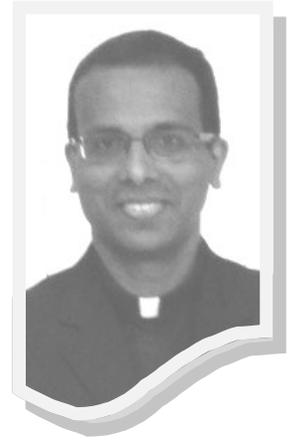




## From the Pastor



### Mary, Mother of the Church: Part 1

**O**n Saturday, the Vatican announced Pope Francis' decision that the Church celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary in her role as "Mother of the Church" every year on the Monday after Pentecost, as a way to foster Marian piety and the maternal sense of the Church. The decree establishing the memorial was published March 3rd in a letter from Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. The celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church—as an obligatory memorial—will have precedence over any other memorial of a saint or blessed.

The Marian title of "Mother of the Church," was given to the Blessed Mother by Blessed Pope Paul VI at the Second Vatican Council. Pope Paul declared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of the Church—that is to say of all Christian people—the faithful as well as the pastors who call her the most loving Mother. It was also added to the Roman Missal after the Holy Year of Reconciliation in 1975. Subsequently, some countries, dioceses, and religious families were granted permission by the Holy See to add this celebration to their particular calendars. With its addition to the General Roman Calendar, it will now be celebrated by the whole Roman Catholic Church.

Blessed Paul VI explained that as soon as Christ took on a human nature in Mary's virginal womb, He united to Himself, as its head, His Mystical Body, which is the Church. Therefore, "Mary, as the Mother of Christ, must be regarded as the Mother of all the faithful and pastors, which means the Church." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven also manifests Mary as the spiritual Mother of the Church. After being assumed into heaven, "Mary, by her constant intercession, continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation, and by her maternal charity she cares for us who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties until we are led into the happiness of our true home" (Lumen Gentium, 62).

In 2018, the memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, will be celebrated on Monday, May 21st.

—Fr. Jose Thomas