

The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + MAY 2026



Go, teach
all nations
(Matthew 28:19)



May Is the Month of Mary

Whose titles are as numerous as the stars

***Pope Paul's Plea
to Mary for Peace
on page 3***



***Poverty of Spirit is the
subject of Grow Your
Faith on page 4***

***Respect for Life lists
activities and events.
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theme,
Pope's prayer
intention on page 10.***

As befitting the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven and Earth, Mary has so many titles and names they create a litany. It's fascinating that one person can have so many titles, but how else could we grasp the aspects and virtues and unique role of Our Lady merely by her given name?

In our own parish church, there are 16 different images of Mary to ponder

Present in the East Wing's windows, we are offered the highlights of Our Lady's life, and the alcove in that wing, contains images of Our Lady of the Clouds, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Our Lady of Aparecida. Just a few feet away is Sam Barber's portrait

that he named Our Lady of Hyannis Port. On the left of the redo of the main altar, Our Lady with the Child Jesus is high on the wall.

In the west wing, Our Lady of Grace stands with her spouse St. Joseph, who is holding Jesus, creating an alcove for the Holy Family.

About 15 years ago, the Marian Fathers at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge listed the 10 Top Ten Names of Our Lady, which they noted are "admittedly subjective".

Counting down they are:

10. Queen of Peace — Mary officially received this title during World War I in a
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proclamation by Pope Benedict XV. The Pope added "Queen of Peace" into the Litany of Loreto in his call for peace among the warring nations.

9. Our Lady of Czestochowa, or The Black Madonna — Poland's national shrine to Mary. Legend has it that St. Luke painted this icon on a table that Jesus built. Popes and pilgrims alike have recognized the miraculous nature of the image.

8. Mother of Perpetual Help — This painting shows the Madonna and Child attended by the archangels Michael and Gabriel. The angels hold instruments central to the Passion. The painting is heart breaking. The Christ Child, having glimpsed the instruments of torture, runs to His mother's protection. His right foot is bare, indicating He was so frightened He ran out of His sandal.

7. Our Lady of Guadalupe — This is the image Mary left on the cloak of Juan Diego. Our Lady called herself *coatlaxopeuh*,

which means "the one who crushes the serpent." The word is pronounced "*quat-lasupe*," from which is derived the English version of "Guadalupe."

6. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel — This is Mary of the brown scapular. The scapular comes to us through the vision of St. Simon Stock. Many miracles have been attributed to the scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.



5. Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal — Mary's appearances to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830 marked the beginning of modern Marian apparitions. Mary gave Sr. Catherine the design for this medal. The words on the medal prompted clarification on the Immaculate Conception, which became a dogma of the Church in 1854.

4. Mother of Mercy — Saint Odo, a 10th century

abbot, is believed to be the first to call Mary by this name. In the 11th century, this title was incorporated into the prayer *Salve Regina*.

3. Blessed Mother — This seminal title derives from words of the Archangel Gabriel's greeting to Mary at the Annunciation, where she is called "blessed" among all other women.

2. The Immaculate Conception — The 1854 dogma issued by Pope Pius IX refers to Mary's sinless nature at the moment of being conceived by her parents. The Immaculate Conception was the first time a pope claimed a dogma to be infallible, even though the idea of papal infallibility would not be officially proclaimed for another 16 years. This is the definitive title of the Blessed Mother.

And now, the No. 1 title of the Blessed Mother selected by the Marians:

1. Theotokos — Mary's first and most important title means "God bearer." The title, defined by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., refers to the Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Incarnate Son of God. +

Pope Paul VI's Peace Plea to Mary

In 1965, he wrote the encyclical *Mensa Maio* on how we may obtain peace through prayer. Here are some excerpts.

