

"She is a mother to us
in the order of grace."
— Lumen Gentium

www.graceinaction.org
May 2007

GRACE IN ACTION

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



Photo by James Baca

celebrate
May

- 3 National Day of Prayer
- 13 Mother's Day
- 17 Ascension of the Lord
- 27 Pentecost Sunday
- 28 Memorial Day
- 31 Visitation of the BVM



try this Honor thy mother

If you're giving a Mother's Day gift, consider gifts that advance women's economic status. The U.N. Expert Group on Women and Finance reported that women comprise one-third of the official labor force, yet do two-thirds of the world's work, earn only one-tenth of its income and own one-hundredth of its property. Assisi Garments, a nonprofit company run by Franciscan Sisters in India, sells organic clothing made by disabled or economically disadvantaged people in a rehabilitation center. Global Girlfriend, a fair-trade outlet, helps disadvantaged artisans in developing countries by selling their handmade gifts and goods. Using profits, these organizations help empower women by providing medical care, job training and small loans for small businesses that help them escape the grind of poverty. Visit www.assisiorganics.com or www.globalgirlfriend.com to shop or request a catalog.

new parables Grow gratitude; grow grace

There were two women with gardens. One woman wanted a picture-perfect garden with many flowers and no weeds. She spent all her free time bent over, digging dandelions or pulling out perennials that had self-seeded.

She liked her vegetable garden rows perfectly aligned, her flower beds meticulously tended. She constantly bemoaned that the roses did not have enough blossoms, yet rarely noticed their scent. Whenever she saw an aphid, she broke out the heavy-duty pesticides and sprayed the entire yard. This woman considered entertaining in her garden, but she never believed it was ready to show to anybody. She always wanted one more yard ornament, one more wind chime, one more arbor dripping with honeysuckle. She dwelled on the tulips that had wilted and the poppies that had gone limp. Or she dwelled on the iris that was not yet blooming or the goldenrod that didn't seem as golden as last year. But she rarely stopped to notice the plants at their peak.

The second woman's garden was more wild and weedy, and she was grateful to have a habitat for birds and butterflies. Volunteer violas grew in the cracks in her sidewalk. This woman was content to relax in her garden and enjoy every seasonal change. She left the aphids alone, confident that the ladybugs would control them. Since she gardened organically, she cut nutritious dandelion leaves to add to her green salads. And she delighted in inviting friends over to her garden, assured they would find the fragrance of the lilacs so lovely that they would not even notice the faded and well-worn cushions on her lawn furniture.



CORNERSTONE
*"The Mother bore Him in her womb, let us bear Him in our hearts."
— St. Augustine*



kidsCORNER May Day! May Day!



May is the month of Mary, the Mother of God. Open the new month with an old tradition: May baskets. Fun to give and fun to receive, you can make May baskets from a wide variety of materials. Use your imagination to create your own May baskets, or visit www.graceinaction.org for some simple ideas.



Add to the May basket a treat — candy, gum, nuts or popcorn — or a small gift such as a tea bag or a package of seeds. You might want to tuck a bit of a blossoming twig or a small flower into the May basket, too. And be sure to add a spiritual bouquet: Include a note with a promise for a prayer for the person to whom you'll give your May basket.

Then comes the really fun part: Hang the May basket on the doorknob of somebody you love, ring the bell and run. Your surprise is sure to delight somebody; and that, in turn, will delight you. Catholic stewards know that making others feel good makes us feel good, too.

OurSundayVisitor



Copyright © 2007 Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.
Permission to reprint required from publisher.
Grace In Action, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.,
200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750
Phone: 1-800-348-2440.
Fax: 1-260-359-9117.
E-mail: giaction@osv.com
Please visit our website: www.graceinaction.org

the wayWE pray The "beautiful flower"

"The month of May cannot end; it must continue in our lives, because veneration, love, devotion to Our Lady cannot disappear from our hearts, on the contrary they must grow and be expressed in a testimony of Christian life, modeled on the example of Mary 'the name of the beautiful flower which I always invoke, morning and evening,' as the poet Dante

sings (Paradise XXIII, 88).

"Cause of our joy, pray for us! Teach us to be able to grasp, in faith, the paradox of Christian joy, which springs up and blooms from sorrow, renunciation and union with your sacrificed Son: make our joy to be always genuine and full, in order to be able to communicate it to all! Amen."

Pope John Paul II
May 1979



Photo by James Baca

definingmoments Stewardship Alphabet

Economics: The branch of the social sciences devoted to the study of commerce, goods, services, spending, labor and output. The Church encourages governments and individuals to work for a deeper understanding of the economy and for material prosperity that aims at advancing the social welfare of all peoples.

Endowment: A gift of property, usually cash or securities, but including land, made to an official institution such as the Church.

Envy: One of the seven capital sins, characterized by pain and misery when one sees

another prosper. Envy is a sin against charity and justice that makes some believe that by another's success they themselves are losing something.

Ethics: The systematic reflection on human goodness and righteousness along with human fulfillment and the role of the human person in decision-making. It analyzes the end of human existence, studies human acts and defines the qualities that make one "complete." Ethics encourages one to live in freedom from outside pressures and to develop a truly upright character. Other realities like the social, political, economic and medical fields also have an ethical component.

Visit www.graceinaction.org for Stewardship Alphabet letters A-D.

sowingseeds "Dare not fail in charity and what it entails"

"Christian stewards . . . dare not fail in charity and what it entails, and the New Testament is filled with warnings to those who might be tempted to substitute some counterfeit for authentic love."

—Stewardship: A Disciple's Response
U.S. Catholic bishops' stewardship pastoral



authentic love of the Lord includes an element of fear of the Lord.

While we understand God as an all-merciful and ever-loving God, our tradition also holds that fear of the Lord is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In his book "The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales," Jean Pierre Camus wrote, "We must fear God through love, not love Him through fear." Fear of the Lord can be a motivator for the Catholic steward. Pope St. Gregory the Great said, "To fear God is never to pass over any good thing that ought to be done."

What temptations cause you to fail in charity? How do you substitute counterfeit for authentic love? What "good thing" do you pass over that ought to be done?

