May Is Mary's Month

In his Meditations and Devotions of 1893, the newly beatified John Henry Newman asks, "Why is May chosen as the month in which we exercise a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin?" And then in lush prose he proceeds to answer his own question.

"The first reason is because it is the time when the earth bursts forth into its fresh foliage and its green grass after the stern frost and snow of winter and the raw atmosphere and the wild wind and rain of the early spring. It is because the blossoms are upon the trees and the flowers are in the gardens. It is because the days have got long, and the sun rises early and sets late. For such gladness and joyousness of external Nature is a fit attendant on our devotion to her who is the Mystical Rose and the House of Gold."

May belongs to the Easter season, he continues, when there are "frequent Alleluias, because Christ has risen from the grave." Blessed John concludes, Mary is "the first of creatures, the most acceptable child of God, the dearest and nearest to Him. It is fitting then that this month should be hers, in which we especially glory and rejoice in His great Providence to us, in our redemption and sanctification."

This painting of Our Lady at the entrance of the Abbey church reminds us that Mary is Gate of Heaven, our Way to Christ her Son. All the houses of our Order are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. And the name of our monastery is actually Our Lady of Saint Joseph Abbey. We monks trust in her prayer and protection.

In our work at THE HOLY ROOD GUILD we are pleased to offer several vestments that can be worn for Feasts and Solemnities of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These vestments are typically constructed with a creamy white foundation and are often adorned with blue damask orphreys, since blue is Mary's color, the color of the heavenly firmament. Two of our Marian chasubles are ornamented with the fleur-de-lys. Since it is a stylized lily, the fleur-de-lys is symbol of Mary in her purity, as Immaculate Conception.

Annunciation chasuble   *Angelus chasuble*