**May Chaplain’s Report**

***Real Men, Honor their Mother!***

Growing up, the month of May was always one I looked forward to. If memory serves me right, our summer uniforms were back, school was mounting to its eventual end, and Memorial Day weekend at the beach was just around the bend. It also meant our annual May Procession at Holy Innocents which depending upon what grade we were in at the time we all had a different part to play.

As a kid, my understanding of the annual May Procession was pretty limited. We honored Mary for Jesus’ mom and our mom too. We sang songs together in her name and about the wonderful things that happened to her and through her. But apart from that I never quite appreciated why it was we went through all the extra trouble to pay honor to Mary – she’s in heaven, does she really need our praise and honor?

But something changed while I was in college and would come to a head in the fall of my first year in the seminary. While I understood *objectively* the reasons why we honor Mary, and ought to desire to give ourselves to her protections I didn’t really know her as a person. After all, wasn’t Jesus enough?

As is well known one of the greatest “Marian Popes,” that is a pope with a great devotion to Mary was and is Saint John Paul II. While on a retreat, in the winter of my junior year at Temple University, I came across a book of his entitled *Gift and Mystery*, written on his fiftieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. To this day, I can almost recall the page (28 or 29) on which I first got a glimpse of John Paul II’s first real encounter with Mary and what she could mean for me too.

John Paul II chose for his Episcopal and eventually pontifical motto, the phrase, *Totus Tuus,* that is “*Totally yours.”* This is a sentiment found in the writings of St. Louis de Montfort whose feast we celebrated on April 28th. It essentially encapsulates the following: *“Mary I am totally yours.”*

As a young man, John Paul II worked as a quarrymen in order to provide for himself and his aging father during the Nazi Occupation of Poland. During the nights spent working at the quarry he would also find time to read. He read during that time St. Louis de Montfort’s *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.* Before he encountered this book he admits being hesitant to engage in deeper Marian devotion thinking he ought to focus more on Christ. What St. Louis helped to convince him that true devotion to Mary was always focused on Christ.

From that point on, devotion to our Lady formed a foundational part of his spirituality and relationship to Mary’s son, Jesus. As the years wore on I began to pray the rosary more regularly but still held back a bit too, harboring some of that youthful hesitance of John Paul II. When I got to Seminary I finally took the time to really pray *with*, *to* and *through* Mary and also read the *True Devotion* book of St. Louis de Montfort. The book is one part of a preparation for a “Total *Consecration* to the Blessed Virgin Mary.” This is a total entrustment of oneself to Mary’s love and care.

According to St. Louis, ***“This devotion is a smooth, short, perfect and sure way of attaining union with our Lord, in which Christian perfection consists.”*** What does that mean? It is a smooth, short, perfect ad sure way of becoming a saint. St. Louis’ famous summation of this devotion is a simple one, ***“Ad Jesum Per Mariam,” “To Jesus through Mary.”***

This May, I encourage you to take time to pray with, to and through our Lady. Pray especially for the gift of knowing her more personally and experiencing her loving care for you wherever you may find yourself. It is no accident that as knights we seek our Lady’s special protection in all our efforts. ***“Take this rosary and pray it as often as you are able.”***

**Practical Tips:**

1. ***Pray the Rosary***
   * Find a guide for meditation online to help you reflect on each mystery as you go.
   * Car time is a good time for a rosary!
2. ***Read: True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Secret of Mary***
3. ***Participate in Marian Devotions around the Parish, esp. a Paris May Procession*** 
   * St. Robert’s May Procession – Wednesday May 9, 2018 at 7:00PM.

**Coming Up:**

***May***

* Ascension Thursday – May 10, 2018
  + Holy Day of Obligation
* Mother’s Day – May 13, 2018
  + Pray especially for present mothers and those expecting. Remember those women in crisis pregnancy situations and their families.
* Pentecost Sunday – May 20, 2018

**June**

* St. Robert’s 50th Anniversary Mass – June 3, 2018 11:00AM