

## **MAY: A Season of New Life**

May is the month that the Catholic Church dedicates to Mary. Originally May was a season honored in both Greek and Roman cultures as a time to celebrate the season of blooming, the beginning of growth and new life. For Christians, this sense of new life has particular meaning because Mary gave birth to Jesus, the one through whom we have new life.

I have often wondered if Mary knew all that she was getting into when she said *yes* to be the mother of God. Did she know that the new life she carried would be new life for herself and for the world? Did she know that her *yes* to new life was also an implicit *yes* to the suffering and hardship that comes with life?

To some extent, Mary must have known that Jesus, the new life she was holding, would face suffering that would break her heart. When she and Joseph took



the child Jesus to Jerusalem to present him at the temple, the prophet Simeon confirmed this in her: "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." (Luke 2: 34-35)

Catholic iconography honors this "knowing" of Mary in the image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Whenever I see or pray with this image of Mary I am reminded of the *yeses* of my own life that have brought new life along with joy, adventure and, yes, suffering. For Mary, her *yes* brought her through the birth of her son, the ups and downs of raising a child, the pride of seeing Jesus come to begin his mission, the heartbreak of his suffering and death, and the joy of seeing him resurrected from the dead.

This May, as new life blooms all around us, let us courageously say *yes* to the new life that is blossoming within us, trusting that come what may, God will help us say *yes* to *all* of it.

### **For Reflection**

What is one of my *yeses* to new life? How has this *yes* transformed me through its ups and downs, joys and heartbreaks? Look to Mary as a friend and mentor who can be with you as you continue to say *yes*.

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