

The Assumption of the Virgin Mary  
(Revelation 11:19; 12:1-6.10 / Luke 1:39-56)  
15.08.2021

Dear brothers and sisters,

Very often, the end of an event enlightens the whole event.

Those who are used to reading detective novels know that it is only at the last page that they will discover the truth of each of the protagonists and the real motivation of their relationships with one another.

In ordinary life, it is very often the way how people die which reveals who they really were; their death throws into light the golden thread of their personal history. For example, people dying in peace and with an unwavering hope in God's eternal love for them reveal that a living faith in Christ as their unique Saviour was the secret of their lives.

Today we contemplate the Virgin Mary who, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven. There she lives for ever with her Son and the saints of all times, those known and those unknown. There she praises God the Father and intercedes for those who are still engaged in the earthly pilgrimage.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in glory near her Son throws into light her intimacy with him during her earthly life. With her people, Mary waited for the Messiah. She used to listen to God's Word, keep it in her heart and put it into practice. Little by little she became aware that she was graciously chosen by her heavenly Father to give flesh to his Son Jesus, God's word made flesh. She mothered him, educated him and lived with him for thirty years. She was so united with him that the Tradition said that she was preserved free from all stain of original sin. Her communion with him was never broken. We know that sin is often a way to avoid suffering. Even when Mary suffered intensely at the foot of the Cross of her Son, she did not sin, she never doubted the Father's love for his Son Jesus; and she never doubted his love for her.

Contemplating Mary, the first creature to have been introduced into the glory of heaven by the merits of the passion, death and resurrection of her Son Jesus, the unique mediator between God and humanity, we contemplate the condition we hope that we shall come to share one day by grace, both in body and in soul. Mary's Assumption anticipates our own resurrection – body and soul – in Christ.

Body and soul! I guess that some of us think: soul, ok; but body, no, because that is not realistic. We think: after our death, our body will be soon decomposed in the earth. We think also of all those who have been cremated and others whose earthly bodies were completely destroyed. I understand these objections, but I believe in the faith of the Church: One day, by the grace of the Risen Christ, we shall be raised body and soul into the glory of heaven.

Perhaps our difficulty is in our understanding of what we mean by 'body'. The body is not only a conglomerate of living cells with a soul. It is above all an instrument through which we are able to enter into loving relationships with other human beings. Through our body, we are able to love others respectfully and serve them, we are able to relate to others, – all others – without exception of race, colour, education, political opinion, religion, all those

with whom we meet on the path of life. While our body will be radically changed, all these relationships which constitute our real body will remain for ever in God's glory.

The contemplation of Mary taken up into heaven is a foretaste of our own future in heaven. This foretaste of our future helps us to discern what is important in our daily lives today: To enter into loving and respectful relationships of service with our neighbour, those we meet in life without making a selection between them, without any exclusion whatsoever.

The narrative of Mary, pregnant, who set out and went as quickly as she could to visit and help her aged cousin Elisabeth, who was pregnant also, gives us a good example of what is asked of us. The journey from Nazareth to Ein Kerem through the hills of Judah was a long and tough journey for a young pregnant girl! What we must grasp is this: All those relationships of love which ask from us a lot of humility and obedience to the present moment have an eternal value and will remain for ever. One day, we shall live body and soul in the glory of heaven with Jesus and the Virgin Mary.

We know where we are going; we know the way to reach this end. Blessed are we! We have just to make ours the Magnificat, Mary's canticle of praise: "My Soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour".