

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters; Grace and peace!



On today's Holy Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother, we as Catholics understand that the Virgin Mary, body, and soul, was carried up to the celestial paradise.

Thus, when her earthly life was completed, Jesus Himself came to gather her up and exalted her as Queen of Heaven. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, # 966). This celebration honors the feast of Mary's total release from death and decay, where she reigns with Christ forever.

In our First Reading, the author of Revelation may not have had Mary of Nazareth in mind when he described the "woman" in this narrative. He sees the "woman" as a symbol for the nation and people, Israel. She is pictured as giving birth, as Israel brought forth the Messiah through her pains. The Church sees this woman as symbolic of the Church, and the woman's offspring represents the way the Church brings Christ into the world. The dragon would represent the *world's* resistance to Christ and the truths that the Church proclaims.

In continuation of this thesis, St. Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians defends the teaching of the resurrection of the dead, an apt selection on the feast of our Heavenly Mother's Assumption into Heaven. In the *Magnificat*, the song that Mary intones in today's Gospel, Mary acknowledges that "*the Almighty has done great things*" for her. Besides honoring her as Jesus' mother, God has blessed her with the gift of bodily Assumption. God, who has "lifted up" His "lowly servant" Mary, lifts up all the lowly, not only because we are faithful, but also because God is faithful to the promise of Divine mercy.

Remarkably, Mary's Assumption gives us the assurance and hope of our own resurrection and assumption into Heaven on the day of our Last Judgment: this ensures to us that we, too, will one day join the Blessed Mother in giving glory to God. Mary, as supreme model of all virtues, points the way for all followers of Christ to imitate her fidelity and obedience to God's will. Since Mary's Assumption was a reward for her saintly life, we are reminded that we, too are to keep our bodies pure and holy.

In our current moment of significant adversity, where human despair and temptation are imaginable, we ask for the grace to pray to our powerful heavenly Mother who constantly intercedes for us to her Son, Jesus. Our task is to imitate her self-sacrificing love, her indestructible Faith, and her perfect obedience. Let us join the hosts of heaven to celebrate!

Happy Assumption of Our Blessed Mother!