



The Month of May is the Month of the Blessed Mother Mary **By Sr Jennifer Canillas**

“When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” (John 19:26-27)

One of the earliest memories of my childhood is of seeing my mother kneeling in front of her small altar with a beautiful statue of a lady. One night I asked her about the lady to whom she was praying and she patiently explained to me, “This is the Blessed Mother Mary, the mother of Jesus, my mother and yours, too.” I had heaps of questions for my mum and towards the end of our conversation she taught me how to pray the “Hail Mary.” And every night afterwards I would join my mother in praying to Our Lady, her Mother and mine, too.

The month of May is devoted to our Blessed Mother Mary. In the Philippines, we have a tradition called “Flores de Mayo”, wherein for the entire month of May the children of every parish gather every afternoon for a Catechism class where they learn about Mary and Jesus. They pray the Holy Rosary and offer a flower to the Blessed Mother. The parents and Catechists then serve afternoon tea to the children. They are being nourished physically, socially, and spiritually. Gradually, these children grow in their faith to God and their devotion to our Blessed Mother Mary for as the Scriptures says, *“People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”(Matthew 4:4)*

“Mary is present in the Church as the Mother of Christ... In this sense Mary, Mother of the Church, is also the Church's model. Indeed, as Pope Paul VI hopes and asks, the Church must draw “from the Virgin Mother of God the most authentic form of perfect imitation of Christ” (Redemptoris Mater, 47). She is indeed the perfect model for all generations. Through her, individuals who have gone astray from their faith are led to her Son, Jesus.

I admire the parish where I presently belong as after every Mass, the parishioners stay and pray the Holy Rosary. How wonderful it is to see parishioners spend a little more time to pray and offer intentions to Jesus and to Mary. Likewise, the role of my mum in my life has had a great impact when it comes to my faith journey and values.

Despite her being a working mum, she would always make sure that every Sunday we attended Holy Mass as a family. She taught me the difference between good and poor choices. She is my consoler, my adviser, my helper, my supporter, my first teacher, my first Catechist. With her I learned to pray. And, this is where I developed and found my vocation that led me to religious life and to join the Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation. Our Lady of Consolation is one of the Augustinian Marian titles, which we celebrate every 4 September.

This Mother's Day, I express my gratefulness to my mum for she chose 'life' for me. I give honour to my Blessed Mother Mary for she chose "life" too for the Word to be fleshed and to dwell among us. Our Church is blessed to have a Mother who protects her children.

I remember a priest friend who told me jokingly, "If Jesus won't listen to your prayer go to Mary, surely He will listen to His mum."