

## Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Aug 15, 2017

A young lady was dancing and swinging her umbrella as she walked in a street. Her umbrella almost touched the nose of an Elderly man passing by. The man said to the young lady, "Please be careful with your umbrella." The young lady turned around and said, "Am I not free to swing my umbrella?". Then the Elderly man said, "you are free to swing your umbrella, but your freedom ends where my nose begins."

We all want to be free and happy. We experience true freedom and complete happiness when we are in the presence of God. Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We celebrate the Blessed Virgin, taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over.

In his decree on the Dogma of the Assumption, Pope Pius XII gives three theological reasons to support this traditional belief.

1: The decay of the body after death is the result of original sin. Since, through a special intervention of God, Mary was born without original sin, it is not proper that God would permit her body to decay in the tomb.

2: Since Mary was given the fullness of grace, Heaven is the proper place for this sinless mother of Jesus. Hence, unlike other saints, Our Lady is in Heaven not only with her soul but also with her glorified body.

3: Mary was our *co-redeemer* with Christ. Hence, her rightful place is with Christ our Redeemer in Heavenly glory.

**The first reading** from the book of Revelation begins with the words, "God's temple in heaven was opened, and the Arc of the Covenant was seen there." The arc of the covenant was gone missing for five centuries before St. John wrote the book of revelations. The arc of the covenant which contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments and Manna, the food from Heaven, which are represented by Jesus, who is the word made flesh and the bread of life. In the next verses we heard in the first reading today, St. John instead of describing about the Arc of the covenant, which went missing for hundreds of years, he goes on to describe about a woman clothed with Sun, moon under her feet and crowned with 12 stars. In other words, he describes about the arc of the new covenant, which is Mary. She bore Jesus in her womb, who is the word made flesh and the Bread of life. The Church sees in this heavenly woman the Blessed Virgin, "taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over.

**The second reading**, taken from I Corinthians, is Paul's defense of the resurrection of the dead, an apt selection on the feast of our Heavenly Mother's Assumption into Heaven. In 1 Cor 15:20 Paul speaks of Christ's resurrection as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Since Mary is

closely associated with all the mysteries of Jesus' life, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit has led the Church to believe in Mary's share in his glorification. In the *Magnificat*, given in today's Gospel, Mary declares, "*the Almighty has done great things for me; Holy is His Name.*" Besides honoring her as Jesus' mother, God has blessed Mary with the gift of bodily Assumption. God, who has "lifted up" His "lowly servant," Mary, lifts up all the lowly, not only because they are faithful, but also because God is faithful to the promise of Divine mercy. Thus, the feast of the Assumption celebrates the mercy of God or the victory of God's mercy as expressed in Mary's *Magnificat*.

1. Mary's Assumption gives us the assurance and hope of our own resurrection and assumption into Heaven on the day of our Last Judgment. It is a sign to us that someday, through God's grace and our good life, we, too, will join the Blessed Mother in giving glory to God. It points the way for all followers of Christ who imitate Mary's fidelity and obedience to God's will.

2: Since Mary's Assumption was a reward for her saintly life, this feast reminds us that we, too, must be pure and holy in body and soul, since our bodies will be glorified on the day of our resurrection.

3: This feast also gives us the message of total liberation. Jesus tells us (Jn 8:34) that every one who sins is a slave of sin, and St. Paul reminds us (Gal 5:1), that, since Christ has set us free, we should be slaves of sin no more. Thus, the Assumption encourages us to work with God to be liberated from the bondage of evil: from impure, unjust and uncharitable thoughts and habits, and from the bonds of jealousy, envy and hatred.

4: Finally, it is always an inspiring thought in our moments of temptation and despair to remember that we have a powerful Heavenly Mother, constantly interceding for us before her Son, Jesus, in Heaven. The feast of Mary's Assumption challenges us to imitate her self-sacrificing love, her indestructible Faith and her perfect obedience.

Therefore, on this feast day of our Heavenly Mother, let us offer ourselves on the altar and pray for her special care and loving protection in helping us lead a purer and holier life.