

## May is the Month of Mary



I wonder why it is that as soon as I thought of the month of May, I thought of the rosary, and then had to remind myself that October is the month of the Rosary – May is the month of Mary, and whilst always encouraging praying the Rosary, we should not limit the many other ways of praying to and with Mary and the Saints.

The image of Our Lady Stella Maris (Latin: Star of the Sea) is one of many images. It is interesting to see how many they are and which ones speak to you and which ones do not. We should never lose sight of the numerous cultures which rightly claim Mary for their own as well as recognising her as a Middle Eastern Jewish woman.

This May, Pope Francis has asked the world to use the month of Mary to pray for an end to the pandemic by daily prayer of the Rosary which he is associating with 30 Marian shrines around the world, including the Lourdes shrine in the Vatican Gardens.

On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May, the shrine of Walsingham (England's national shrine) has been chosen as a focus, with the intention being: For those who have died.

On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May, the focus will be the shrine of Knock in Ireland.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May is the turn of the shrine at Lourdes, France.

On each of the days, it is worth looking for the possibilities around the world where livestream is likely to be available widely now.

Here is the English Translation of the Shrines and Daily Intentions:

English Liturgical Guide: [https://www.stchadscathedral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ENGLISH-Liturgical-Guide\\_Sussidio-Rosario-2021-Inglese.pdf](https://www.stchadscathedral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ENGLISH-Liturgical-Guide_Sussidio-Rosario-2021-Inglese.pdf)

May Prayer Initiative: <https://www.stchadscathedral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/May-Prayer-Initiative-PCPNE.pdf>

Shrine List: <https://www.stchadscathedral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Shrine-List-Ing.pdf>

The scope of the shrines of the world include some amazing places to be united in prayer:

Częstochowa in Poland;

the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, Israel;

Apareceida, Brazil (a place close to the heart of Pope Francis);

the Holy House at Loreto, Italy;

Fatima in Portugal;  
Medjugorje in Bosnia;  
The National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington DC, USA;  
Montserrat, Spain  
Madonna of Nagasaki, Japan  
Guadalupe, Mexico.....

as well as shrines in Algeria, Nigeria, Cuba, Ukraine, Lebanon, Canada, Malta, Germany, Australia, India, South Korea, Belgium, Turkey and Argentina.

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May, there is to be a national rosary rally in the UK and on that day, Archbishop Bernard will celebrate the 10am Mass in St Chad's Cathedral and will then lead the recitation of the Rosary during the hour from 10am to 11am that has been assigned to the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

And returning to the global rosary initiative to pray for an end to the pandemic, Pope Francis will conclude the month of May by leading the prayer of the Rosary at the Lourdes Shrine in the Vatican Gardens on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May, the Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady to her cousin, Elizabeth. (This will coincide with the Archdiocese of Birmingham virtual pilgrimage to Lourdes).

May our adventure of exploring different shrines dedicated to Our Lady during this month of May bring us closer to Mary, to Joseph during this special year, and in recognising the universality of the Church.