Our heart rejoices at the thought of the moving tribute of faith and love which will soon be paid to the Queen of Heaven in every corner of the earth. For this is the month during which Christians, in their churches and their homes, offer the Virgin Mother more fervent and loving acts of homage and veneration; and it is the month in which a greater abundance of God's merciful gifts comes down to us from our Mother's throne.

. . . Since Mary is rightly to be regarded as the way by which we are led to Christ, the person who encounters Mary cannot help but encounter Christ likewise. For what other reason do we continually turn to Mary except to seek the Christ in her arms, to seek our Savior in her, through her, and with her? To Him men are to turn amid the anxieties and perils of this world, urged on by duty and driven by the compelling needs of their heart, to find a haven of salvation, a transcendent fountain of life.

Because the month of May is a powerful incentive to more frequent and fervent prayers, and because our petitions more readily find access to her compassionate heart during it, it has been a favorite custom of Our predecessors to choose this month, dedicated to Mary, for urging the Christian people to offer up public prayers whenever the needs of the Church demanded it or some grave crisis threatened the human race. This year, Venerable Brothers, We in turn feel compelled to call for such prayers from the whole Catholic world. Looking at the present

needs of the Church and the status of world peace, We have sound reasons to believe that the present hour is especially grave and that a plea for concerted prayer on the part of all Christians is a matter of top priority.

. . . [O]ur appeal stems from the present state of international affairs, which, as you well know, Venerable Brothers, is extremely troubled and uncertain. The supreme benefit of peace is again being placed in jeopardy. Today we see tensions worsening gravely between nations in certain parts of the world, as if no lesson had been learned from the bitter experiences of the two world wars which caused so much bloodletting in the first half of this century. Once again we see men risking recourse to arms instead of negotiating to settle disputes between opposing viewpoints. Thus the inhabitants of entire nations are subjected to unspeakable sufferings occasioned by uprisings, secret and treacherous warfare, and outright battles. These activities grow more frequent and more bitter each day, and could at any time spark a new and terrible war.

Cognizant of these grave dangers threatening mankind, and conscious of Our duty as Supreme Pastor, We deem it necessary to voice Our anxious concern and Our fears that these tensions may degenerate into a bloody war. We implore all those who bear the responsibility of public authority not to disregard mankind's unanimous desires to achieve peace. Let them try everything in *(Continued on page 4)*

... Paul VI's Peace Plea to Mary

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their power to preserve the peace which is now threatened. Let them not cease to promote discussions and negotiations on every possible occasion and between men of every rank, so that they may forestall the dangerous recourse to weapons and the terrible misfortunes which result for temporal, spiritual, and moral values. . . .

And so we shall obtain this lofty benefit by praying to God; by praying with constancy and watchfulness, as the Church has been wont to do from her very beginning; in particular, for the intercession and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Queen of peace. . . .

May she who experienced the cares and hardships of earthly life, the weariness of daily toil, the hardships and trials of poverty, and the sorrows of Calvary, come to aid the needs of the Church and the human race. May she graciously lend an ear to the devout pleas of those all over the world who beg her for peace. May she enlighten the minds of those who rule nations. And finally, may she prevail on God, who rules the winds and storms, to calm the tempests in men's warring hearts and grant us peace in our day. +

St. Alphonse Ligouri in his book, *The School of Christian Perfection*, cites Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"When the masters of the spiritual life speak of poverty in spirit, they generally understand it in a twofold sense. In the restricted sense it means a detachment of the heart from earthly possessions. In the broad sense, by poverty in spirit they mean detachment from everything earthly, no matter what it may be. In this sense, poverty in spirit is necessary for all who are striving after perfection.

