

AUGUST 15, 2021
Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Luke 1: 39-56

“MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD.”

“There is an old story about a workman on scaffolding high above the nave of a cathedral who looked down and saw a woman praying before a statue of Mary. As a joke, the workman whispered, ‘Woman, this is Jesus.’ The woman ignored him. The workman whispered again, more loudly: ‘Woman, this is Jesus.’ Again, the woman ignored him. Finally, he said aloud, ‘Woman, don’t you hear me? This is Jesus.’ At this point the woman looked up at the crucifix and said, ‘Be quiet now, Jesus, I’m talking to your mother.’”¹

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a tradition started 6th century ago by the Eastern Churches, spread in the West and accepted by Catholic theologians in the 13th century, a belief that Mary was taken up into heaven body and soul where she was exalted as Queen of heaven and earth. In the Magnificat, our gospel for today, Mary gave thanks to God for all things He has done to her, symbolizes her ‘yes/fiat’, obedience and total surender as she recognized God’s favour on her lowliness. The first line of her Magnificat summarises everything in her heart: ‘My soul magnifies the Lord.’ Even Elizabeth and her baby, St. John the Baptist leapt for joy, a symbol of perfect homage and reverence, as they encountered Mary and the baby in her womb during her visit to them.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was declared as one of the dogmas of the Church on November 1, 1950 by “Pope Pius XII in the papal document *Munificentissimus Deus* (the most bountiful God) who gives four reasons for our belief in the Dogma of Assumption of Mary. 1) The uninterrupted tradition about Mary’s death and Assumption starting from the first century. 2) The belief expressed in all the ancient

¹ <http://frtonyshomilies.com/>

liturgies of the Church. 3) The negative evidence — the absence and veneration of a tomb of Mary while most of the apostles have their tombs. 4) The possibility of bodily assumption warranted in the Old Testament in the cases of Enoch (Gn 5:24), perhaps Moses (Dt 34:5), and especially Elijah (II Kgs 2:1). 5) The theological reasons: a) The degeneration of the body after death is the consequence of “original sin,” and Mary, as “Immaculately Conceived,” is exempted from the post-mortem decay of the body. b) As receiver of the fullness of grace and holiness because she is mother of Jesus and co-redeemer with Him, Mary’s place is with her son, God’s Son Jesus, the Redeemer, in the abode of holiness, Heaven.”² For us Catholics, this is a great motivation that those who are faithful and have their own ‘fiat’ to God will be rewarded eternal life in heaven. “Mary’s greatness was not just in being chosen to be Jesus’ mother but in her total acceptance of that responsibility in faith and trust, accepting blindly all that it might entail. And, indeed, she had no idea the price she would have to pay to be the mother of Jesus. But, again, like her Son she had emptied herself in total service to him and to day we celebrate her reward, her being raised to the highest place among the human race.”³ We can really say that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the epitome and role model of our faith, on how to follow the Lord and give all to Jesus.

“Miss Holycheek, the Catholic Sunday school teacher, had just finished explaining the feast of the Assumption to her class. ‘Now,’ she said, ‘let all those children who want to go to Heaven to see their Heavenly Mother raise their hands.’ All the children raised their hands except little Marie in the front row. ‘Don’t you want to go to Heaven, Marie?’ asked Miss Holycheek. ‘I can’t,’ said Marie tearfully. ‘My mother told me to come straight home after Sunday school.’”⁴

² <http://frtonyshomilies.com/>

³ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

⁴ *ibid*

My sisters and brothers, we are being reminded by today's solemnity that all those who are willing to be with our Lord in heaven must say 'yes' to Him and renew it always and everyday and like Mary, silently and obediently follow her Son Jesus Christ. This solemnity gives us the optimism and hope of our own resurrection and assumption into heaven when our Last Judgment was given to us. It is a sign that in the next life, through God's grace and our faithfulness, we too, will join our Blessed Mother in giving glory to God. Let us join in Our Lady's happiness as we look on her seated at the throne in heaven and may we look forward to the day when we too can share this happiness and joy with her. May we all be in heaven someday and let us start it here on earth by living our Christian lives of charity, compassion, mercy and service. Let us also thank the Lord for the blessings He gave to us everyday because in gratitude, when we thank Him, we exalt and give praise to Him. Pope Francis said: "Let ask ourselves, whether we, like Mary, praise and thank God for the good things He does for us, for His love, forgiveness, tenderness and for giving us His Mother and our brothers and sisters. If we forget the good, the heart shrinks. But if, like Mary, we remember the great things that the Lord does, if at least once a day, we were to 'magnify' Him, then our hearts will expand and our joy will increase."⁵ So, we ask her intercession that we may remain obedient, committed and faithful disciples to her Son as we continue our journey here on earth. Like her, let us thank our Lord and say our unconditional Yes to what Jesus wants for all of us. Let us emulate our Lady so that at the end of our lives, may we join Mary in her Son's kingdom someday.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, fill me with Your Holy Spirit as I obey and follow You. Increase my faith and trust in Your promises, say always my own Fiat/Yes like Your Mother and my Mother too. May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for me as I give my love for You as my all and joy. Our Lady of the Assumption, pray for us. Amen."

⁵ www.vaticannews.va