



What an Artist is Our God!

By Marge Loenser

Thank God for beautiful August! All good and beautiful things come from God and August (which means venerable) is no exception. See the copious snow ball bushes, the waving crepe myrtles, the stands of gladiolas! What an artist is our God!

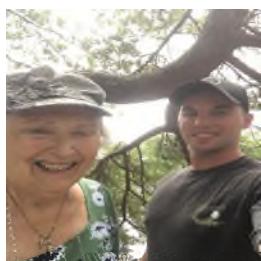
August is chocked full of very important events and saints. The events being: On the 3rd, the dedication of St. Mary Major, Papal Basilica; On the 6th, the Transfiguration of our Lord; on the 15th, the Assumption of our Blessed Mother. The saints we celebrate, to name a few: St. Lawrence, St. Clare, St. Bartholomew, St. Maximillian Kolbe, St. Monica and St. Augustine.

The Church of St. Mary Major is the basilica of the Pope. In the 2nd century, a Roman Patrician, Giovanni and his wife being childless prayed to the blessed Mother that she would designate an heir for their wealth. They had a vision in which the Blessed Mother said she wished to have a church built in her honor on the Esquiline Hill and the sign to verify this dream was that the prospective layout of the church would be outlined in snow. This was the month of August. Giovanni approached Pope Liberius and found out that the Pope had the same vision on Aug 4, 352. Mary said a miraculous snowfall would occur that would outline where the church was to be built in her honor. The next day, August 5, snow indeed fell on the Esquiline Hill in the midst of a heat wave.

This event provided us with one of Our Lady's oldest titles: Our Lady of the Snows. The basilica holds some of the finest art work and architectural wonders of the world. Two noteworthy treasures in this basilica are a relic from the manger in Bethlehem and an image of the Blessed Mother which tradition says was painted by St. Luke.

On the 6th we celebrate the transfiguration of our Lord. He takes Peter, James and John to the top of Mt. Tabor (very high – from there you can glimpse the sea of Galilee which is about 20 miles away). Jesus does this on his last trip to Jerusalem where he will face his passion and death. In the Transfiguration of our Lord, where His face shone like the sun, he tells Moses and Elijah of his final act of redemption for mankind. Now his mission is nearing completion – tying the Old Testament to the new.

My sisters in Christ, let us take advantage of all that August offers us spiritually, especially let us celebrate Mary's Assumption and read about the wonderful saints we celebrate in August. They light the way for us. They show us how they overcame adversity and followed the will of God. They help us turn our thoughts away from the chaos, which is our world right now and towards heaven, which is after all our final destination. Let us forever be charitable with each other and with those in need, be it physical, emotional or spiritual need. God bless us, each one and give us the strength to follow Him each day. Love, Marge



Marge Loenser is a member of Saint Mark's Church in Sea Girt where she is Lector and Eucharistic Minister. She has retired from teaching CCD at Saint Mark's. She has been a member of Catholic Women of Zion for about 30 years and is also a member of Mary Queen of Peace Prayer Community for about the same length of time. She writes for a monthly column for Saint Mark's Church Bulletin.