

## Homily of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 2021

Revelation 11:19; 12:1-6; 10ab; Psalm 45:10-12; 16; 1Corinthians 15:20-17; Luke 1:39-56

The first reading can be interpreted to be a figurative narrative of Herod's attempt to kill baby Jesus and the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt recorded in Matthew 2:13-15. The woman who was with child represents Mary. The male child she gave birth to who is destined to rule all the nations represents Jesus. The dragon who wanted to devour the child represents Herod. As we read in the first reading, when Jesus was rescued from the dragon, a victory statement was proclaimed from heaven: "Now have salvation and power come, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Anointed One" (Revelation 12:10).

Not only in the case of Jesus, St. Peter warns us about everyone, "Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). We pray that through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary we are saved from being devoured by the devil and his agents. Amen.

The event of the Assumption of Mary is not recorded in the Scripture as Ascension of the Lord is recorded. The Word was made flesh in the womb of Mary. Hence, Mary is known as 'Vessel' or 'Tabernacle' of God. Therefore, God did not abandon his abode to rot in the grave. After her earthly life, Mary was taken body and soul to heaven. It is this wonderful mystery that we are celebrating today. Psalm 16:9-11 is a prophecy that points to this mystery, "Therefore, my heart is glad, my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor let your devout one see the pit. You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever." A section of the Preface prayer of today's celebration comes from this Psalm, "... rightly you would not allow her to see corruption of the tomb since from her own body she marvelously brought forth your incarnate Son, the Author of all life." The first reading depicts Mary in heaven, "... a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1).

During her life on earth, Mary was not passive. Today's gospel tells us how she went over to support her aunt, Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant. She interceded for the couple during their wedding at Cana when they ran out of wine. Through her intercession, Jesus changed water into wine (John 2:1-9). Now, being in perfect communion with God in heaven, she is more active, and her intercessory role more powerful and effective. That is why we pray for Mary's intercession. The prayer, *Memorare*, affirms, "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided." There are countless testimonies of answered prayers and miracles attributed to Mary's intercession. Numerous Marian feasts, Marian prayers, Marian pilgrimage centers, Marian institutions, Marian organizations, Marian groups and societies, and millions of Marian devotees attest to the effectiveness of Mary's powerful intercessory role.

Today's celebration is a celebration of hope. This is, also, expressed in today's Eucharistic Celebration Preface prayer, "For today the Virgin Mother of God was assumed into heaven ... a sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim people." We hope to be where she is after our earthly life. We are, therefore, invited to imitate her holy earthly life.

Let us pray:

O Blessed Virgin Mary, may we surrender to God's will as you did. May we be faithful as you were. May we persevere in all circumstances as you did. May we love God and neighbor as you did. May we ponder things in our hearts as you did. May we be caring as you were. May we radiate joy and the Holy Spirit as you did. May we be tender hearted as you were. May we be compassionate as you were. May we be generous and helpful to others as you were. May we be vessels of God as you were. We are not as sinless as you are, but may we repent of our sins. Pray for us to overcome and triumph over various 'dragons' battling with us to devour us. May our many prayers find favor in God's presence through your maternal intercession. At the end of our earthly journey, may we join you in heaven to merit eternal life. Amen.

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