

The Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary - August 15

Today's reflection focuses on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady into heaven. I feel compelled to reflect on our blessed mother's assumption and its practical implications for all of us, her devotees.

On November the 1st 1950, Pope Pius XII in a document titled *Munificentissimus Deus* defined the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul into Heaven as a dogma of our Catholic faith. I was not born then, but I can imagine can imagine that it was an event of enormous significance for the Church and the world. It made the whole church focus in a new way on the meaning of the Assumption and its pivotal place in our daily lives. Of course, the Church always believed in the Assumption and it is the oldest feast of Mary in the liturgical year. It would be unthinkable for Mary to be anywhere else but in heaven in the totality of her personhood, that is body and soul. She was conceived without original sin and was free from any personal sin; she is the Mother of God and shared not only deeply in the life of our Lord but also in his passion and death. It follows logically that she would share in his Resurrection.

Let me just mention a few things that this dogma about Our Lady should offer us as her children. First of all it should offer us tremendous hope for our personal lives and for our apostolate. One of the great joys in the life of Frank Duff, founder of the legion of Mary, took place on Thursday, May the 10th 1979. That day he attended the Mass of Pope John Paul II in his private chapel together with three other legionaries and they also received Holy Communion from him. Afterwards they had breakfast together and had a wonderful discussion on the Legion and its worldwide apostolate. In the course of their conversation the Holy Father said: 'I must tell you a story.' It went as follows: 'When Cardinal Hlond of Warsaw was dying, a young priest knelt by his bedside. There had been great difficulties, not only in Poland but also in many other countries as well. The Cardinal, as if leaving a last testament, said: "Victory will come through Mary." Then His Holiness added: "and that is my message to the Legion of Mary - 'Victory will come through Mary.'" "And a thrilling message it was." I want us to make this message our own also. Surely victory will come through Mary.

Before the Holy Father said his final farewell he said again "Remember the words 'Victory comes through Mary.'" Dear Sisters and brothers, this is also the message of the dogma of the Assumption.

In her Assumption Mary proclaims in a wonderful way the total victory of Christ in his death and resurrection. What has taken place in her will take place in us too. This is what our bonding with Mary as our mother guarantees; this is what our consecration to her brings about. What St. Paul writes about in the first letter to the Corinthians is first of all realized in Mary and by her maternal intercession and care comes to be realized in us too: 'When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture will come true: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Where is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Assumption is the most perfect fulfillment of the promise in Genesis of the victory of the Woman and her seed. We children of Mary, members of the Slaves of Love must think not only about the prophecy in Genesis but its superabundant fulfillment in the Assumption of Our Lady into heaven.

Mary's spiritual maternity of souls comes to perfection in the Assumption. Now she sees us not by faith and obscurely but she sees us now with total clarity down to the very last details of our lives in the beatific vision of God and her Son. Our special charism or vocation as Blessed Mother's children and members of the mystical body of Christ, her son, is the call to share in Mary's maternity of souls and therefore it is important for us to be receptive to the graces and meaning of the Assumption. It is not a relationship to the Mary of history that is the centre of our calling or spirituality but Mary as she is living here and now in heaven as the heart of the Trinity. We treasure every moment and aspect of the mystery of Mary our Mother but especially in the way she is actually living and acting now. Victory comes through Mary assumed into heaven. Let us finish with the opening prayer of the Liturgy for this great feast: 'All powerful and ever living God, you raised the sinless Virgin Mary, Mother of your Son to the glory of heaven. May we see heaven as our final goal and come to share her glory. Amen.'