



## ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

*The Church in Central and Southern Indiana*

# Leadership Briefing

By Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

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### Mary's month, a time for devotion, prayer

There are Marian feasts in every season of the Church's calendar, but May and October are two months set aside by tradition as times for special prayer and Marian devotion. The tradition of dedicating the month of May to Mary came about in the 13th century because May is the time when in many parts of the world spring is at the height of its beauty. Spring is the season when nature renews itself. In a very special way, Mary gave new life to the world when she gave birth to our savior Jesus Christ.

Devotion to Mary is an important part of our Catholic identity. As our mother she is an example of a committed "Yes" to the will of God. Because of our confidence in Mary, we ask her for help in the most difficult moments of our lives—as any child does with his or her mother. During the recent pandemic, Pope Francis, and dioceses like ours throughout the world, repeatedly called on Mary to intercede for us and to bring her Divine Son's comfort, healing and peace to all humanity.

Friday, May 13, is the Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima. Church historians tell us that on this day in 1917, three young children reported seeing a woman "brighter than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal goblet filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun."

We are blessed with many ways to express our love for Mary. The rosary, which Mary urged the children at Fatima—and all of us—to pray, is the most popular form of Marian devotion. When we pray the rosary, we have a special opportunity to meditate on the incidents in the life of Christ, the sacred mysteries of our redemption, even as we ask our Our Lady to



intercede for us as we struggle to follow her Son as missionary disciples who are called to give witness to his peace.

The rosary is a sacramental comprising a string of beads, a crucifix and a pendant. It is also a set of prayers including the Apostles' Creed followed by the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary (repeated 10 times for each decade) and the Glory Be to the Father. Those who pray the rosary often say that touching the beads helps the mind concentrate on the "mysteries" that commemorate key events in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Quoting from the Vatican II document, "Lumen Gentium" ("Light of the Nations") #60, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "the Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship" (#971). We Christians do not worship Mary (or any of the saints), but we honor them and look to their example, and their active intercession, as intrinsic to the adoration given to God alone. I encourage all Catholics in central and southern Indiana to pray the rosary, especially during this month of May as we continue the Easter season and pray for the people of Ukraine and other war-torn areas of the world.

If you have never prayed the rosary, or if you haven't "picked up the beads" in many years, give it a try this month. I think you'll find that the rosary can be a great source of consolation and peace. It's a form of meditation that helps remove us from the worries and frustrations of daily life and places us in the loving arms of our Blessed Mother. By meditating on the mysteries of Christ's life among us, we can get outside of ourselves and join him on the Way of Life.

To know, love and serve Jesus Christ is the object of all true Christian prayer, including the rosary. Mary's whole life points us to her divine son. She was the first to know him as the incarnate Son of God, and she was the first to tell us, her children, to "do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).

Mary was faithful to the bitter end, and her story inspires us to look to Jesus and to be united with him. As St. Teresa of Calcutta would say, "We come to Jesus through Mary."

Every era in human history has had its share of distractions and anxieties, but it seems to me that our contemporary situation makes it especially difficult to concentrate on knowing, loving and serving God. We are so bombarded with "bad news" and with negative, or at least superficial, images in the various media that surround us all the time.

Praying the rosary is a positive means of getting away from it all and allowing our minds and hearts to focus on what is truly good and beautiful in our lives as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

When we consecrated our sisters and brothers in Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, we acknowledged that they are our brothers and sisters who need the protection and tender care of our Blessed Mother.

This month especially, I pray that Our Lady of Fatima will intercede for us. May she inspire us by her tenderness and her courage to set aside the things that distract us and look to her Son Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Charles C. Thompson  
Archbishop of Indianapolis



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## **Message from Pope Francis**

### **PRAYER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS**

*On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Cova da Iria (12-13 May 2017)*

*Chapel of the Apparitions, Fátima | Friday, 12 May 2017*

Hail Holy Queen, Blessed Virgin of Fatima, Lady of Immaculate Heart, our refuge and our way to God!

As a pilgrim of the Light that comes to us from your hands, I give thanks to God the Father, who in every time and place is at work in human history;

As a pilgrim of the Peace that, in this place, you proclaim, I give praise to Christ, our peace, and I implore for the world concord among all peoples;

As a pilgrim of the Hope that the Spirit awakens, I come as a prophet and messenger to wash the feet of all, at the same table that unites us.

Hail, Mother of Mercy, Lady robed in white! In this place where, a hundred years ago you made known to all the purposes of God's mercy, I gaze at your robe of light and, as a bishop robed in white, I call to mind all those who, robed in the splendor of their baptism, desire to live in God and tell the mysteries of Christ in order to obtain peace.

Hail, life and sweetness, Hail, our hope, O Pilgrim Virgin, O Universal Queen!

In the depths of your being, in your Immaculate Heart, you keep the joys of men and women as they journey to the Heavenly Homeland.

In the depths of your being, in your Immaculate Heart, you keep the sorrows of the human family, as they mourn and weep in this valley of tears. In the depths of your being, in your Immaculate Heart, adorn us with the radiance of the jewels of your crown and make us pilgrims, even as you were a pilgrim.

With your virginal smile, enliven the joy of Christ's Church. With your gaze of sweetness, strengthen the hope of God's children. With your hands lifted in prayer to the Lord, draw all people together into one human family.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary, Queen of the Rosary of Fatima! Grant that we may follow the example of Blessed Francisco and Blessed Jacinta, and of all who devote themselves to proclaiming the Gospel. Thus we will follow all paths and everywhere make our pilgrim way; we will tear down all walls and cross every frontier, as we go out to every periphery, to make known God's justice and peace.

In the joy of the Gospel, we will be the Church robed in white, the whiteness washed in the blood of the Lamb, blood that today too is shed in the wars tearing our world apart. And so we will be, like you, an image of the column of light that illumines the ways of the world, making God known to all, making known to all that God exists, that God dwells in the midst of his people, yesterday, today and for all eternity.

Hail, Mother of the Lord, Virgin Mary, Queen of the Rosary of Fatima! Blessed among all women, you are the image of the Church robed in paschal light, you are the honor of our people, you are the victory over every assault of evil.

Prophecy of the merciful love of the Father, Teacher of the Message of Good News of the Son, Sign of the burning Fire of the Holy Spirit, teach us, in this valley of joys and sorrows, the eternal truths that the Father reveals to the little ones.

Show us the strength of your protective mantle. In your Immaculate Heart, be the refuge of sinners and the way that leads to God.

In union with my brothers and sisters, in faith, in hope and in love, I entrust myself to you.

In union with my brothers and sisters, through you, I consecrate myself to God, O Virgin of the Rosary of Fatima. And at last, enveloped in the Light that comes from your hands, I will give glory to the Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

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## My Prayer for You

**Let us pray with Pope Francis:**

*Ave O Clemens, Ave O pia! Salve Regina Rosarii Fatimae. Ave O clemens, Ave O pia!  
Ave O dulcis Virgo Maria!*

Hail Holy Queen, Blessed Virgin of Fatima, Immaculate Heart of Mary, <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>our refuge and our way to God! Guide us to your Son, Jesus, so that we may obtain true and lasting peace in our hearts, in our families and communities, and among all nations and peoples. Amen.

*+ Charles C. Thompson*