

WE HOST THE PILGRIM STATUE OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY FOR A WEEK THIS FRIDAY



On June 4, Bishop Jeffrey Monforton, opened the Year of Reconsecration of the Diocese of Steubenville to the Immaculate Heart of Mary with a public procession of her statue through the streets of downtown Steubenville.. First the entire diocese prayed a novena in preparation May 26 – June 3.

Her pilgrim statue will visit every parish in the diocese during the next 12 months. The diocese originally was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the first Bishop of Steubenville, John Mussio, when the diocese was formed in 1945. The purpose of the reconsecration after 71 years is to renew not only the diocese, but also our parish and each one of us, especially those who are drifting or are lapsed Catholics. Her intercession will be key to that great missionary task.

**Our Own Consecration to Mary.** It is hoped that many of us will consecrate ourselves individually to Mary according to “*Total Consecration*”, the method written by St. Louis de Monfort, whose statue is at the entrance of our church. David Stapleton and Jaga Sebastian would be more than happy to guide you in making the consecration to Mary. This visit of the Pilgrim Statue would be an excellent time to start the 33 day process.

In 1984 St. Pope John Paul II in union with the bishops consecrated Russia in particular and the World to the Immaculate Heart as Mary had requested at Fatima (See Blog #96 at [paulrsebastianphd.blogspot.com](http://paulrsebastianphd.blogspot.com)).

**St. Louis Church will receive her statue on Friday August 26 at 6 pm**, the day after the feast of St. Louis IX, our patron and coinciding with our Parish Festival the next day. She will stay with us until Friday

September 2. We have been praying at daily Mass an octave of Preparation for her stay with us since the Feast of the Assumption of Mary (the 4<sup>th</sup> Glorious Mystery of the Rosary) – her being taken bodily into Heaven upon her death or dormition. To honor His mother, our Lord would not allow this living tabernacle for nine months to deteriorate or be stained by the elements. This octave concluded with the feast of the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth (the 5<sup>th</sup> Glorious Mystery of the Rosary), which is the octave of the Assumption August 22. According to the tradition of the Old Testament, it was always the Queen Mother who had the special place of great honor and intercessory influence in the royal court. Mary of course is the Queen Mother of Christ the King! Mary has the same intercessory role in the heavenly court for each one of us, her children. Similarly, mothers at times intercede for their children with an authoritarian father. **MAY WE ALL BE THERE TO WELCOME MARY ON FRIDAY AUGUST 26 at 6 pm and BID HER FAREWELL THE FOLLOWING FRIDAY!**

**Why do we say “Immaculate Heart of Mary”?** It comes from the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854. That is, Mary was protected from any stain of sin from the very moment of her conception. Every other person that God created is born with what we call Original Sin, a blot upon every member of the human family as a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve.....rebellious, distrusting God, and blatantly disobeying Him. Mary did not need to be baptized to share in the divine life of sanctifying grace as we must. After all, the Archangel Gabriel declared unto Mary at the Annunciation: “Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women” (Luke 1:28-29).

Certainly, our Lord would only choose a woman of immaculate purity with not the slightest stain of sin to carry the Son of God in her womb for nine months. Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant containing the Bread of Life, a future high priest, and prophet who speaks for God. The original Ark contained a sample of manna, the staff of Aaron, the high priest, and the Ten Commandments given to Moses the prophet by God.

**Where is it in the Bible that Mary is our Mother?** While suffering and dying on the cross to make reparation for our sins and thus open the gates of Heaven for us, our Lord gave us His own mother in addition to Himself in the Eucharist the day before. St. John, from his position at the foot of the cross, personally reported in his Gospel: “He said to His mother, “Woman, behold thy son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold thy mother” (John 19: 26-27). That great gift was for all of us. Mary was present in the Upper Room at Pentecost and provided prayers, comfort, counsel, and encouragement to the first apostles. She does the same to us today as she nurtures our faith, prays for us, and intercedes for us. Didn’t Christ give us His life, His all because of His infinite love for us? And even to this day that includes His very self, His body and blood in the Eucharist and in addition, His dearest mother to help us to navigate the long, narrow, and arduously difficult road to Heaven.

**How can we call Mary, the Mother of God who created her?** Critics forget that Christ has two natures.....human and divine. Mary is the mother of God only in the sense that she was God’s instrument in giving birth to the human manifestation or human nature of the Son of God. Through Mary, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became one of us to teach us how to live and to save us from our sins.

Mary gave her fiat (yes) to the great mission God asked her to carry out by saying to the Archangel Gabriel with great humility: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). Thus Mary heroically trusted in God and took on the awesome responsibility to give birth to the Son of God and raise Him to adulthood. Christ received His genetic makeup from both Mary and the Holy Spirit who overshadowed her, the ever virgin. Thus we say in the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed “and she conceived by the Holy Spirit”. In the Upper Room years later, the Holy Spirit overshadowed the apostles and Mary again on the first Pentecost. We receive many of the same graces in the sacrament of Confirmation.