

The Month of Mary.

THE Church dedicates the month of May to the special service of the Blessed Virgin for many reasons. It is the most beautiful and charming month of the year, and as Mary is the most favored and exalted of God's creatures, she is entitled to receive from mankind tokens of love and veneration. At this season all nature revives from the deep sleep that was cast over it by winter and puts on a new garment of verdure and flowers. Everything proclaims the season of cold and frost as past, and nature begins to display the splendor of her riches. The trees are covered with their brilliant foliage, the sun darts his rays into the heart of nature, and under his influence the birds fill the air with their joyful songs—in a word, all nature unites in contributing to make May the most pleasing and beautiful month of the year.

If you have a friend or benefactor to whom you are attached by the ties of love and gratitude, in order to prove your love and esteem, do you not strive to make an offering to him of the best you have, that the greatness of the value may express the extent and fervor of your esteem? After God, your Father; after Christ, your Redeemer; after the Holy Ghost, your Sanctifier, whom should you love more than Mary? For whom else should you entertain a nobler and more tender affection? Of all creatures the Blessed Virgin Mary is the most deserving of your love and veneration. Hence the Church recommends us to offer her our best and most precious gifts, and to consecrate ourselves to her service, especially during this lovely and charming month of May. Let us unite with nature in offering the treasures of this month to Mary; let us enhance Mary's delight by presenting her the crown of our virtues, the sweet perfume of our good works, and the melodious concert of our fervent prayers. During this month we should every day raise our hearts to her, to draw down some special favor that we need. We should unite with all the

children of Mary throughout the world in celebrating her month with reverence and devotion, so as to obtain her powerful aid, that we may be enabled to imitate her virtues, and thereby please and honor her.

The sinners as well as the just gather round the altar of Mary and invoke her special intercession during this month; the former to seek through her aid the grace of conversion; the latter to obtain additional help to advance in piety and make sure of their election. She is the true Mother of Christians and Refuge of sinners, and she will assuredly protect and guide those who invoke her help.

The fruit of devotion to Mary is that sin is taken away, the soul is purified, and her servants advance in good works and the practice of virtue. Nothing pleases her more than to behold her followers striving to imitate her virtues by the purity and holiness of their lives.

Mary is likened to the fairest and most elegant objects in nature. She is compared to the cedar, because by her beneficent influence she puts to flight the evil spirit; to the cypress, because she inspires the fragrance of holiness; to the palm, because she makes us victorious over our passions; to the vine, because she leads us to produce the fruits of heavenly virtues; to the olive, because she brings peace to the soul; to the rose, on account of the divine love that she excites in our hearts; to the lily, because she breathes purity into the soul.

Practice then during this month some special devotion to Mary, so labor in the neglected garden of your soul that you may reap the abundant graces of this beautiful month of May.

To induce the Faithful worthily to celebrate the month of May, Pius VII. conceded:

1. An Indulgence of 300 days every day of the month to those who publicly or privately honor the Blessed Virgin by some prayers, good works, or other devout exercises.

2. A plenary Indulgence once during the course of the month, provided they communicate and pray to the Lord for holy Church, &c.