

Vigil Mass/ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY C/2010

There are moments in life when one feels satisfaction and fulfillment after a job well done. These are moments like when a student has completed his test successfully, a challenging project has been accepted for further development, or a business has achieved a mile stone with new profit, etc.

Such moments are also the moments of recognition and reward for the skills displayed, the qualities shown, and the ability to sort things out that place the individual above the common lot and the ordinary people.

The feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother Mary contains both elements of recognition, for what God has done by choosing her as the mother of his Son Jesus, and reward for the spiritual quality of her life that made her a special woman before God.

The readings of this Vigil Mass remind us that what happened to Mary has been prepared by God in his plan since ancient times. The first reading of this Feast reminds us of the importance of the ark of the Covenant and what David did in order to preserve it in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

We know that the ark of Covenant contained the stone tablets of the Law. It was a strong conviction in Israel and one of the oldest beliefs of the Church that what the law contained was the word that God himself wrote with his own finger in the form of Ten Commandments he gave to Israel.

In that perspective, the ark of the Covenant was seen as the personification of God himself in the midst of his people. When in the desert Israel was in trouble, God himself guided them and helped them by his presence in their midst from the ark of the Covenant. When David transferred solemnly the ark of the `Covenant to Jerusalem in the temple, it found there its definitive place among God's people as a sign of blessing.

Why is the Church referring to this story in this Feast? The Church refers to this text because she sees Mary as the ark of the New Covenant and the dwelling place of the word of God. As the ark of the old Covenant contained God's word in the form of stone tablets, so Mary bore in her womb the Word of God, Jesus. In the same way, the Church sees in the solemn transfer of the ark of Covenant into Jerusalem, the city of God and the place of its dwelling among God's people as a prefiguration of the assumption of Mary into heaven.

In that sense, the Assumption is the feast of the glorification of the Mother of our Savior who shares with her body and soul in the glory of her son Jesus who is in heaven in the splendor of the Father. As St Paul said in the second reading, when that which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then death is swallowed up in victory; its strength is to be found nowhere and its sting disappears.

The truth St Paul teaches us here is that immortality is a victory over death and over sin as well. But, as God has preserved Mary from any stain of sin for the sake of the great gift of

being the mother of our savior and the savior of the world, he has prepared her a place near her son and a glory similar to that of her son in heaven. Thus, as a perfect human being, Mary shares in her son's victory over death and sin with her body and soul.

That is why the feast of the Assumption is a day of joy for what God has done for Mary, a human being like us, by receiving her in the glory of heaven with body and soul. This is a big consolation for each one of us to know that, like Mary, at the end of our pilgrimage on earth, we will be received into God's home to rejoice with him forever.

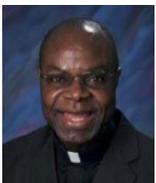
When Jesus says in the Gospel, "Blessed are those who hear the word and observe it", he defines our destiny as those who can share in the glory of heaven together with Mary who was the first to trust God and to believe in his word that the angel brought to her. The fate of Mary is the fate of those who believe in Jesus and observe his word.

In that perspective, the Assumption feast is a celebration in anticipation of what we will become. It is a contemplation in advance and a longing for our own transformation for the day our body will be clothed in immortality. As Pope Benedict says, "With Mary, we must begin to understand that it is so. We must not drift away from God but make God present; we must ensure that he is great in our lives. Thus, we too will become divine; all the splendor of divine dignity will then be ours".

In the Assumption of Mary, we have the assurance that in God's home, there is room even for the body. In the Assumption of Mary, we celebrate one of the mysteries of our faith, namely that the resurrection is not only about the soul, but also the body. If that is the case, we have to believe that on the day of the resurrection of the dead, we will appear entirely as we are, with our bodies washed in the blood of the Lamb and purified before the throne of God. Then, we will see with our own eyes the truth of what we celebrate today in the Assumption of Mary. We will live the truth of sharing forever in the glory of Jesus.

The Assumption Feast teaches us that because Mary is with God in the glory of heaven, she is also close to each one of us. She has been the mother of Jesus and our mother during her days on earth. That role remains permanent throughout human history that finds its culmination in heaven. That is why we can turn to Mary in time of distress and our needs. As she interceded for us while she was still on earth, she is still fulfilling the same role now where she is close to her son in heaven.

Let us pray that the Feast of Assumption may help us to turn our eyes to heaven where our Mother is in glory. Let us turn to Mary in trust and confidence so that we live here on earth in the expectation of our eternal glory in heaven. May God bless you all!



Homily Date: August 14, 2010

© 2010 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD

Contact: www.mbala.org

Document Name: 20100814homily.pdf

1 Chronicles 15, 3-4, 15-16; 16, 1-2; 1 Corinthians 15, 54b-57; Luke 11, 27-28