

We Arise, Walk To Christ, With Mary

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein, Editor – *The Catholic Register*

Announcing the “Arise Together In Christ,” experience, Bishop Mark has placed that experience under the special patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is honored as the patroness of our Diocese under her title “Mother of the Church.”

In entrusting this three year process of growth and renewal to Mary’s care, Bishop Mark is carrying out a tradition as old as is Catholic life in the Allegheny Mountains: turning to Mary for help and support, for prayerful intercession when moving into the future.

This tradition began when the Servant of God Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, filled with the holy desire to see a Catholic center of faith, worship, culture and education grow up in the mountains gave the name “Loretto,” after the Italian shrine of the Holy House, to what had previously been known as McGuire’s Settlement. To think of Loretto is to think of Mary: the diocesan shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies on the grounds of the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel; the grotto of our Lady of Lourdes on the campus of Saint Francis University; the chapels of Our Lady of Fatima and of our Lady of Loreto in the grounds of Mount Assisi - Saint Francis Friary; and the chapel of the monastery of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, where the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel beckons to visitors from beyond the cloister grille.

Parishes named for the Blessed Virgin Mary criss - cross the map of our eight county Diocese like the beads on a rosary. Most are simply known as “Saint Mary’s” no matter what other title or attribute of the Virgin’s they are formally named after. It’s as if we don’t need the fancy titles to tell us who she is or what she is. We are at home with Mary - - on a first name basis. She’s one of the family.

Bishop Mark’s prayer to Mary as we begin the “Arise” experience appears on page 2 of this issue, along with a picture of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies. I’d like to suggest that you cut out the prayer and the picture and pray it daily for our diocesan intentions.

Throughout the Christmas season we heard reference made to Mary reflecting in her heart on all that she had seen and heard during those days when God’s grace was being poured out in abundance. In this regard she can be especially helpful to us as we enter into the “Arise” experience. Mary will encourage us to be reflective, too - - to treasure God’s actions in our lives, to keep them in our heart, and to reflect on them often. By sharing those reflections with one another we will indeed Arise, together in Christ, and make a new beginning as a people of faith, drawing ever closer to Him, accompanied on our way by His most holy mother. Come, let us walk together!