of heaven, **have mercy on us.**
God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**
God, the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**
Holy Trinity, one God, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**
Holy Mother of God, **pray for us.**
Holy Virgin of virgins, **pray for us.**
Chosen daughter of the Father, **pray for us.**
Mother of Christ the King, **pray for us.**
Glory of the Holy Spirit, **pray for us.**
Virgin daughter of Zion, **pray for us.**
Virgin poor and humble, **pray for us.**
Virgin gentle and obedient, **pray for us.**
Handmaid of the Lord, **pray for us.**
Mother of the Lord, **pray for us.**
Helper of the Redeemer, **pray for us.**
Full of grace, **pray for us.**
Fountain of beauty, **pray for us.**
Model of virtue, **pray for us.**
First fruit of our redemption, **pray for us.**
Perfect disciple of Christ, **pray for us.**
Untarnished image of the Church, **pray for us.**
Woman transformed, **pray for us.**
Woman clothed with the sun, **pray for us.**
Woman crowned with stars, **pray for us.**
Gentle Lady, **pray for us.**
Gracious Lady, **pray for us.**
Our Lady, **pray for us.**
Joy of Israel, **pray for us.**

Splendor of the Church, **pray for us.**
Pride of the human race, **pray for us.**
Advocate of peace, **pray for us.**
Minister of holiness, **pray for us.**
Champion of God's people, **pray for us.**
Queen of love, **pray for us.**
Queen of mercy, **pray for us.**
Queen of peace, **pray for us.**
Queen of Angels, **pray for us.**
Queen of Patriarchs and Prophets, **pray for us.**
Queen of Apostles and Martyrs, **pray for us.**
Queen of Confessors and Virgins, **pray for us.**
Queen of all Saints, **pray for us.**
Queen conceived without original sin, **pray for us.**
Queen assumed into heaven, **pray for us.**
Queen of all the earth, **pray for us.**
Queen of heaven, **pray for us.**
Queen of the universe, **pray for us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **spare us, O Lord.**
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **graciously hear us, O Lord.**
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, **have mercy on us.**

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Father, you have given us the Mother of your Son to be our Queen and our Mother. With the support of her prayers may we come to share the glory of your children in the Kingdom of heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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