

May is the month of Mary.....

Those of us of a certain age will immediately complete this phrase with the words ' month we all love so well.....' - and memories will go to processions and statues and perhaps even First Communion shirts and ties and white dresses brought out again for the special day. Pope Francis has given us a new Memorial of Our Lady to be celebrated by the whole Church on the day after Pentecost Sunday ( this year, Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May ) – the Memorial of **Mary, Mother of the Church** is intended to remind us that the position of Mary at the heart of the life and devotion of the Church ; she is the one who tells us, as she did at Cana in Galilee, ' Do whatever he tells you' ( John 2:5 ) . Mary always points away from herself and points towards Jesus – and tells us to '**DO**' , to put into action and into practice what Jesus tells us. And how do we know what exactly to do? In the daily circumstances of our lives it can be difficult to decide what to choose, how to discern, exactly what would Jesus want us to do. That is why prayer and discernment is always needed, lest I just do what I want to do and have no regard to the wider picture or indeed to the needs of others who may be effected by what I am doing.

If we are not careful discernment can be simply a 'canonizing' of what I want to do anyway. That is why discernment always includes the community of The Faithful, the Church. Mary as Mother of the Church always seeks the best for her children, seeks to help them discern how best to most perfectly and fully respond to the invitation and call of her Son. This is discipleship in action; the listening, the discerning, the doing.

It is something we need to do each and every day, many times each and every day – as Saint Paul would put it in his letter to the church in Rome we need to ask for the grace to discern what is GOOD, ACCEPTABLE and PERFECT ( Romans 12:2 )

Happy and fruitful discerning

Canon Philip