

Solemnity of the Assumption

August 15, 2014

Luke 1: 39-56

Dear Holy People,

Why is the celebration of Mary, the Mother of God, being brought bodily to heaven right after her death so significant? We might think that it is because this precious vessel which carried Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as a human being: as the Apostles' Creed says, "who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary..." We believe that her whole being, including her body, was so special that God would not allow it to undergo the decay most mortal bodies experience. And we would be right; but that is not all.

We might think that we celebrate this feast so especially because Mary was given to us at the foot of the Cross when he told Saint John: "behold, your mother." Mary, Our Mother, Our Star of the Sea, our light, is so important to us that we cannot do anything else by honor her without this distinguished celebration. Her very importance to us as a close link to her Son makes this feast necessary and desirable. After all, Mary is our heavenly mother. And we would be correct. There is more.

We might think that Mary, the Mother of God, is an outstanding model and example for us as one who allowed Jesus to enter her being and her very body, so that she always had him within her in her heart and actions. This is exactly what we do as Jesus' brothers and sisters, becoming members of his Body and adopted by the Father. Jesus is not 'out there,' he is part of our very being too. We carry him with us every day. Mary's example reminds us to make this presence count. We pray that she may help us become images of her Son. And we would be accurate again.

But there is another reason for our celebration that goes even deeper. You remember that recently on August 8, we celebrated the feast of the Transfiguration. One thing that this event showed us is that just as Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, as we, too, will be transfigured as we begin our new life with God in heaven. Jesus' Transfiguration is a glimpse of what we are called to be as our life continues after we die. Mary, too, in her assumption bodily into heaven is a snapshot for us to see that our actual existence in the next life is real. Mary is a symbol to us of who we will be and what we will become. And she is so, precisely because of the reasons mentioned above. In Mary, all generations are blessed and the great things of the Lord are seen. Pray for us, O Mary, our hope and our shining star.

Today we also celebrate as a parish, the 140th anniversary of our foundation as a parish. We are grateful for a good patroness in St. Mary, Star of the Sea. We are thankful to those who have gone before us for this beautiful church which has served us so faithfully and well as a place where we worship. But the real beauty of our parish is those who make it up. We are called to be like our mother, Mary, and be carriers of Jesus, his presence in the world. We will celebrate our patroness and our anniversary after the 7:00 pm bilingual Mass on Friday, August 15th. The reception will be outside the church weather permitting; if the weather is bad, we will use the auditorium. All parishioners, friends, guests, and neighbors are welcomed to come and join our celebration at Mass and afterward at the social.

Rev. John Tran