

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

On Saturday, August 15, we celebrate a divinely revealed dogma of our faith, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Unlike other Christians who die in God's grace, Our Blessed Mother, when the course of her earthly life was finished-- by a special privilege-- was taken up into the glory of heaven with her body, a body preserved from all stain of sin and corruption from the very beginning. On this beautiful Solemnity of Our Lady, the Church contemplates the raising of her body and soul to the glory of heaven. In Mary's Assumption we see her triumph over death and her glorification in heaven.

Mary, "a woman clothed with the sun," is as glorious as the sun--not because of her own glory-- but because she is the reflection of her Son Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, the glorious resurrected Son of Calvary to Whom she always leads.

We must always remember that it is Christ's definitive victory in which she shares. Mary participates fully even now in the justice and salvation won by Christ, "the firstfruits," a victory in store for each of us "who belongs to Christ." She is the first among the redeemed, the first human person among those called to glory. Mary, the woman, is embraced fully, body and soul, by the mystery of the living God. She is truly filled with the presence of God. "The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold." She lives forever in the light of His kingdom.

At its deepest level, the teaching of this dogma of Mary's Assumption, a dogma defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950, should give each of us strong hope, hope that her present share in Christ's victory over sin and death may also be our final trophy. Sin need not triumph in our lives. The struggle against the powers of darkness, real and challenging as they are, can be victorious also for us as faithful followers of Christ. The grace of Jesus Christ is stronger than the bondage of sin, evil, every kind of addiction, human weakness, pandemic, violence, corruption, and yes, even death. This is the hope-filled message of Mary's Assumption into heaven.

The entire Church rejoices on this Solemnity with Mary. We rejoice over the great work God has done in her. With confidence, hope and expectation, each of us looks to our own future glory in Christ Jesus.

We look to Mary, then, for a glimpse of that wonderful life to come, a life which has already begun for those who believe. Together we pray: "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you."

Prayerfully yours,

Monsignor Peter J. Vaghi
Pastor