

Homily For the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Year I St. Peter's 8:30 AM Mass for Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Revelation 11:19-12:6 "A woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet."

Psalms 45:9-15 "At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir."

1 Corinthians 15:20-26 "Christ has been raised from the dead, first fruit of those who belong to him."

Luke 1:39-56 "The mighty one has done great things for me. He has lifted up the lowly."

Assumed Into Heaven

Introduction

Today is a great feast day of our Lady. Today we celebrate the virgin Mother of God being assumed, or taken up, body and soul, into heaven at the end of her earthly life. It began as a feast day in the Eastern Churches after the Council of Ephesus in 431, when she was proclaimed Mary the Mother of God. By the 6th century, the feast celebrated Mary's Dormition, her 'falling asleep', meaning her death. The western Church began to celebrate this feast around 650. In 1950, Pope Pius XII declared the Assumption of Mary official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that the Virgin Mary "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." According to one tradition, all of the Apostles were present when Our Lady came to the end of her earthly life and peacefully went to be with Christ in Heaven. The bodily Assumption of Jesus' mother into heaven is a foretaste of our own bodily resurrection at the end of time.

1 Corinthians

St. Paul addresses the Christian understanding of death and resurrection. When Christ returns, he will take those who were faithful to him. The first to be raised will be those who belong to Christ. The Church has always seen Mary as a member of this first group.

At Mary's birth, we already see the human nature of the Saviour of the world. She is not just any woman. She is at the heart of God's plan to bless and save the

world. Jesus chose his mother, not randomly from all the women of the world or from Israel. Jesus chose his mother from the beginning of time. St Paul says in this letter that those whom God predestined, he also called. Mary is clearly the one, destined from birth, who responded most perfectly to that call.

The feast of the Assumption of our Lady prompts us to acknowledge the basis for this joyful hope. Yes, we are still pilgrims, but our mother has gone on ahead, where she points to the reward of our efforts. She tells us that we can make it. And, if we are faithful, we will reach home.” (Saint Josemaría Escrivá)

Luke

When Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth is moved to refer to her as "the mother of my Lord." It is always the mother of the king who rules with the king, who intercedes on behalf of the poor. Elizabeth says: “For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.” In response, Mary gives us the gift of her Magnificat: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.”

Revelation

John sees a woman clothed with the Sun and crowned with twelve stars in heaven. Notice that later in the chapter, she is given wings of eagles. It happens to Enoch in Genesis 5. He is zealous for God and walks with God. Elijah also, taken up on a fiery chariot. Also, Moses was taken up directly. How much more should this happen to Mary.

In Genesis 3:15, we read that the woman would be the instrument of crushing the head of the serpent. At the wedding feast of Cana, Jesus says: "Woman, my time has not yet come." On the cross, he painfully declares: "Woman, behold your son." And to John standing there: "Behold your mother."

In Revelation 12, there are three characters: The woman with the crown of twelve stars; her child, who we know is going to be the messiah, who will rule all the nations with an iron rod, a reference to psalm 2, a messianic psalm; and the

dragon, definitely an individual person. The woman, crowned with stars, gives birth to a boy. The dragon waits to devour the child, which is taken by God before harm can befall him, and the woman flees to the desert. The Church sees in this vision of an image of Mary and the birth of Jesus.

She is Mary, the mother of the messiah and the spiritual mother of his disciples. But she also represents the faithful of Israel, crying out for the Messiah, as well as the Church, attacked by the devil for witnessing to Jesus. She is the new Eve, who was deceived and intimidated by the serpent, the devil, in the garden. Now she holds the power to overcome him. The vision depicts her in heaven, not on earth, as pure in body and soul, as equal to an angel, as one of heaven's citizens, as one who brought about the incarnation of God.

Call To Conversion

From her conception and her birth Mary has a destiny. At every stage of her life, she embraces that destiny. At her death, she receives the reward of those who die in Christ. Jesus is able to honour his mother in ways that we cannot. He gives her the gift of being immaculately conceived, born without original sin. If this is true, then it makes perfect sense for him also to provide her entry into heaven without the decay of her body.

Every family needs a mother. Only Christ could choose His own. From before time, he chose Mary. And, everything Christ has, he shares with us. His divine life is ours. His heavenly home is our home. His Father is our Father. His brothers and sisters are our brothers and sisters. And, his mother is our mother too. From her conception and from her birth, her destiny becomes our destiny, to be with her in heavenly glory. "If we fear to go directly to Jesus Christ, our God, whether because of His infinite greatness or because of our vileness or because of our sins, let us boldly implore the aid and intercession of Mary, our Mother. She is good, she is tender. She does not look to see what kind of person you have been. (St. Louis de Montfort)