



August 15, 2021

## The Assumption of Mary into Heaven

*Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Corinthians 15:20*

Dear Friends;

For the last several weeks all around Byron and Brentwood farmers and farm-workers have been bringing in the harvest of corn and tomatoes. Trucks are filled to overflowing as they take produce to market or to be processed and preserved. We give thanks to all who labor to bring forth food from our mother the earth. We thank our mother earth for her life-sustaining gifts. We also ask for forgiveness for our rapacious treatment of her. We also commit ourselves to healing her and living a more sustainable, earth-friendly lifestyle.

Today, we celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. This feast started in the Churches of the Christian East (Greek speaking eastern Mediterranean.) There it is celebrated as the Dormition (going-to-sleep) of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Icon for this feast shows the Apostles surrounding her death bed. In the upper portion of the image is the Risen Christ. In a reversal of the Icon of the Nativity of the Lord, the Christ is holding a baby. This baby represents the now reborn Virgin to the life of the resurrection.

Mary through her "yes" to God, allowed the Word of God to take flesh in womb and become human. Now she follows her Son through death to the risen life where he shares with her his divine nature. This is a privilege that is not only given to Mary but to all of us. Mary represents the Church which is called to respond "yes" to the Good News that it can take flesh in us and be brought to birth into our world. The divine Word shares our human nature so we can share in his divine.

Like Mary in our reading from Luke's Gospel, we proclaim the reality of the Kingdom expressed in her song of praise. We name it the *Magnificat* (*My Soul Magnifies the Lord*). If we can truly listen to what is being said we should be shocked by this creed's radicalness. Outside our worship context many would say it is subversive or socialist or communist. In this canticle Mary is completely unpretentious. Except to mention God's goodness to her, Mary's focus is proclaiming her faith in God who always takes the side of the poor and the outcaste.

Sister of St Joseph, Mary M. Mcglone explains Mary's song this way:

*"...those who stand in awe of God's Majesty (fear of the Lord) will learn God's mercy outshines even the splendor of all creation.*

*Then, perhaps as an explanation of God's mercy, she goes on to sing of how God upends all worldly values and expectations. The proud lose their way (and just maybe, embarrassment at their confusion may save them from themselves). The mighty discover to their terror that their power is no ultimate safety net, while the lowly who know how to trust in God fear nothing. The hungry who know how to share enjoy fulfillment while there will be never enough to satisfy those who count on their own wealth.*

*At the end...Mary sings the praises of the God of Israel, the God who has remained faithful throughout their history and promises to be their future.*

We share in God's radical plan to save all creation. We along with Mary are like a vine-ripened, juicy tomato that will be harvested into the Kingdom. The first fruit of the harvest to new life is Jesus, then Mary, and all of us to follow.

Today with all our sisters and brothers of Indian heritage celebrate India day. August 15 is not only important to Catholics and Easter Rite Christians but it is also celebrated by all Indians as the day they were liberated from British Colonial rule. Our 10:30 liturgy will reflect the colors of India. We thank our Indian families for sharing the richness of their culture with us.

Peace,

*Fr Ron*