'Our heart cannot exist without love; it will either love God or creatures. If it does not love creatures, it certainly will love God. In order to become holy we must therefore banish from our heart all that is not for God. When anyone came to the Fathers of the desert and desired to be received by them he was asked: 'Do you bring an empty heart that it may be filled by the Holy Ghost?' And they were right, for a heart that is filled with the things of earth has no room for the love of God. He who brings a vessel filled with earth to the spring will never be able to fill it with water until he empties it of the earth with which it is filled. How does it happen that so many pray and go frequently to Holy Communion, and still make no considerable progress in the love of God? The reason is doubtless because the heart is full of self-esteem, of vanity, self-will and attachment to creatures. He, therefore, who wishes to arrive at the perfect love of God must practice poverty in spirit. He must be detached from worldly possessions, from temporal honors, from his fellow creatures and from himself.

"Our Divine Redeemer has said: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. 5:3). And again: 'Woe to you rich.' (Luke 6:24). What does He mean by these words? Does He mean that all the poor are happy and all the rich unhappy? Certainly not; He wishes rather to exhort all, both rich and poor, to the practice of the virtue of poverty and detachment. For there are many who are poor in the goods of this world, but their hearts cling tenaciously to the things of earth; while on the other hand, there are wealthy people whose hearts are entirely detached from their earthly possessions." +



Respect for Life Corner

By Rebecca Minninger

Mother's Day, May 10th this year, has a different meaning for each of us. For us Catholics, we always think of our Blessed Mother Mary with gratitude, affection and the one to whom we pray.

If we have or had a good Mom, we are grateful and want to express our love at this occasion. If we had a difficult relationship with our own Mom or, an absent or hurtful Mom, it may be a painful time of year. And if we had a miscarriage or an abortion which interrupted our experience of motherhood, it can be particularly painful.

How can we relate to the above situations, as well to help those particularly, who have denied the experience of motherhood themselves? Our communal prayers for them are invaluable! Our Parish Rosary Holy Hour for Life, every third Friday at 7 p.m., is a specific time and place to pray.

Another couple of activities that our Parish is involved in this month are: The Walk for Life held in Attleboro that happened on May 1st, sponsored by our Fall River Diocese to pray, raise awareness of the importance of Life and to walk to, and pray at, the Abortion Clinic there.

Our own St. Francis Xavier Walking with Moms Ministry is sponsoring a table at the Cape Cod Mall on Saturday, May 9, from 10:30 a.m. through 2:30 p.m. We will pass out Spiritual Adoption pamphlets, our Walking with Moms brochures, and other literature to

shoppers. We will engage in conversations about our group and the purpose of Walking with Moms. We can still use some more volunteers for this very positive experience right before Mother's Day. If you can help please contact Deacon Steve at 508-237-1154, or just stop by and say hi at the Mall!

One of our Walking with Moms moms is celebrating her little boy's second birthday with much joy, and another one of our Walking with Moms moms is celebrating her little girl's first

birthday! It brings much joy to them, and us, who are part of the Team!

These celebrations are great graces as their Moms walked through much fear and uncertainty to bring their pregnancies to completion. Let us continue to pray for them. Let us pray especially too for the women who have suffered an abortion, for their healing, especially at this time of Mother's Day.

Helpful Resources

We are so blessed to have resources for healing available to those women suffering the pain of abortion. They are:

1. **Rachel's Vineyard**, a healing weekend retreat in Boston or Providence (1-877-HOPE-4-ME)
2. **Project Rachel**, their confidential phone line is 508-617-3230.
3. **Abundant Hope's** Surrendering the Secret, an 8-week Bible Study to gain healing and freedom. Call 508-455-0425 for info.



The Ascension of Christ

The following is from a sermon by St. Augustine of Hippo, originally delivered on the Solemnity of the Ascension. The sermon explains how we, as member's of Christ's body all ascended to heaven with God through love.

Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with Him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: "If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth."

For just as He remained with us even after His Ascension, so we too are already in heaven with Him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.

Christ is now exalted above the heavens, but He still suffers on earth all the pain that we, the members of His body, have to bear. He showed this when He cried out from above: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" and when He said: "I was hungry and you gave me food."

Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with Him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to Him?

