

Homily for August 15th, 2021 – The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The foundations of the Father's Kingdom are laid, but the construction is still on-going. He wills to extend his Kingdom's borders and gather more and more people into it. And do you think God is doing it on his own? He could have done it on his own, but God wanted you and me to participate in his work: to build up God's kingdom, to bring more and more people into his friendship, so that they follow him and find the meaning of their lives.

But what will happen at the end of history? What will the Church become when the years of building reach the important lessons of precisely the answer to have always seen the image of the whole Church. church as the Mother



their completion? One of today's Solemnity is that question. Christians Blessed Virgin Mary as an We always pertain to the Church.

The First Reading from the describes a vision, rich with that reflect the heart of

Book of Revelation dreamlike symbolism, Christian faith. Mary

brought the baby Jesus into the world on the first Christmas, took care of him as he grew to manhood, and accompanied him as he fulfilled his mission. Mary was present from the cradle in Bethlehem to the Cross in Calvary.

The Church as a whole has a similar relationship with the mystical body of Christ – with you and me, every Christian, the members of that body. The Church continually brings Christ into the world through her many works of charity and apostolate, and especially through bringing more Christians into the world in baptism. And with her teaching and sacraments, like Mother Mary to her Son Jesus, the Church cares for and accompanies her members as they grow to maturity and carry out their missions.

And so, just as God assumed Mary into heaven, body and soul, at the end of her earthly mission, so God will lift the whole Church into perfect communion with himself in heaven at the end of history. Mary's Assumption, then, is God's promise to us.

Every Christian who follows Mary's path of humility and fidelity to God's will can look forward to following her into the glories and joys of heaven.

It's important for us to remember this bigger picture. That's one of the reasons the Church celebrates the Assumption so solemnly: the Church wants our faith to be big, strong, and robust, like Mary's. She wants us to remember that God is powerful and magnificent, and that he does wonderful things **in, through, and for those people who really trust him**, as Mary did. Here is a story that illustrates the importance of remembering the big picture that our faith paints for us.

Two men went fishing. Jimmy was an experienced fisherman; the other man, Kenny wasn't. Every time Jimmy caught a big fish, he put it in his ice chest to keep it fresh. Whenever Kenny caught a big fish, he threw it back. Jimmy watched this go on all day and finally got tired of seeing Kenny waste good fish. "Why do you keep throwing back all the big fish you catch?" Jimmy asked. Kenny replied, "I have to throw them back to the water because I only have a small frying pan."

Sometimes, like Kenny, we throw back the big plans, big dreams, big ideas, and big opportunities that God sends us, because our faith is too small. We laugh at Kenny who didn't figure out that all he needed was a bigger frying pan; yet how ready are we to increase the size of our faith? God has big hopes for us - Assumption-sized hopes. Seeing how his hopes for the Blessed Virgin Mary were so wonderfully fulfilled should help increase our faith.

It should stretch out our frying pan. As the angel Gabriel said to Mary long before her glorious Assumption, "nothing is impossible to God" (Lk 1:37).

One of the practical effects of this truth is given special attention by today's liturgical prayers.

In the prayer before the Consecration or what we call the Preface, we will hear Fr. Phil say: "Today the virgin Mother of God was taken up into heaven to be the beginning and the pattern of the Church in its perfection, and **a sign of hope and comfort** for your people on their pilgrim way." Why is it a sign of hope and comfort?

Because earth is not heaven.

Our lives here are full of doubts, difficulties, sufferings, and pain. Our efforts to follow Christ face obstacle after obstacle. We don't understand why God doesn't fix things. We are traveling through life in the midst of problems, troubles, and frustration and we can't see the way out. This is life in a fallen world.

Our faith in Christ doesn't take away the cross. It didn't take away the cross from Mary's life. It didn't take away the cross from the lives of the saints. But it does show us that the first Christian, the Mother of all Christians, the Blessed Virgin Mary, was snatched up into heaven at the end of her earthly journey.

When we lift our gaze to her, standing at the right hand of our Lord, as the Psalm tells us, we are given the assurance that our God is faithful. The gift of free will allows us to choose how we live each day – either looking out only for our own interests or accepting what God desires of us for the benefit of all humankind. If we stay true to him, he will be true to us.

And so, Mary's Assumption gives us comfort and hope as we stumble through life's hardships, enabling us to persevere through our trials, as she did, and to rejoice in the Lord even while the world gives us trouble.

Our solemn commemoration of Mary's Assumption does not end after the Mass. Through the Eucharist, we unite ourselves with Jesus so that we become signs of his living presence in the world. Let us be the extension of comfort and hope brought to us by Mary's Glorious Assumption.

Today, as we receive Mary's Son in Holy Communion, let us enjoy the primary source of comfort and the primary source of hope, and rest assured that this is not an illusion, but the everlasting truth.

Carlos Jacinto