

May 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

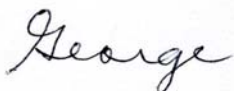
The month of May, along with the month of October, is traditionally associated with devotion to Mary. Two Marian feasts of the universal church fall in May: Our Lady of Fatima (May 13) and the Visitation (May 31). In addition, there are two Marianist celebrations during the month: Mary, Mother of Graces and Mediatrix (May 12) and Mary, Help of Christians (May 25). These latter feasts mark historical moments for the Society of Mary and the Marianist Sisters.

Along with these official feasts, there are other motivations for remembering Mary during this month. In "The May Magnificat," poet Gerard Manley Hopkins sees springtime as quintessentially Mary's season. He writes: "All things risings, all things sizing / Mary sees, sympathizing / With that world of good, / Nature's motherhood." Just as the earth nurtures and brings forth new life in the spring, so did Mary nurture and bring forth Jesus, the Life of the world.

Mary is present at Pentecost (May 23). She is mentioned by name as being in the Upper Room, and she is often included in icons and illustrations of Pentecost. Not only did Mary give birth to Jesus, the Son of God, she also witnessed the Pentecost event, the birth of the Church. She is truly the First Disciple.

As we bring the Easter season to a close with the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost, we find Mary ever-present as the faithful mother of Jesus, source of new life and mother to us all. On Mother's Day (May 9), let us pray in gratitude for all mothers, mothers-to-be, and all who have loved us with a mother's care. And let us model our discipleship on Mary, our Mother, who began her faithful journey with a simple "yes."

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George".

George J. Cerniglia, S.M.
Assistant for Religious Life

