

**The consecration to Mary is worth doing badly:** Kyril Wolfe recalls his journey to a Marian devotion, in the midst of Mary's month: "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." I used to be spiritually allergic to Marian devotion. Even though I grew up saying the Rosary with my family, I never really understood the idea of being devoted to Mary, specifically. Asking saints to pray for me made sense, and I knew Mary as the greatest of the saints. Still, I never understood why Mary was so important to the spiritual life of Catholics. I also thought people who were devoted to Mary were weird. They would call her "Mama Mary," or give me a bunch of scapulars and medals to ward off demons. For someone who had not developed his own devotion to Mary, it all seemed a bit much. This changed one day when, at my university, I saw some students handing out pamphlets for Marian consecration. The pamphlets were based on Father Michael E. Gaitley's 33 Days to Morning Glory, a book that was becoming popular with Catholic young people. I don't know why, but I picked up a pamphlet and then decided to do it. I went through the consecration process poorly. I was at a point in my life where I struggled with prayer and praying for 33 days in a row did not happen. I once had to make up a whole forgotten week of meditations and prayers. Still, I persevered, and managed — one day late — to say the consecration prayer. And ... nothing happened. The semester was ending, and it was time for finals. I stayed for the summer, taking classes and working part time, so there was a lot of downtime. I was able to take some advice given to me a long time ago and spend more time in prayer. One day, I was in the campus chapel praying the Rosary when I suddenly began to think about the prayers I was reciting, especially the words "blessed is the fruit of your womb." As a young man, a woman's pregnancy was (and still is) a wonder and a mystery to me. I can never know exactly what it is like to nourish and grow a person within me, but I do know it is a miracle and a blessing. What surprised me in that moment of prayer was the wonder and fact of Mary's pregnancy, how she even more wondrously gave life to Christ. She received the body of Christ first in her womb; the body of Christ that we receive sacramentally at Mass was first nourished by Mary. I talked with a priest about this afterward, and he reminded me that Mary also received the Eucharist at Mass with the apostles and disciples of the Early Church. She never stopped receiving Christ's body, even after being united to Jesus so closely. All of this deeply moved me, and I spent much time afterward contemplating this mystery. This, I think, was the fruit of my first consecration to Mary. It was also certainly not the last gift I was given. That summer I managed, somehow, to pray and attend Mass almost every day. I picked up St. Louis de Montfort's book Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary and learned more about Marian devotion. All in all, my life — not just spiritually but in every respect — greatly improved that summer, and all of it seemed to have happened because of my poorly carried out consecration. Over the last few years, Marian consecration has become a bit of a phenomenon, especially for young adult Catholics, and the movement is still growing. Students at the Catholic high school where I teach have started their own consecration group, using Father Gaitley's ever-popular book. I joined them and renewed my own consecration this year, out of gratitude for the fruits I received the first time, and a desire to continue growing in devotion to Mary. G.K. Chesterton famously said, "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." In this month dedicated to Mary, I would encourage everyone to start or strengthen their own Marian devotion in this way. Even if you do it badly, as I did, graces can be planted within you that will grow your spiritual life. <https://aleteia.org/author/kyril-wolfe/>

**Fisherman's Prayer** - I pray that I may live to fish Until my dying day. And when it comes to my last cast, I then most humbly pray: When in the Lord's great landing net And peacefully asleep That in His mercy I be judged Big enough to keep.

**My Communion Prayer** - Dear God, I know that You give me many gifts. The gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ in Holy Communion is the greatest of all. How can I ever thank You enough for this special gift? At Mass we are called to be like Jesus, by loving and serving one another in the world. As I become more like Him, please continue to help me. Show me the places and ways that I can bring Your love, kindness, and peace to others.... in my family, in my neighborhood, in my community, with my friends. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Bishop's Appeal:** *So far 46 families from our parish have donated \$10,090. The total assessment for our parish is \$12,171. If you have not sent in your donation yet, please pray about what God is calling you to give to help support the Church. Please know that whatever you are able to give we are very grateful for. (Please note that whatever amount we fall short in reaching our goal our parish does get billed for.) So far 8 families have contributed \$600. St. Hubert Mission Station goal is \$1,465.*

**Vacation to India:** Fr. Polumari will be gone on Vacation to India starting from May 12 to June 13, 2024. He requests prayers for his sister's wedding in June and for the safety of the travels. Fr. John Cerkus will cover the weekend masses and the spiritual needs of the parishioners.

#### **Announcements:**

**Entrust Retreat:** We have the Entrust Retreat at St. Leonard Church, on Friday, May 17 at 6pm to 9pm & on Saturday, May 18 at 8am to 4pm. We need 35 people to conduct this retreat. So far 12 people have registered. Kindly register at [www.gbdioc.org/Entrustlaona](http://www.gbdioc.org/Entrustlaona). Or call the parish office: 715- 674-3241. The final date of registration is May 10<sup>th</sup>.

A special thanks to Maline Enders and Jeanne Mertins for preparing the First Holy Communicants.

There will be a Parish Council meeting on Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:15pm in the Church Hall.

As we are in the Marian Month join us praying the Holy Rosary prior to the beginning of all the weekend masses. We pray for our building project & for all the needs of our parishioners.