

Mary, Mother of the Church

When I am in need, there are two people I go to first - my mom and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Often, it is my mom who leads me to Mary.

“Pray your rosary” is my mom’s solution when a situation seems hopeless or out of our control, and it is the best advice I have ever received.

During the month of May, we will celebrate mothers as we have since President Woodrow Wilson established Mother’s Day as a formal holiday in 1914. Concurrently, Catholics will use May as the Month of Mary, a tradition that has a much longer history.

Parishes throughout the nation and the Archdiocese of Baltimore will celebrate Mary through May crowning processions, daily rosaries and Marian displays. In addition, for the first time this year, Masses will honor Mary in a new memorial May 21.

The Vatican announced March 3 that every year on the Monday after Pentecost, the day that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, the church will celebrate Mary, Mother of the Church.

I heard that someone commenting on the new memorial said, “Isn’t there enough about Mary, already?”

How can there be too much about Mary when she brought us Jesus?

As Catholics, we often get questioned on our devotion to Mary as the mother of Jesus. I believe St. Teresa of Kolkata said it best: “No Mary, no Jesus. No mother, no Son.”

None of us would be here if we did not have a mother. Just as I ask my mom for help and guidance, as Catholics we ask the same from Mary. The rosary is one way to connect with her, and through my mother’s encouragement, it has become my favorite form of prayer.

Check your parish’s bulletin for activities to honor Mary. As the weather warms, plant a Marian garden complete with traditional flowers of Mary, such as roses or

lilies. Commit to a daily or weekly rosary; or serve as a mentor to a young parishioner. Spend time with your mother, or if she has passed, share her memories and make a difference in her honor.

Check this out on the Catholic Review's Facebook page for inspiration on creating a small shrine to Mary in your home. If you have a picture showcasing your Marian shrine, send it to us through our Facebook or Twitter pages or to mail@CatholicReview.org.

Plan a visit to the National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, or simply keep an eye out for statues, grottos and shrines to Mary as you travel through the archdiocese, and take a moment to stop and pray. The beautiful statue of Mary at St. Wenceslaus in East Baltimore caught Kevin J. Parks' eye when on assignment, and he snapped the picture that accompanies this article.

The month of May provides us with opportunities to thank our mothers – biological, adoptive and spiritual – in many ways. Mom, thank you for mothering me. Mary, thank you for mothering the Lord.

Email Emily Rosenthal at erosenthal@CatholicReview.org.