



The Miraculous Medal Association Australia

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Incorporating AMM Sydney, New South Wales & AMM Adelaide, South Australia

The Season of Autumn:

By Fr Kevin Canty, CM (National Director)

I was fortunate to have been given the opportunity of spending two years –1984-5 in Boston in the US. It was good to have had the opportunity of experiencing the seasons of the year in the northern hemisphere, especially Autumn. And I remember how a group of us travelled north into the state of Maine, where the Autumn colours were in a grand display. In the back yard of our house here in Ashfield, we have a beautiful tree that provides something of the Autumn colours that we can enjoy in parts of Australia. I have taken photos of the tree in each season. I believe the Blue Mountains are presently well worth visiting. I remember a Spiritual Director's Conference I attended in Hobart a few years ago. Someone from the Tasmanian group, who lead the prayers and liturgies each day, provided in our opening prayer on the first day, a reflection entitled Listening to Autumn, from a book "The Circle of Life" by Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr. I found it an excellent reflection, and was struck by the following few lines: 'I am listening

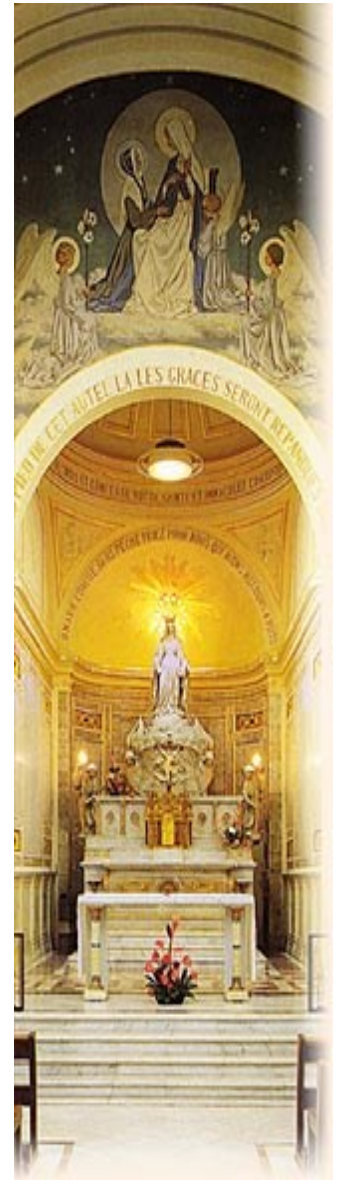


Photo by Simon Berger on UNSPALSH

to the song of transformation, to the wisdom of the season, to the losses and the grieving, to the turning loose and letting go. I am listening to the surrender of autumn.' But there was also a reference to the leaf that refused to let go. And that image of the leaf not letting go stayed with me for some time. So now, I offer you the following for reflection at this time.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Season of Autumn 1-2
AMM Sydney celebrates Flores de Mayo 3-4



Extract from a poem by Joyce Rupp.

O Falling leaves of Autumn, what mysteries of death you proclaim
to my unwilling self.

What eternal truths you disturb in the webbings
of my protected heart.

What wildness you evoke
in the gusty dance of emptying winds.

What mellow tenderness you bravely breathe
in your required surrender.

Some questions for us as we face this season of Autumn:

What do we need to gather into our spiritual barns? What in our lives needs to fall
away like autumn leaves so another life waiting in the wings can have its turn to live?

This is the season that evokes nostalgia and pours longing into our human hearts. Autumn speaks of connection and yearning, wisdom and aging, transformation and surrender emerging shadows, and most of all, mystery. I have always remembered some words of a well-known spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen, who stated : “Life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be entered into.” In what way does this season of Autumn speak to me of the Mystery of Life in Christ that is continually being offered to me each day?” May Mary, our Mother, who so successfully entered into the mystery of her life and call from God, help us to respond to the mystery being played out in our lives each day.



Prayer requests and special intentions are remembered during the First Saturday Novena mass. Click on this amm.org.au link to submit your prayer request.



AMM Sydney celebrates Flores de Mayo

By Bianca Kallukaran

The month of May is traditionally dedicated to Our Lady and began from as early as the 13th century. In the Northern Hemisphere, May is considered a season of growth flourishing, and renewal of nature which is closely connected to the Incarnation (when Mary gave her "yes" to God and birthed our Lord Jesus Christ into the world). This devotion became even more popular in the 1700s, among students in the Jesuit Order and when it was celebrated in the Gesu Church in Rome spreading to the wider church. Interestingly, the Flores De Mayo devotion was borne out of this in Italy among the Jesuit Orders to "counteract immorality and infidelity" among its students, and spread to the other churches in the Latin Rite. Many Popes have also strongly advocated and fostered devotion to Our Lady in the church (especially from the 19th century onwards): Pope Pius IX 's declaring the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, Pope Pius XII in his encyclical on the Sacred Liturgy *Mediator Dei* in 1947, and Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Mense Maio* in 1965. It was in this time, around 1854, that the devotion became an integral part of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, during the Spanish colonization.

For the entire month of May, each year, flowers are offered daily to Our Lady, the Mother of Jesus across the Philippines. It is also no coincidence that many Marian Feasts occur in May: 13 - Our Lady of Fatima, 24 - Help of Christians, and 31 - the Visitation). During this time the faithful are encouraged to foster and renew their devotions to Our Lady as Mother of Jesus and of the Church especially through the Rosary, Marian Novenas and Processions. In Marsfield, the AMM (Association of the Miraculous Medal) Sydney Chapter, with the great encouragement and coordination of Mercedes Soria, an AMM member, celebrated for the first time Flores De Mayo during



the first Saturday Novena Mass (at St Anthony's Parish, Marsfield) on 4 May 2024, sharing a deeply rooted tradition in the Philippines with the local community in Marsfield. The celebration began with a Rosary, followed by a flower procession with Our Lady to the church altar, as the Spanish hymn "Dios te Salve Maria" was sung. Many attendees brought flower offerings for Our Lady, which sat around her in a beautiful display of sweet scents and colours contemplating the beauty of creation and the most beautiful of God's creation - Immaculate Mary.

The Novena Mass followed and was celebrated by Fr Kevin Canty, CM. Fr Kevin, in his homily recalled the great role of Our Lady in the church and as model disciple and the rich history of devotion to Our Lady. The celebration culminated with a morning tea where many gathered for a joy-filled fellowship, cake and coffee.

The flowers were then moved from the main altar to the parish shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal as a reminder throughout the month of this floral devotion to Our Lady. Many parishioners visit the shrine to offer prayer intentions, flowers, or even a rosary to Our Blessed Mother. It is our hope as members of the AMM that this celebration renews and strengthens devotion to Our Blessed Mother especially as a community of faithful in Marsfield and across the wider community in Sydney, and we hope to make this an annual celebration going forward. Together, let us truly take Mary as our Mother in striving to be closer to Jesus!



For Miraculous Medal Novena monthly mass schedule, please visit amm.org.au/novena_groups.