

Mary, Pro-Life Inspiration**For Immediate Release****By Kimberly Baker**

“Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.” So begins the *Regina Coeli* prayer, which replaces the noon-time *Angelus* during the Easter season. Because the Easter season extends well into May, we are able to use this special prayer to Mary during much of the month traditionally dedicated in her honor. Marian devotion is one of the Vatican’s recommendations for observing the Year of Faith. It can also be a wonderful help in pro-life efforts.

Mary has many beautiful titles: Patroness of the Americas, Patroness of the New Evangelization and Patroness of the Unborn, to name a few. There are also many inspiring examples from Mary’s life that serve as a model for authentic Christian living. We see her immense faith and total gift of herself at the moment of the Annunciation, when she agrees to be the Mother of God. We see her sensitivity and her spirit of charity when she visits her pregnant older cousin Elizabeth. We see her love and maternal care for new life when she shelters her infant son Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem. We see her conviction in pointing to Christ at the Wedding at Cana when she says, “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). We see her at the foot of the Cross, even there opening her heart to be the mother of all humanity. And we see her quiet strength and support for the apostles in the Upper Room during the time leading up to Pentecost.

The significance of Mary as a role model for all women was highlighted by Blessed Pope John Paul II in his 1987 encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (Mother of the Redeemer). He wrote that “women, by looking to Mary, find in her the secret of living their femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement. In the light of Mary, the Church sees in the face of women the reflection of a beauty which mirrors the loftiest sentiments of which the human heart is capable: the self-offering totality of love; the strength that is capable of bearing the greatest sorrows; limitless fidelity and tireless devotion to work; the ability to combine penetrating intuition with words of support and encouragement (#46).”

Mary’s example is especially important to remember in pro-life efforts. She can be a tremendous source of inspiration and hope for women in today’s society, where there is so much woundedness resulting from the culture of death. Modern culture encourages a self-centered, materialistic and utilitarian view of the person, promising instant satisfaction, but ultimately leading to emptiness. The Christian view of the human person offers a very different way of life that is at once challenging and rewarding. Mary’s example of authentic Christian living speaks especially to a model of womanhood that is life-giving and love-affirming, and therefore very relevant to the pro-life message.

In addition to praying the Rosary and the *Angelus* (and the *Regina Coeli*), there are many ways to remember Mary’s example as we reach out to others with the pro-life message. Especially important is the hope we can offer to women everywhere who have been deceived and hurt by the anti-life mentality of our culture. We have a beautiful message to share, a message of life, love and true freedom. During this Year of Faith and as part of the New Evangelization, let us

remember the Queen of Heaven -- not only during the month of May, but throughout the year -- as we share the Gospel of Life.

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