



# St. Rita News

The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

MAY 2013 ■ VOLUME II, ISSUE 4

## Marian Traditions for May *The Month of Our Blessed Mother*

The Catholic Church dedicates the month of May to the Blessed Mother--the oldest instance of a devotion encompassing an entire month--and there is a great tradition of private and public devotion to Mary during this month. These devotions date back to at least the 18th century, in Italy, and from there spread throughout Europe. The pious practice of honoring Mary during the month of May was subsequently especially recommended by the Popes. Among others, Pius XII made frequent reference to it and in his great Encyclical On the Sacred Liturgy (*Mediator Dei*) characterized it as one of "other exercises of piety which although not strictly belonging to the Sacred Liturgy, are nevertheless of special import and dignity". Paul VI wrote a short encyclical in 1965 using the Month of Mary devotion as a means of obtaining prayers for peace, and urged the faithful to make use of this practice which is "gladdening and consoling."

Within the home, many families have traditionally set up a May Altar, for the purpose of venerating an image or statue of Mary, and often decorated it with fresh spring



flowers. This is a wonderful way to encourage devotion in young children, as they love to decorate the altar, but it is a beautiful practice for Catholics of any age. Devotion to Mary through the Rosary is also traditional during the month of May; it is an ideal time to establish recitation of the Rosary as a regular practice, if you have not already.

Many churches also have services honoring Mary during the month of May: The May Crowning, in which the young children of the parish crown a statue of Mary with a wreath of flowers, is a long-standing tradition. The crowning is accompanied by the singing of

Marian hymns, some of which, like *Bring Flowers of the Rarest*, are specific to the month of May ("O Mary! we crown thee with blossoms today/Queen of the Angels, Queen of the May").

Finally, May also includes two important Marian feasts: Our Lady of Fatima on May 13, and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 31. May the month of May be a blessed one for all the parishioners of St. Rita's, and may our devotion to the Blessed Mother increase!

### ■ EVENTS IN OUR PARISH AND DIOCESE

#### First Communion

Please pray for the children in our school and parish who will be receiving their First Holy Communion this weekend!

#### St. Rita Parish Festival!

The parish festival honors our Patroness St. Rita of Cascia, whose Feast Day is May 22. On Friday, May 17 please join us for a Dinner and Dance in the School Hall from 6-9:30pm. On Saturday, May 18, following the 5pm Mass, please join us for a family-style Monte Carlo night with dinner, drinks, casino games, bingo, and kids' games.

**"Credo: I Believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Catholic Church,"** a lecture series with Fr. Paul Scalia, Holy Spirit Church in Annandale, May 7 at 7:30pm. Continues Tuesdays through May 28.

**Divine Mercy Care and Tepeyac Family Center** invites you to attend their annual memorial service for all those who have lost children--through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, premature death, stillborn, abortion, or infant death--on May 11 at 7pm at Truro Anglican Church, Fairfax, Virginia. Contact [info@divinemercycare.org](mailto:info@divinemercycare.org) or 703-934-5552.

# Helping the Most Vulnerable in Our Community

Learn more about the two crisis pregnancy centers that our parish baby shower will support this month to help the unborn and their mothers!

**The Marih Center in Alexandria** has been in operation for over 30 years. The name, which is sometimes written as MaRiH, is an abbreviation for “Mary Rose in Haste,” referring to the time when Mary, hearing that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting, quickly went to her aid. Marih is a pro-life crisis pregnancy center that counsels pregnant women about their options so as to help them choose life and also supports women in need who have babies and very young children.

Trained volunteers assist pregnant women who call needing assistance or who are considering abortion. Volunteers will also help the expectant mother through the system of social services, if needed, and Marih will pay for the first doctor’s visit and sonogram. Currently, the majority of clients are mothers of babies or toddlers. The center provides all sorts of necessary items, from maternity clothes, childrens’ clothes (for babies to two-year-olds), diapers, and formula to pack-n-plays, strollers, and diaper bags. As anyone who has had a child knows, the list of items needed is long!

Marih will assist anyone in the metro area in need; there is no residency requirement. Volunteers, likewise, come from many different parishes. If you have an interest in volunteering, please call 703-370-4774. In-house training is provided for those who counsel clients or answer phones. But you don’t have to be a counselor to help; some volunteers sort donations or help in the office in other ways.

All those who work at Marih—including the director—are volunteers; so monetary donations are primarily used to cover minor overhead expenses, doctors’ appointments, and formula, which is rarely donated in sufficient quantities to meet clients’ needs. The Marih Center is always very grateful to St. Rita parishioners for all the items donated during our annual baby shower. They are glad to accept



donations—including gently used baby and maternity clothes and baby gear—at other times of year as well! Donations can be delivered to 3230-B Duke Street (please call the number above for business hours). Thank you to each of our parishioners for your support of those who choose life!

**A Woman's Choice (AWC)** is a nonprofit agency dedicated to protecting the sanctity of human life and the dignity of marriage and the family. Located in the Seven Corners neighborhood of Falls Church, AWC exists to provide women in the Washington DC Metro area all the information they need to make an informed decision about their pregnancy. For more than 30 years, they have provided a wide range of free services and information about abortion and other alternatives—including free pregnancy tests, counseling, doctor referrals, and pre-natal care. They also help with job searches, housing options, planning for parenting, adoption options, and satisfy physical needs with clothing and baby gear. Last year, they counseled over 900 women and fulfilled over 2,500 requests for material assistance. In addition, 31 out of 65 women had a change of heart after visiting the center.

AWC’s dedicated staff and volunteers (some of whom are St. Rita’s parishioners) rely on our generous support. They are appreciative of all of our donations--no matter how small or large--during our annual baby shower. They would gladly accept donations through the baby bottles, which can be returned to the Russell Road vestibule during Masses on Mother's Day weekend, or mailed to their office at 6201 Leesburg Pike, Suite 220, Falls Church, VA 22044-2201. You may also contribute through their website at: <http://www.awomanschoicecenter.com>. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please contact their Director, Dolores Wisecarver at 703-538-4305.

## ■ LIVING OUR FAITH



### Baptisms

- + James Patrick Tweed-Kent, March 9
- + Ciaran Patrick Tweed-Kent, March 9
- + Bree Cecelia Polk, March 9
- + Andrew Christopher Mavretich, March 16
- + Anne Miriam Collins, March 23
- + Alexis Emerson Romero-Placios, March 23
- + Adriana Andrea Fuentes-Gomez, March 23
- + Erika Michell Zelaya, March 23
- + Merisbeth Lopez-Aviles, March 23
- + Ester Abigail Herrera-Baldizon, March 23
- + Yanci Liseth Rodriguez, March 23
- + Juan Lopez-Aviles, March 23
- + Daniel Mateo Vasquez-Argueta, March 23

- + Keegan Vagnier Sinfelt, April 6
- + Anthony Phan DeMatteis, April 12
- + Sienna Lorraine Cehrs, April 20
- + Elias Rief Carpio, April 26

### Weddings



- + David Jonathan Hughes & Lucia Anthonette Whittaker, April 4
- + Richard Daniel Lancaster & Katherine Ann Gutschke, April 13
- + Fabian Francis & Rose Mari Hacking, April 20
- + Brain Mark Janelsins & Arunee Wangsuk, April 27

### Funerals

- + Rosemarie Katrivanos, Funeral Mass April 26

*Do you have ideas for future items in the parish newsletter, or would you like to submit a feature for publication? All submissions can be directed to our editors: Catherine Feil ([catherine.feil@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.feil@gmail.com), or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church ([erinmchurch@gmail.com](mailto:erinmchurch@gmail.com)). Thank you!*