While in heaven He is also with us; and we while on earth are with Him. He is here

with us by His divinity, His power and His love. We cannot be in heaven, as He is on earth, by divinity, but in Him, we can be there by love.

He did not leave heaven when He came down to us; nor did He withdraw from us when He went up again into heaven. The fact that He was in heaven even while He was on earth is borne out by His own statement: "No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven."

These words are explained by our oneness with Christ, for He is our head and we are His body. No one ascended into heaven except Christ because we also are Christ: He is the Son of Man by His union with us, and we by our union with Him are sons of God.

So the Apostle says: "Just as the human body, which has many members, is a unity, because all the different members make one body, so is it also with Christ."

He too has many members, but one body. Out of compassion for us He descended from heaven, and although He ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in Him by grace.

Thus, no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body as a unity cannot be separated from the head. +

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Leo XIV, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father. . .



Fall River Diocese Is #8 In U.S. Dioceses Recording Catholic Converts

Many U.S. dioceses recorded large increases in people joining the Catholic Church at Easter 2026, including some with record highs, a survey by the *National Catholic Register* found.

This year's expected increases in converts in the United States include regions where the Church has been growing rapidly in recent decades, such as Florida, but it also includes highly secularized New England, where the Diocese of Norwich, CT, is recording a 112% spike, the Diocese of Providence 76% more converts, and our diocese 71% more. At St. Francis Xavier, we welcomed **eight** converts to our parish. +

Fall River Diocese to Welcome National Eucharistic Pilgrimage During America's 250th Year

The Diocese of Fall River will take part in an historic moment, as it welcomes the 2026 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, an event closely tied to the nation's 250th anniversary and a broader call to spiritual renewal.

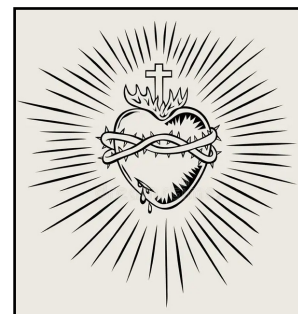
Bishop Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V, wrote to priests, announcing that the diocese has accepted an invitation to host a portion of the pilgrimage, which will pass through the

region June 29 to 30, part of the St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Route ending in Philadelphia.

The pilgrimage also coincides with the U.S. Bishops' planned consecration of the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, set to take place during this June's plenary assembly. While full details are being worked out the Fall River Diocese will host several public events during the 2026 pilgrimage. On June 29, opportunities for Mass and Eucharistic processions are planned in Easton and New Bedford, with additional liturgical celebrations on the morning of June 30 in Fall River. +

The USCCB Will Consecrate the U.S. to the Sacred Heart of Jesus June 11th

As the United States of America commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) joins this celebration by lifting up the contributions of Catholics and the impact of our faith on the history of this country. In a historic moment, the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11, 2026, and invite all to join in this consecration.



The **Knights of Columbus** launched its Pilgrim Icon Program centered on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus with a Holy Hour on the first Friday of January 2025. For more information on the Holy Hour format, go to kofc.org.

Access the **Welcome His Heart** website at welcomehisheart.com for ideas for families to join in the consecration. +



Words^{of} WISDOM

Quotations from the Saints whose feasts are this month . . .

“He, the Life of all, our Lord and Savior, did not arrange the manner of His own death lest He should seem to be afraid of some other kind. No. He accepted and bore upon the cross a death inflicted by others, and those other His special enemies, a death which to them was supremely terrible and by no means to be faced; and He did this in order that, by destroying even this death, He might Himself be believed to be the Life, and the power of death be recognised as finally annulled. A marvellous and mighty paradox has thus occurred, for the death which they thought to inflict on Him as dishonor and disgrace has become the glorious monument to death's defeat.”

— **St. Athanasius**

“Say the Rosary everyday to obtain peace for the world. And after each decade, say the following prayer:

‘O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.’”

