

HOMILY FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION

“Let us all rejoice in the Lord, as we celebrate the feast day in honour of the Virgin Mary, at whose Assumption the Angels rejoice and praise the Son of God.”

Recently I attended a gentleman who is terminally ill. The request had been made by his family and I was welcomed with open arms and gratitude. We spoke for a little while before his receiving the Sacraments. The conversation enabled him to express his fears and anxieties concerning his approaching death; and particularly the sense of having to leave behind all that he holds dear.

I tried in my replies to help him to trust in Jesus' promises but what really made a difference for him was his receiving the Sacraments of Anointing and Holy Communion. Having received Holy Communion he said, ***“I feel so much better now that I have received our Lord.”***

Reflecting on this experience I was reminded of one of the antiphons written by Saint Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi:

“O Sacred Feast in which we partake of Christ, His sufferings are remembered, our minds are filled with His grace, and we receive a pledge of the glory that is to be ours.” The phrase ***“We receive a pledge of the glory that is to be ours”*** made me realise that for this person whom I attended receiving Holy Communion was for him a ***“pledge of future glory.”***

Today's Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady into Heaven gives substance to this pledge of future glory for each and everyone of us; for we see this fulfilled in the life of our Lady. As the preface of today's Mass states, in addressing God our Father, ***“rightly You would not allow her to see the corruption of the tomb since from her own body she marvellously brought forth Your incarnate Son, the Author of all Life.”***

The Dogma of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady into Heaven was only promulgated in 1950, however from the earliest times of the Church this belief in our Lady's Assumption was widely held. This dogma is part of all that the Church teaches about our Lady, what you might describe as a beautiful symphony or harmony. At the annunciation Mary offered her total self to God's plan to save the human family. She was to become the Mother of the incarnate Son of God: ***“I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what You have said be done to me.”***

In Mary we see what the grace of God can accomplish in our own lives too.

When I go to Confession I sometimes receive as a Penance the suggestion that I spend a few quiet moments reflecting on the times I have experienced God's love for me and God's blessing me and that I thank God for those moments. If you like that I make up my own litany of thanksgiving.

The Gospel of today's Mass includes the Magnificat, Mary's thankful song of praise for all that God was doing in her life. May I suggest that we each try to spend a few quiet moments today reflecting on the promises that God has made to us, the Blessings He has showered upon us, in His Son Jesus Christ, and that, like Mary, we find it in our own hearts to thank and praise our Lord.

“All generations will call me blessed, for He who is mighty has done great things for me.”