

An easy May altar

Though I've had a devotion to Mary for many, many years, it took me quite a while to introduce my children to the idea of a May altar. It was an ongoing challenge for me to translate my personal spirituality into something tangible for those around me.

But here in the Midwest, spring is welcome and May being Mary's month just makes sense as the flowers burst from everywhere.

A few years ago, I pulled myself together enough to clear a space on a shelf and have a May altar. Not only did I get a statue dusted off enough to be presentable, but I also worked with my kids to keep the flowers around the statue fresh.

I was surprised, especially that it was *fun*. The kids got involved, the flowers cheered me up, and I felt like I had inserted some beauty into my home.

But you don't have to limit yourself to your home. If you have access to fresh flowers, why not keep a corner of your office space or classroom dedicated to Mary?

Here are three tips for pulling together a May altar simply and easily.

1. Find a spot.

If you can see it when you're in the midst of your flurried activities, maybe it will bring calm to you. Then again, maybe you'll prefer to set it up as something that's more of a destination. You decide.

2. Make it special.

If you have a statue of Mary, however large or small, make sure it's part of your spot. A special cloth underneath—a

pretty napkin or a doily, for example—and a vase or two (or even just a fancy glass), and you are ready to go!

3. Involve your whole family.

I know my children will love the ongoing task of keeping the vase filled with pretty flowers. At least one of them will probably also be inspired to include some artwork or maybe even a toy or two. I'm okay with that.

The more comfortable my children are with Mary, the better later on in life, when they realize the extent of my imperfection and the amount of help I can't give. Mary won't let them down. I want them to turn to her without a second thought.

Having a pretty Mary altar right in the middle of our family's busy May comings and goings is one more way I hope to continue to make our Blessed Mother an integral part of their faith life.