By Pat Haggerty

When I was a young girl the month of May was a big deal! I attended the local “parochial” school, and we were all about May shrines and May processions. We even sang a song that began: “C’est le mois de Marie; c’est le mois le plus beau” (It is the month of Mary; it is the most beautiful month). Indeed, it was!

All of our classroom shrines to Mary were festooned with lilacs and lilies of the valley. Even to this day, I have a special fondness for both of these flowers. The church altars were resplendent with blossoms of every spring variety. Processions to Mary were a common event. One year, I recall vividly, my mother made me a beautiful blue organza dress with a huge bow tied in the back, so that I could wear it leading the May procession.

What’s happened? Has our devotion to Mary waned? I don’t think so. In some ways, it has intensified through our looking at Mary with biblical eyes. We find the beauty of Mary in Luke’s gospel, for example. We see the magnitude of Mary’s submission to God in her visit with Elizabeth when she said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name (Luke, 1: 46-49).”

Mary is illustrating to Elizabeth---and to us---the splendor of God and how he is working through her. We should take a lesson from this gospel and look to Mary as a model for glorifying God, for showing humility, and for giving thanks to the God who made us. How wonderful to have such a model before us! I think God wants us to use Mary as a vehicle to get to Him.

Father Emmanuel d’Alzon, founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption, has a beautiful prayer that speaks to just that idea of using Mary as our model:

“O Mary, you will be my model and my teacher. I will study your perfections, and in that way learn to imitate less imperfectly the perfections of Jesus. In this way, my soul will be formed and merit one day to share in your victories, because I will have more generously tried to walk

in your footsteps.” (From: *Prayers: Emmanuel d’Alzon*. Rome, Italy. 2011)

Let us, like Father d’Alzon suggests, walk in the footsteps of Mary that will lead us to the Lord.