

Faith in 5 – Adults Marian May Crownings



1. May Crownings are a tradition in the Catholic Church during the month of May to honor our Mother Mary. It involves a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary being crowned with a garland or crown of flowers honoring her as Queen of Heaven and Earth. Pope Paul VI wrote that this occasion was a “moving tribute of faith and love which Catholics in every part of the world pay to the Queen of Heaven”.



([Source](#))

Catholic churches typically create a dedicated area to place a picture or statue of Mary, which is surrounded by flowers and candles. This tribute remains up throughout the entire month in order to memorialize the importance of our Mother Mary in the Church and in our personal lives.

2. May, “a most beautiful and florescent month” was dedicated to the Greek goddess of fertility Artemis; in ancient Rome, May was dedicated to Flora the goddess of blossom, when celebrations were made to expel winter. May is a month where Spring is in full bloom. King Alfonso in the 13th century wrote about honoring Mary in May. The idea of dedicating a month to Mary was not uncommon, as a 30 -day devotion to Mary during August called Tricesimum already existed.
3. Devotion to our Blessed Mother Mary originates in the earliest days of the church. At the end of the 18th century, Father Latomia of the Roman College of the Society of Jesus introduced the practice of dedicating the month of May to our Blessed Mother. While this was done to promote devotion to Mary among the students, it was also used as a way to counteract their infidelity and immorality. From Rome, the May devotion spread throughout the Jesuit colleges, and eventually throughout the whole church. Pope Pius VII in 1815 granted a partial indulgence for participating in either a public or private devotion honoring Mary during the month of May. It is no longer listed as an indulgence. ([Source](#))

Pope Pius XII dedicated 1954 as a Marian Year. He instituted the Feast of Mary the Queen to be celebrated on May 31st. After Vatican II in 1969, Pope Paul VI changed the feast to an optional memorial and moved it to adjust the compelling order of Marian feast days. The Feast of the Visitation in July was moved to May 31st, closer to the Annunciation. The Feast of Mary’s Queenship was then moved to August 22nd - to the octave of the Assumption - in line with the final mystery of the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, Mary’s crowning, which follows her rising to heaven. One significant feast day in May includes Our Lady of Fatima, where Mary appeared to the three children at Fatima on May 13, 1917.

4. The image of Mary (as well as Jesus) wearing a gold crown is found in the earliest forms of iconography, especially in the Eastern Churches. This dates back to the 5th century. Precious metal placed over Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic icons predate the use of crowns (in Greek, *riza* – ‘robe’; in Russian, *oklad* – ‘cover’). These metal coverings were used to honor and to protect the paint on the images from the damage caused by the smoke of candles lit in front of them. Many of these coverings were commissioned as votive offerings to honor the saint and were adorned with enamel and jewels. In the West, the pious practice of publicly crowning an image of the Blessed Mother gained popularity in the 16th century.
5. In 1987, The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, in response to the Marian Year declared by Pope St. John Paul II, issued a ritual, **Order of Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary**: “The queen symbol was attributed to Mary because she was a perfect follower of Christ, who is the absolute ‘crown’ of creation. She is the Mother of the Son of God, who is the messianic King. Mary is the Mother of Christ, the Word Incarnate” ([Source](#)). This rite is quite flexible, and can be celebrated in homes, schools, or at the local parish. The May crowning may be done on a solemnity or feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary; it may be done on the first day of May or on Mother’s Day.
6. In 2018 a new movable feast was declared, **The Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church**. Pope Francis himself decided the feast should be celebrated on the Monday immediately following Pentecost, in order “to encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety.” ([Source](#))
7. Simple ways to honor our Blessed Mother may include the recitation of the family rosary each day in May, singing Marian hymns and having a special crowning of Mary at home with a celebration. Our devotion to Mary brings us closer to Jesus.
[May Crowning Service at Home](#), prayers and activities for children.
[A Catholic Mom’s Life May Crowning](#)
8. Catholics do not worship Mary. Only God is worthy of worship, adoration, and praise (Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 4:11; 15:4). We honor Mary because God loved her and brought our Lord into the world through her. We can ask for her help and bring her our prayers. “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee”.

Hail, holy Queen enthroned above, O María.
Hail, Queen of mercy and of love, O María.
Triumph, all ye Cherubim.
Sing with us, ye Seraphim.
Heav’n and earth resound the hymn:
Salve, Salve, Salve, Regina.

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