

## ON CROWNING IMAGES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(Notitiae 9 [1973] 266-267; Acta Apostolicae Sedis 65 [1973] 280-281)

Often in history the Christian people have earnestly asked and received permission to place a crown upon some particular image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The reason for this is that “Mary, as the Mother of God, placed by grace next to her Son above all angels and saints, has shared in the mysteries of Christ and is justly honored by a special veneration in the Church (LG no. 66). The rite given in the Roman Pontifical stands as permanent evidence of the tradition of crowning her images.

By mandate of Pope Paul VI, the Congregation for Divine Worship lays down the following norms for the coronation rite.

1. Only images of the Blessed Virgin, whether paintings or statues, may be crowned; the image of a saint or blessed may not.
2. Images to be crowned must be those specially revered by the Christian people, so that the rite does in fact express the attachment and devotion of the people to the Mother of the Lord.
3. The rite for crowning an image that is the object of devotion in a particular place must as a rule be conducted by the bishop of that place. He follows the rite as given in the Roman Pontifical.

The crown used must be gracefully made and have the beauty of a noble simplicity and genuine art.

4. For the crowning of an image “in the name and by authority of the pope”, which is done by a papal legate, the requirement is that the image is regarded as having truly special significance for the Church or for some nation or region.

To obtain authorization for such a crowning, the following *documents* must be sent well ahead of time to the Congregation for Divine Worship:

- a. the petition either of the bishop or of the conference of bishops (depending on whether the image involved is venerated in a diocese or in a region or nation);
  - b. a brief historical summary about the image itself and of the people’s devotion in its regard;
  - c. ecclesiastical or civil proceedings, requests, lists of signatures, to accompany the petition and serve as evidence of the will of the Christian people.
5. The faculty for the crowning is granted by means of a decree of this Congregation and an apostolic letter sent in the form of a brief.