

# Did You Know...



*News and trivia from our parish and the Catholic Church*

*-- contributed by the Christ Child Church Women's Club --*



## **Christ Child Catholic Church**

*Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the Challenges of Loving Service*

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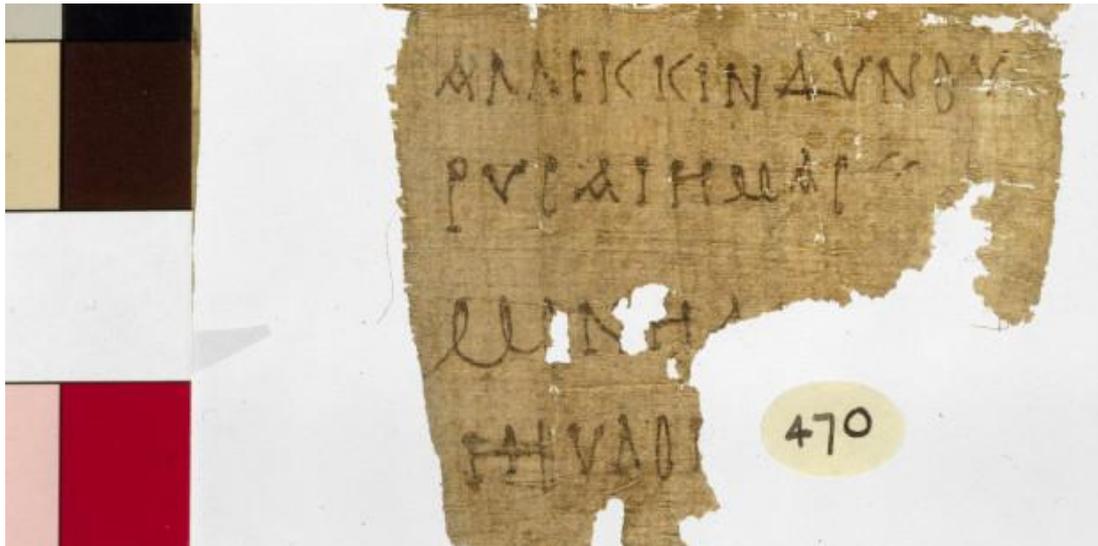
Mother's Day is always in May, and this special day in this very special month is used to honor all mothers, and especially the most famous mother of all time, our Lady Mary.

In addition, the month of May in this year of 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of Mary's visit to Fatima, Portugal, and her soothing message to the three children -- a message we all can heed -- "live free of fear".

Along with dedicating one month of the year in her memory, we also are blessed with a very special prayer specific to Mary, the "Hail Mary" or "Ave Maria".

## **The Prayer**

The prayer to Mother Mary is sometimes referred to as the Marian prayer. Did you know that this prayer is nearly as old as the New Testament itself? Not in its present form, of course -- as with many sacred writings, the wordings and languages have changed down through the ages.



An Egyptian papyrus, dating from 250 A.D., reads (in part):

*Mother of God hear my supplications: suffer us not to be in adversity, but deliver us from danger. Thou alone....*

Looks familiar, doesn't it? The prayer evolved over time, and its first formal publications was in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, after which it was included in the Roman Breviary of 1568. At that time, the "Ave Maria" was still known as the "Angelical Salutation".

### **The Month of May**

The exact origin of May/Mary honorifics is not well understood, and appears to have occurred over an extended period of time (rather than a sudden proclamation). At first, single days were dedicated to celebrations of Mary. *[Spring time has historically been a season of the celebration of newness and birth, and this may have had some influence.]* By the 1200's, multiple dates in May were being used to celebrate the Holy Mother.

Later (the exact era is not known for sure), the month of May became fully allocated to celebrations and observances. We do know that early dedications

were occurring in Italy in the 1600's. By the 1700's and 1800's, May devotions and prayers were common.

Isn't it remarkable, that a simple glance at a calendar can remind us of such spiritual beauty and grace? We should always remember to use this month to embrace the peace that Mary can bring to us.

--- *Karin and Greg Illes*