

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The commemoration of the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the dormition, or falling asleep, as it was known in the East) is known as the Assumption because of the tradition that her body did not decay but that she was raised up, body and soul, into heaven. This tradition was already present in the sixth century; by the beginning of the twentieth century it was widespread; and after consulting the views of bishops all over the world, the Pope formally and infallibly declared the doctrine of the Assumption to be part of the authentic and ancient doctrine of the universal Church.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our first reading from the Book of Revelation does what it was meant to do – confuse those who are not part of God's people. There are many of us who would consider ourselves children of God and still be confused – Revelation can be hard to understand. To understand Revelation, we need to have a knowledge of the other books of the bible. The Book of Revelation highlights the Christian persecution by the Roman authorities, and to speak the truth clearly would mean sure death for all Christians.

Our first reading shows this beautifully. The writer of the Book of Revelation reminds the people of God, as they endure this terrible persecution, of the great sign God had sent from heaven – the woman gave birth to “a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and God's throne. The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God.”

The woman here represents both the people of God, and the mother of Jesus. The dragon represents the Roman Empire and all things that take us away from God. The struggles of our daily lives, and unfortunately those struggles can be greater for some than others, can hide God from us, leaving ourselves disoriented and lost. It can become an internal persecution and we find ourselves crying the cry of Jesus – “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” Like the writer of the Book of Revelation, we need to look back and see the signs of all those God has sent to help, from Abraham to Jesus. We can always turn to those whom God has sent for inspiration and guidance. But also know, if we call on God for help, God will come to us - in the person God sends to us, or in speaking to us in the scriptures we read, or in the prayer we offer to God.

If we are in need of courage, if we desire inspiration, if we want to know the importance of faith in God – look to Mary. Read the gospels, reflect on what Mary's ‘YES’ means. What courage,

what faith, what trust in God Mary needed to say 'YES'. As she interceded at the wedding of Cana, she will intercede for us. On this feast of the Assumption of Mary, let us turn to her and ask her to intercede for us.

***Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed are thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen***

Let us remind ourselves of the words of Jesus, 'Do not be afraid, I am with you always.'

Have a blessed week.

Fr. Martin