

November 2024 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Arlington—our Golden Jubilee!! We are in Year 2 of preparation for our Jubilee. Theme for Year 2: “My soul rejoices in the Lord!”



*Blessed Virgin Mary*

*Mother of the Church*

*Feast: Day after Pentecost*

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost makes it possible for Christ’s followers to “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Jesus came down from Heaven to establish the Kingdom of God which he did in the form of the Church. God called upon Mary to be the mother of Jesus who is the Head of the Church.

Since we are the Body of the Church, she is our mother, too. With the Blessed Virgin’s consent at the Annunciation, she initiated the coming of the Kingdom. Her spouse, the Holy Spirit guides, advocates and convicts the world so many hearts are changed to turn their back on the Prince of this world (Satan) and their face to the Light of our true King, Jesus Christ.

At the Wedding at Cana, the Blessed Mother subtly proclaimed Jesus to be the Divine Son of God when she implored him to intervene when the wine ran out. An attentive mother, Mary was the first to notice that there was a problem and took the matter to the Savior. Jesus answered, “Woman, what is it to me?” Again, Mary consented to participate in the redemptive work of Christ. She showed those who were present that day, that Jesus is divine and that we are to cooperate with him and participate in his work of salvation: “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn 2:1-5)

Mary, Mother of our Redeemer, stood at the foot of the Cross, where her true labor pains began as blood and water from the side of Jesus gave life to the Church. “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then he said to his disciple, ‘Behold your mother.’ From that hour, the disciple took her into his home.” (Jn 19:26-27) It is the hour that Mary became Mother of the Church, the New Eve, mother of those redeemed by Christ. We need her motherly care because John warns us in Rev. 12:17 “Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep the commandments and bear witness to Jesus.”

A constant source of comfort to the Apostles, Blessed Mother Mary prayed with them the nine days after Jesus ascended to Heaven. On the tenth day, Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles to give them the gifts needed to expand the Kingdom of God. Peter baptized 3,000 people on the that day and the Kingdom of Heaven began to spread. For this reason, Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Church. Saint Augustine reflected “What God has bestowed on Mary in the flesh, He has bestowed on the Church in the spirit; Mary gave birth to the One, and the Church gives birth to the many, who through the One become one.”

Mary has long been venerated as the Mother of the Church. Pope Pius XII expressed Mary’s motherly concern for the church when he said, “It was she who was there to tend the mystical body of Christ, born of the Savior’s pierced heart, with the same motherly care that she spent on the child Jesus in the crib.” In 2018, Pope Francis officially added the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church to the calendar to be celebrated the day after Pentecost.

This year, we focus on Mary, the *Mediatrice of All Graces*, the model disciple, who shows us how to receive and bear the Word to the world. For more on Year 2 preparation, visit: [www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/)

-Office of Religious Education