

Third Sunday of Easter
May 5, 2019

“But since it has pleased God not to manifest solemnly the mystery of the salvation of the human race before he would pour forth the Spirit promised by Christ, we see the apostles before the day of Pentecost ‘persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren’ (Acts 1:14), and Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the annunciation.”
(*Lumen Gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church] #59)

Each year, during the months of May and October, we are reminded of the importance and role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our Catholic Church. As we prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, I believe it would be helpful for us to use this month, and its emphasis upon Our Lady, to reflect upon our Catholic Church’s teachings concerning Mary’s role in Salvation History. I realize we live in a heavily Protestant area (the Bible Belt state of Alabama) and many of you were Protestant long before you ever became Catholic. Therefore, some here may never have had the opportunity to hear much concerning the beauty of our Catholic devotion to the Mother of God. I only hope that once we conclude this month you and I will have a better understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of Mary which will develop into a greater love and devotion for the Mother of Jesus.

As the apostles and disciples prepared for the coming of the promised Spirit of God, I assume they would have been both excited and anxious. This outpouring would have been a “new” development in God’s relationship with His Church. However, for Mary, this anticipated moment would instead be a familiar moment which had begun long ago when the Holy Spirit had “overshadowed” her allowing for God’s Word to become incarnate in her womb. For Mary, this would be a time for her to prayerfully join with the catholic community that they may be prepared and disposed to receive the Spirit of God which she had known much of her earthly life. Mary would implore her Son to send His Holy Spirit upon each member of that first Catholic community in accord to their own talents, personalities, and missions. This prayer of hers would also be offered for herself since she too would need the Holy Spirit to help her in her new mission. A mission offered to her by her Son Jesus as He hung upon the cross: “*Woman, behold, your son.*” (John 19:26) Mary’s motherhood would now include every disciple of her Son.

Mary’s mission as Mother of all God’s children is still very much alive today. She is continually praying for you and I to daily open ourselves to receive anew this same Spirit sent by her Son. Whether we knowingly accept this or even acknowledge it as a truth of our faith, the fact will always remain that Mary, the Mother of God, is your Mother and my Mother. She **IS** praying for us. Please, let us accept the words of Jesus upon the cross directed toward each of us: “*Behold, your mother.*” (John 19:27) Let us, like Saint John, take her into our homes, both our physical residence and the home of our heart. Let us embrace so sweet a gift entrusted to each of us by Jesus Himself. The way we honor His Mother will only affirm and strengthen the way we honor Him. Mary, Mother of Jesus and my Mother, pray for me!