



By Pat Haggerty

Everyone has their favorite month. Perhaps it's the month of their birthday or a month associated with their favorite season. I wouldn't say that May is my favorite month, but, like a childhood song I know, it is the "most beautiful month." As an elementary student at St. Anthony's School, we always sang "It is the month of Mary" during May. It began with the words: "It is the month of Mary; it is the most beautiful month." We sang it in French, though: "C'est le mois de Marie; c'est le mois le plus beaux." That song still resonates with me.

There are numerous Marian hymns that we can identify with. Many are hymns that we sang as children that conjure up images of May processions and rosary devotions. I was curious to delve into more songs of Mary. In a popular GIA publication, I counted sixty-one hymns to Mary. They read like a timeline of Mary's life---a life integrally woven into the life of Christ. It is awe-inspiring to think of Mary and the path that led her to be the Mother of Jesus. Thinking about the scope and depth of Mary's commitment is most humbling. We can learn so much from Mary. At the heart of who Mary is beats her beautiful YES to the Angel Gabriel. It is the yes that brought our salvation story to fruition.

Joseph Gelineau's beautiful song, "Canticle of Mary" adapts the Magnificat in a very special way. Antiphon II of the hymn is as follows: "Blest are you, O Virgin Mary, blest are you for your great faith. All that the Lord promised you will come to pass through you, alleluia, alleluia."

In pondering that Antiphon, I reflect on the importance of Mary as a piece of salvation history. I think of her deep faith in God and in her unwavering response to God's request. She is a model for us of trust in God. I know that I need to turn more to Mary as an example of what true faith is all about. It is a struggle to trust implicitly, at least it is for me. I know that is what we are each called to do---trust in the Lord.

Not only should we look to Mary as an example of faith, but we should use Mary as a conduit to our heavenly Father. It is through the intercession of Mary that many of our pleas are heard. Just as any mother responds to the pleas of her child, Mary will bring our concerns to her Son.

Pray the "Memorare" when you want Mary's help:

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.*