

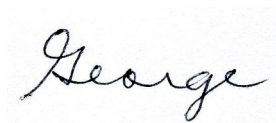
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Since the 13th century it has been a Christian custom to dedicate the month of May to the Blessed Virgin. This devotional practice has been especially recommended by the popes. Pope Paul VI wrote an encyclical on the *Month of May*, in which he states: "During this month, 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. In this month, too, the benefits of God's mercy come down to us from her throne in greater abundance."

For us in the Marianist Family, there are a number of Marian feasts, some of which mark anniversaries of special occasions in our history. We also celebrate Mother's Day during this month, a day to give thanks for our mothers, both living and deceased. This is also the month when many of our ministries and communities will mark the closure of the year. Let us commend all of these events to Mary, the Woman of Faith, in our lives.

In sending you this month's liturgical feasts, let me also offer you stanzas of a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins entitled *The May Magnificat*. May it offer you pause for reflection and prayer!

Affectionately,



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

May is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why;
Her feasts follow reason,
Dated due to season –

Candlemas, Lady Day;
But the Lady Month, May
Why fasten that upon her,
With a feasting in her honour?

Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
Question: What is Spring?

Growth in every thing –

All things rising, all thing sizing
Mary sees, sympathizing
 With that world of good
 Nature's motherhood.

Their magnifying of each its kind
With delight calls to mind
 How she did in her stored
 Magnify the Lord.

Well but there was more than this:
Spring's universal bliss
 Much, had much to say
 To offering Mary May.

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's birth
 To remember and exultations
 In God who was her salvation.