

Daily Parish Communication

August 5, 2022

Good Morning All,

First Friday Adoration following the morning Mass till 3:00 pm

1. Today's Readings: [Friday of the Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Today we celebrate the dedication of one of the 4 major basilicas in Rome, St. Mary Major in honor of our Blessed Mother. Every August 5th, a solemn celebration recalls the Miracle of the Snows. Before the amazed eyes of the congregation, a cascade of white petals descends from the coffered ceiling, blanketing the hypogeum. From the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II requested that an oil lamp burn day and night under the icon of the Salus Populi Romani, as witness to his great devotion to the Madonna. ([op.org](#))

At the Council of Ephesus in 431AD, Mary was declared as Theotokos (Godbearer). *Source: One Bread, One Body*

3. Quote of the Day:

~Christ conquered the devil with the same weapons the devil used against us: a virgin, a tree, and death. These tokens of our demise have now become the tokens of our victory. Instead of Eve, there is Mary; instead of the tree of knowledge, there is the wood of the Cross; and instead of Adam's death, there is the death of Christ." St. John Chrysostom

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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St. Mary Major



We celebrate today the dedication of one of the four most illustrious churches of Rome. While each diocese and parish keeps its own dedication anniversary, the Church universal commemorates the consecration of the four great Roman basilicas, the mother churches, we may call them, of Christendom, viz., St. John Lateran, St. Peter, St. Paul Outside the Walls, and St. Mary Major. By means of these feasts the Church seeks to link all Christians with the Holy See.

This feast commemorates the miracle of the snowfall that occurred during the night of August 4-5 in the year 358 on the site where the basilica now stands. According to tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared in a dream to two faithful Roman Christians, the patrician John and his wife, as well as to Pope Liberius (352-366), asking that a church be built in her honor on the site where snow would fall on the night of August 4-5. Pope Liberius traced the outlines of the church in the snow and the first basilica was built on that site. It was completed about a century later by Pope Sixtus III (432-440), after the Council of Ephesus in 431 during which Mary was declared to be the Mother of God.

In Rome the Basilica of St. Mary Major will hold its traditional triduum from August 1 to 3 and two days of celebration on August 4 and 5. During the pontifical Mass and the second vespers, the traditional shower of flower petals will descend from the ceiling of the basilica to commemorate the August snowfall in 358.

St. Oswald, king, is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology. St. Bede the Venerable commemorates his deeds. He was sometimes portrayed as a martyr, since he died in battle against the pagan Welsh invaders.

Historically it is also the feast of St. Emygdus who lived in the 3rd and 4th century and was a Christian bishop in Ascoli Piceno in Italy. He converted many people to Christianity with his displays of miracles.

Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome

St. Mary Major is important to Christendom for three reasons:

(a) It stands as a venerable monument to the Council of Ephesus(431), at which the dogma of Mary's divine Motherhood was solemnly defined; the definition of the Council occasioned a most notable increase in the veneration paid to Mary.

(b) The basilica is Rome's "church of the crib," a kind of Bethlehem within the Eternal City; it also is a celebrated station church, serving, for instance, as the center for Rome's liturgy for the first Mass on Christmas. In some measure every picture of Mary with the divine Child is traceable to this church.

(c) St. Mary Major is Christendom's first Marian shrine for pilgrims. It set the precedent for the countless shrines where pilgrims gather to honor our Blessed Mother throughout the world. Here was introduced an authentic expression of popular piety that has been the source of untold blessings and graces for Christianity in the past as in the present.

The beginnings of St. Mary Major date to the Constantinian period. Originally it was called the Sicinini Basilica; it was the palace of a patrician family by that name before its transformation into a church by Pope Liberius. The story of its origin is legendary, dating from the Middle Ages. The Breviary gives this version:

Liberius was on the chair of Peter (352-366) when the Roman patrician John and his wife, who was of like nobility, vowed to bequeath their estate to the most holy Virgin and Mother of God, for



they had no children to whom their property could go. The couple gave themselves to assiduous prayer, beseeching Mary to make known to them in some way what pious work they should subsidize in her honor.

Mary answered their petition and confirmed her reply by means of the following miracle. On the fifth of August — a time when it is unbearably hot in the city of Rome — a portion of the Esquiline would be covered with snow during the night. During that same night the Mother of God directed John and his wife in separate dreams to build a church to be dedicated to the Virgin Mary on the site where they would see snow lying. For it was in this manner that she wanted her inheritance to be used.

John immediately reported the whole matter to Pope Liberius, and he declared that a similar dream had come to him. Accompanied by clergy and people, Liberius proceeded on the following morning in solemn procession to the snow-covered hill and there marked off the area on which the church in Mary's honor was to be constructed.

Under Pope Sixtus III (432-440) the basilica was rebuilt, and upon the occasion of the definition of Mary's divine Motherhood by the Council of Ephesus, consecrated to her honor (432). He decorated the apse and walls with mosaics from the lives of Christ and His blessed Mother, which even to this day beautify the church and belong to the oldest we possess. As early as the end of the fourth century a replica of the Bethlehem nativity grotto had been added; on this account the edifice became known as "St. Mary of the Crib." To the Christian at Rome this church is Bethlehem. Other names for the basilica are: Liberian Basilica, because it dates to the time of Pope Liberius; St. Mary Major (being the largest church in Mary's honor in Rome); Our Lady of the Snow, because of the miracle that supposedly occasioned its erection.

We could point out how the divine Motherhood mystery dominates all Marian liturgy; for the Theotokos doctrine has kept Mariology Christo-centric in the Church's worship. Although recent popular devotion to Mary has become to a certain extent soft and sentimental and has, one may say, erected its own

sanctuary around Mary as the center, devotion to our Blessed Mother in the liturgy has always remained oriented to Christ. In the liturgy the divine Motherhood has always been the bridge from Mary to Jesus. One need only examine Matins in honor of Mary or the Masses from her Common to be reassured. Everywhere Christ takes the central position, and Mary is the Christbearer.

—Excerpted from *The Church's Year of Grace*, Pius Parsch.

Source: catholicculture.org