

# PASTORAL GUIDELINES FOR THE RELIGIOUS DEVOTIONS IN THE MONTH OF MAY

## INTRODUCTION

The SYNOD ON SYNODALITY conducted in the local and national levels has recognized the role of the popular devotions in the participation of the ordinary folks in the life of the church. Likewise, these popular devotions are important tools in the identity and growth of the Christian life of the faithful.

## I. FLORES DE MAYO

1. FLORES DE MAYO is a traditional Marian devotion of the parish. Although it has been associated with children and young people, it has never precluded the participation of adults. Moreover, this devotion has been traditionally based in the parish churches and chapels.
2. Since the month of May is dedicated to the Blessed Mother, parishes are encouraged to continue with the “Flores de Mayo” devotion even if classes would hinder the school children to participate. However, the parish may devise ways and means for children to participate, e.g., adjusting the time schedule or asking catholic schools within the parish to assign specific class sections for each day.
3. This devotion has two basic parts: the daily recitation of the holy ROSARY and the OFFERING of flowers to the Blessed Mother. Adults should also be encouraged to bring up the letters “AVE MARIA” and offer flowers accompanied by prayers and singing (especially when there are no younger people in attendance). The catechesis which has been traditionally given before the start of the devotional prayers may still be given, especially if children and young people are present.
4. An almost forgotten aspect of the devotion is the offering of the SPIRITUAL BOUQUET which the devotees have to pledge for the entire month and which may vary from day to day; the devotee - a daily sponsor or in-charge - will promise to fulfill this either him/herself alone or with his/her family or group. The spiritual bouquet may be in the form of special prayers or mortification or sacrifice for specific intentions for the universal church and parish community. (Cf. Revised Spiritual Bouquet from the devotion in the Cathedral Parish which may serve as a guide).
5. The Mass and the singing of a Marian song may end the daily devotion. However, a Solemn Eucharistic celebration honoring the Blessed Mother should culminate the devotion at the end of the month.

## II. SANTACRUZAN

1. This devotion which was originally connected with the May 3 celebration the Finding of the True Cross by St. Helena (in the old liturgical calendar) has spread throughout the entire month of May. Because of the Marian character of the month of May, this devotion to the Holy Cross has acquired in time a very Marian element. And so, the recitation of the Holy Rosary has been an integral part of the devotion.
2. This devotion has three basic parts: the recitation of the Holy Rosary, the Prayers to the Holy Cross and the procession. As a popular devotion, the initiative and commitment of the lay persons have sustained it. This is the reason why this devotion has largely been village-based or chapel-based (makeshift chapels) sometimes even outside the purview of the parish priest.

3. As a devotion of the catholic faithful, it is imperative that the parish priest should take care of this devotion - the formation of the leaders and the catechetical instruction to the faithful (devotees) regarding the devotion, prayers and songs and even the procession.
4. To emphasize the connection of the popular devotion to the official liturgy, the parish priest should celebrate Mass with the Santacruzán group either in their chapel or together in the parish church.