

Sermon

- ◆ **First Reading:** *Apocalypse 11:19, 12:1-6, 10*
- ◆ **Second Reading:** *1 Corinthians 15: 20-26*
- ◆ **Gospel:** *Luke 1:39-56*

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven, body and soul ; How did the Assumption come about? The truth of the matter is that no one knows how it first came to be celebrated. We know from sacred scripture the type of person Mary was, chosen by the Heavenly Father to be the mother of His only begotten son Jesus.

The womb in a mother-to-be is a type of home for the baby who will be born after the average gestation time of 9 months ; the womb of Mary was occupied by the saviour, her womb was a sacred place, but

Isn't every occupied womb a sacred place where the miracle of new life is miraculously formed? As believers we bestow honour on the motherhood of Mary when we say **AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS**

We have a lot to be grateful for in our religion, God became a human being in the person of Jesus thru 'Mary, her flesh was used to form the flesh of her Son, Jesus.

On 1st November 1950, pope Pius 12th solemnly defined the Dogma of the Assumption (a dogma, in this context, refers to an absolute truth of our Faith, a truth that will never be redefined nor watered-down in any shape or form) **"MARY, HAVING COMPLETED THE COURSE OF HER EARTHLY LIFE WAS ASSUMED BODY AND SOUL INTO HEAVEN**if you notice the dogma does NOT SAY "Mary, after her death, was assumed into Heaven" ; In holy scripture there is no mention of the death of Mary, she has no burial place, her Assumption into Heaven, body and soul, is literal, that's how it happened ; how exactly that happened and where?? Again no one has that information, we are dealing with a mystery of Faith ; We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, then, now and always FOR GOD NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE ...

So can we take something from Mary's Assumption to ourselves???

I don't suppose your body nor mine will ever be taken up like Mary's, but we can get to that place where she has already gone, WHERE?

To HEAVEN!!, may we live in hope of Heaven to-day and everyday,

don't forget that great little saying "HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL" ;

Even in the humdrum of every day life, how often do we raise our hearts and minds to Eternity with God in Heaven? But says you "Don't I have enough to deal with on earth !! I've bills to pay!, the kids are always wanting things!, the arthritis in my left arm will never get any better, and as for this coronavirus, I may not have a job beyond October...."

YES!! the harsh realities of every day life and the eternal joys of Heaven are two very different realities ; for a lot of people, just to get thru' another day, can sometimes be a cross too burdensome to bear ; has anyone ever discovered an easy way to Heaven? There is no such a thing as a resurrection without first having to carry our cross while here on earth, whatever form that cross may take, this is a very sensitive issue, the non-believer could easily come along an'

say "but what you believers refer to as crosses, we non-believers have to bear those same crosses!!!!!" what would your answer be to that?, I am still working thru' this interesting and sensitive question, and I still don't have a complete answer.

What was it that Mary had to endure? She had to behold her dying Son on a cross(..a wooden one..), she was there at his side, right to the bitter end. All her life Mary had known that he son was going to meet with a violent death. Simeon, the holy man, revealed that fact to Mary(Luke 2 ; 33), so that was her CROSS as a mother, her earthly life wasn't a bed of roses, surely she went thru' hours of inner darkness and brutal anxiety, knowing that something terrible was going to happen to her son ;

Is it of any consolation to know that many earthly things, the many things we worry about and drag us down, that all these things are only transitory, they are passing, they will come to an end ; and the human body is WHAT?, a temporary frame ;

The care of our soul is of equal importance, even more so ; YES!, take good care of your body especially while this killer virus is around, but we must never neglect the care of our most sacred part, the SOUL! As believers and pilgrims in this short life we are bound to keep our soul in a state of grace, enjoying God's favour ;

Where Mary has gone, we hope to follow, Heaven-bound ; the last 2 lines of our Creed are **WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME ;**

As already mentioned, in holy scripture there is no description of Mary's actual Assumption into Heaven body and soul, that was the Hand of God at work, but there is a description of the manner of the resurrection for the rest of us who remain loyal to the Lord-of-Life, it's taken from st.Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians, 15 ; 35.

THEN THERE ARE HEAVENLY BODIES, AND THERE ARE EARTHLY BODIES, BUT THE HEAVENLY BODIES HAVE A BEAUTY OF THEIR OWN, AND THE EARTHLY BODIES A DIFFERENT ONE. THE SUN HAS IT'S BRIGHTNESS, THE MOON A DIFFERENT BRIGHTNESS, AND THE STARS DIFFER FROM EACH OTHER IN BRIGHTNESS,

IT IS THE SAME WITH THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD,

THE THING THAT IS SOWN IS PERISHABLE, BUT WHAT IS RAISED IS IMPERISHABLE ;

THE THING THAT IS SOWN IS CONTEMPTIBLE, BUT WHAT IS RAISED IS GLORIOUS ;

THE THING THAT IS SOWN IS WEAK, BUT WHAT IS RAISED IS POWERFUL ; WHEN IT IS SOWN IT EMBODIES THE SOUL, WHEN IT IS RAISED IT EMBODIES THE SPIRIT ;

IF THE SOUL HAS IT'S OWN EMBODIMENT, SO DOES THE SPIRIT HAVE IT'S OWN EMBODIMENT ;

Be well, stay healthy

Fr Kieran A. Fitzharris SVD