



Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

Catholic Pastoral Center ♦ 1615 West Washington Street ♦ PO Box 3187 ♦ Springfield IL 62708-3187
(217) 698-8500 ♦ FAX (217) 698-0802 ♦ WEB www.dio.org

Worship and the Catechumenate
Commission for the Liturgy

E-MAIL worship@dio.org

May Crowning Images of the Blessed Virgin Mary

It is not uncommon for Catholic parishes and schools to hold celebrations in which an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary or one of the same Saint Mary with the infant Jesus is crowned. Most often this devotion takes place in May each year. Since this is devotional prayer, there are no official texts for these celebrations. The following, however, will give some helpful clarity concerning what is available, when each may be used, and conclude in Item 3 with a sample rite that may be copied for parish use.

1. ORDER OF CROWNING AN IMAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

- a. This is part of the Roman Pontifical; thus a rite at which only a bishop presides.
- b. The International Committee on English in the Liturgy [ICEL] provisional translation was sent to bishops' conferences in 1986 for review.
- c. The final translation has not yet been produced.
- d. This rite is celebrated within Mass.
- e. It is liturgy in the narrow, formal sense.
- f. NOTE: it may be used only when a new and significant image is installed in a place of worship.

2. ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF AN IMAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

- a. This is part of the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 36, II, nos. 1277 ff.; part of a larger chapter on images for public veneration by the faithful.
- b. The minister is a priest.
- c. It is celebrated outside Mass only.
- d. It is liturgy in the narrow, formal sense.
- e. NOTE: as for the pontifical rite cited above, it may be used only for new images exposed for the first time, especially in a church.
- f. "For the faithful such images recall our Lord and the saints whom they depict, but they also in some way lead the faithful back to the Lord and the saints themselves" [BB, no. 1258].
- g. "Images are venerated 'not because of a belief that these images themselves possess anything of divinity or power, but because the honor shown them is directed to the prototypes they represent' (Council of Trent, session 25)" [BB, no. 1258].

3. CROWNING AN IMAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

- a. An example of this type of devotional prayer is found in *Celebrating the Marian Year: Devotional Celebrations in Honor of Mary, Mother of God*. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1987. ISBN: 1-55586-152-0.

- b. The minister is a priest, deacon, or lay person.
- c. It is celebrated outside Mass only.
- d. It is devotional and not liturgical prayer.
- e. It is regrettable that the title of the rite is not different enough so that it is not confused with the ones above. Perhaps it might be helpful to add “Devotion of the...” or “Devotional Prayer of...” to the beginning of this rite.
- f. Though prepared in 1987 for the Marian Year, the contents of the book are still helpful today.
- g. Readings are included in the minister’s text. It would be good form to find them in and make use of either a Bible or a *Lectionary for Mass*.
 - i. 1 Chronicles 15:3-4, 15-16; 16:1-2 – LM, no 621 or no. 707;
 - ii. Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab (during the Easter season) – LM, no. 622, no. 690a, and no. 708;
 - iii. 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8 – [canticle used as a responsorial psalm] LM, nos. 198, 306, 573, 709;
 - iv. Luke 1:26-38 – LM, no. 11, no. 196, no. 545, no. 627, no. 653, no. 689, no. 690a, no. 712, and no. 815;
 - v. John 19:25-27 (during the Easter season) – LM, no. 639, no. 712, and no. 1002.
- h. NOTE: It may be used with already blessed images and “may be used appropriately as part of May devotions....”
- i. It is out of print and no longer listed on the USCCB Publications web site.
- j. Because the book is out of print, and the text is only a small part of a larger work, a copy of this celebration that also includes the Title, Contents, Introduction, as well as the Musical Resources noted in the rite itself is available on the diocesan web site at this direct link:



Mary, Crowning
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If you have found or use other May Crowning rites, please share them by sending to ekapitan@dio.org.