

## **HAIL MARY, MOTHER OF GOD AND MOTHER OF THE CHURCH!**

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May is the month dedicated to Mary. Throughout this month, Catholics all over the world pray the Rosary and create special altars to the Mother of God in which they place a statue of Mary that is crowned with beautiful flowers to represent Mary's beauty and virtues. During this time when we still must stay at home, it is a good idea to create a home altar to continue participating in the life of the Church, while remaining safe and healthy.

Coincidentally, May is the month in which mothers' day is celebrated all throughout Latin America; for example, in Chile, Guatemala, Mexico and El Salvador it is celebrated on the 10<sup>th</sup>; in Colombia, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela on the 12<sup>th</sup>; in Paraguay on the 15<sup>th</sup>; in Argentina on the 19<sup>th</sup>; in Bolivia on the 27<sup>th</sup>; and in the United States, the place where this celebration was created, on the second Sunday of May.

What a wonderful coincidence to celebrate Mother's Day during the month of Mary! We send cordial greetings to all our CRS mothers and grandmothers and we entrust them to the special protection of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

In the Gospels, Mary offers us an example of how to follow Jesus, especially during trying times, such as when her Son suffered and died for us. Throughout history, Mary continues to gift us with her maternal care and love, as when, in her advocacy of Our Lady of Guadalupe, she appeared in the Tepeyac to the indigenous people who had been decimated by the conquistadors. And now, she comes to us once again, to comfort us during this terrible epidemic. Let us see what Mary teaches us about following Jesus.

First, Mary teaches us that, although God's will surpasses our understanding, it is our obedience to God's will that will always lead us to salvation. Take for example the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) in which Mary asks the angel, "How can this be...?" (v. 34) and even though the angel's response surpassed her understanding, she still assented in faith because she knew God will walk with her ("The Holy Spirit will come upon you" - v. 35), God always keeps his promises (as in her cousin's pregnancy - v. 36) and God can do anything ("for nothing is impossible for God" - v. 37).

During this time of great difficulty, let us ask Mary to teach us how to fulfill God's will, even when we cannot understand what is going on or why it is happening.

Secondly, Mary teaches us *how* to fulfill God's will. After giving her 'yes' ("Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your word" - v. 38), Mary rushes to her cousin Elizabeth's side (Luke 1:39-45) and after arriving at Elizabeth's home and hearing her greeting, Mary bursts out singing with joy (Luke 1:46-56). The *Magnificat* contains a description of what will be Mary's maternal stance towards Jesus and his Church. It begins with a joyful declaration of God's goodness to Mary (vv. 46-49) and immediately moves to proclaim the greatness of the Lord who is merciful (v. 50), almighty -especially when dealing with the arrogant, the powerful, and the rich who forget the humble, the poor, and the hungry- (vv. 51-53), and faithful to the covenant he established with Abraham and his offspring (vv. 54-56).

As members of the CRS family, let us keep imitating Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church, through our joyful, generous and faithful service to our poorest and neediest brothers and sisters around the world.

In summary, Mary teaches us to trust in God's will, to accept his mercy, and to work in favor of the humble, the poor, and the hungry of the world. Mary did so during her Son's life and ministry and in a very special way during Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection. She has also continued doing so over the centuries, always caring and interceding on behalf of the Body of Christ, the Church.

During this time of great affliction, let us ask Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, to intercede once again on our behalf:

Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, pray for us.  
 May our world, our nation, our families, and our loved ones  
 get the protection of God and of your Son  
 so that all of us may be freed from this terrible disease.  
 We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Pray for us, Oh, Holy Mother of God,  
 that we may be worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen. Alleluia!

**Hail Mary!**