— **Our Lady of Fatima**

“Mary signifies ‘Light-Giver’ or ‘Star of the Sea’ for she gave birth to the Light of the World. In the Syriac tongue, however,

Mary means ‘Lady’ and beautifully so, since she gave birth to the Lord.”

— **St. Isadore of Seville**

“The Name of Jesus is the glory of preachers because the shining splendor of that Name causes His word to be proclaimed and heard. And how do you think such an immense, sudden and dazzling light of faith came into the world, if not because Jesus was preached? Was it not through the brilliance and sweet savor of this Name that God called us into His marvellous light?”

— **St. Bernardine of Siena**

“I am innocent and die innocent. I absolve with all my heart those who seek my death and ask God that my blood bring peace to a divided Mexico.”

— **St. Christopher Magallanes**

“Love God above all things. His goodness being infinite and His beauty without comparison, you should keep always before your minds the great love He has for you as Father, Spouse, and Master . . . May you always remain in holy peace and love with your beloved Spouse Jesus Christ.”

— **St. Rita of Cascia**

“A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one.”

— **St. Philip Neri**

“Pray in the spirit and sentiment of love, in which the royal prophet said to Him, ‘Thou, O Lord, are my portion.’ Let others choose to themselves, portions among creatures, for my part, You are my portion, You alone I have chosen for my whole inheritance.”

— **St. Augustine of Canterbury**



Words OF WISDOM

Quotations on the beauty and value of Motherhood . . .

“The Most Important Person on earth is a mother. She cannot claim the honor of having built Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not. She has built something more magnificent than any cathedral — a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby’s body. . . . The angels have not been blessed with such a grace. They cannot share in God’s creative miracle to bring new saints to Heaven. Only a human mother can. Mothers are closer to God the Creator than any other creature; God joins forces with mothers in performing this act of creation What on God’s good earth is more glorious than this; to be a mother?”

— **József Cardinal Mindszenty**

“The loveliest masterpiece of the heart of God is the heart of a mother.”

— **St. Thérèse of Lisieux**

“Look at the mothers who truly love their children: how many sacrifices they make for them. They are ready for everything, even to give their own blood so that their babies grow up good, healthy, and strong.”

— **St. Gianna Beretta Molla**

“Motherhood then becomes a kind of priesthood. She brings God to man by

preparing the flesh in which the soul will be implanted; she brings man to God in offering the child back again to the Creator she is nature’s constant challenge to death, the bearer of cosmic plenitude, the herald of eternal realities, God’s great cooperator.”

— **Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen**

“To be a mother is to nourish and protect true humanity and bring it to development.”

— **St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein)**

“Thank you, women who are mothers! You have sheltered human beings within yourselves in a unique experience of joy and travail. This experience makes you become God’s own smile upon the newborn child, the one who guides your child’s first steps, who helps it to grow, and who is the anchor as the child makes its way along the journey of life.”

— **Pope St. John Paul II**

“Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?”

— **Our Lady of Guadalupe, to St. Juan Diego**

“And now thou didst ‘stretch forth thy hand from above’ and didst draw up my soul out of that profound darkness [of Manicheism] because my mother, thy faithful one, wept to thee on my behalf more than mothers are accustomed to weep for the bodily deaths of their children And thou didst hear her, O Lord.”

— **St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Monica’s son**

The Month of May 2026

Monthly Theme: Our Blessed Mother



During May, Christians, both in church and in the privacy of the home, offer up to Mary from their hearts an especially fervent and loving homage of prayer and veneration. Paul VI's encyclical *Mense Maio* in 1965 suggested prayers to Mary for obtaining peace.

Pope's Prayer Intention:

For the Use of the New Technologies

Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

Monthly Virtue: Poverty of Spirit

In the restricted sense it means a detachment of the heart from earthly possessions.

In the broad sense, by poverty in spirit it is meant detachment from everything earthly, no matter what it may be. In this sense, poverty in spirit is necessary for all who are striving after perfection.