

**Dear Sisters and Brothers,**

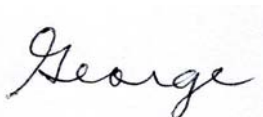
Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century it has been a Christian custom to dedicate the month of May to the Blessed Virgin. This devotional practice has been especially recommended by the popes. Pope Paul VI wrote an encyclical on the *Month of May*, in which he states: "During this month, Christians, both in church and in the privacy of the home, offer up to Mary from their hearts an especially fervent and loving homage of prayer and veneration. In this month, too, the benefits of God's mercy come down to us from her throne in greater abundance."

For us in the Marianist Family, there are a number of Marian feasts, some of which mark anniversaries of special occasions in our history. We also celebrate Mother's Day during this month, a day to give thanks for our mothers, both living and deceased. This is also the month when many of our ministries and communities will mark the closure of the year. Let us commend all of these events to Mary, the Woman of Faith, in our lives.

The Superior General of the Society of Mary, Father Manuel Cortés, has issued his third Circular letter, entitled "*Let It Be Done to Me According to Your Word*," with the subtitle, "*In Obedience with Mary*." In it, he challenges us "to consider our life by the light of the consecration that defines it," and he poses some strong questions for us to ponder: "Did we come to religious life to incarnate God's plan, or rather, to complete our personal or collective projects? How do we truly open ourselves up to the will of God? How can we listen to God's word in the here and now? What does it mean to incarnate this word? ..."

Let me suggest that a prayerful and reflective reading of the Circular might be a good project for each of us during this month of Mary. May we respond to the Superior General's probing questions with openness and honesty so that the process of conversion may continue to happen within us!

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

George J. Cerniglia, S.M.  
Assistant for Religious Life