



The Holy See

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION ON THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

HOMILY OF THE POPE JOHN PAUL II

Friday, 15 August 1997

1. *"The Queen stands at your right hand"* (responsorial psalm).

Today's liturgy sets before us the radiant icon of the Blessed Virgin who was taken up into heaven in the integrity of her body and soul. In the splendour of heavenly glory shines the One who, by reason of her humility, was made great in the sight of the Most High to the point that all generations call her blessed (cf. Lk 1:48). Now, as Queen, she sits beside her Son in the eternal happiness of paradise and looks upon her children from on high.

With this consoling certainty, we turn to her and call on her for those who are her children: for the Church and for all humanity, so that everyone, by imitating her faithful following of Christ, may reach the definitive homeland of heaven.

2. *"The Queen stands at your right hand"*.

The first among those redeemed by Christ's paschal sacrifice, Mary shines forth today as Queen of us all, pilgrims on our way to immortal life.

In her, assumed into heaven, we are shown the eternal destiny that awaits us beyond the mystery of death: a destiny of total happiness in divine glory. This supernatural vision sustains our daily pilgrimage. Mary teaches about life. By looking at her, we understand better the relative value of earthly greatness and the full sense of our Christian vocation.

From her birth to her glorious Assumption, her life unfolded on a journey of faith, hope and charity.

These virtues, which blossomed in a humble heart abandoned to God's will, are those adorning her precious, incorruptible crown as Queen. These are virtues which the Lord asks of all believers, if they are to share in his Mother's glory.

The passage from Revelation just proclaimed speaks of the enormous red dragon that represents the perennial temptation facing man: to prefer evil to good, death to life, the easy pleasure of disengagement to the demanding but rewarding journey of holiness for which everyone has been created. In the fight against "the great dragon ... that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Rv 12:9), there appears the great sign of the victorious Virgin, Queen of glory, seated at the Lord's right hand.

And in this spiritual battle her help to the Church is decisive for attaining the ultimate victory over evil.

3. *"The Queen stands at your right hand"*.

Mary shines on earth "until the day of the Lord shall come, a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 68). A caring mother to everyone, she supports the efforts of believers and encourages them to persevere in their commitment. Here I am thinking most particularly of young people, who are more exposed to the attractions and temptations of fleeting myths and false teachers.

Dear young people, look to Mary and call upon her with trust! The World Youth Day which will begin in Paris in a few days' time will give you the opportunity to experience once again her motherly concern. May Mary help you to feel that you are an integral part of the Church and spur you not to be afraid of assuming your responsibilities as credible witnesses to God's love.

Today, Mary assumed into heaven shows you where love and complete fidelity to Christ on earth lead: to the eternal joy of heaven.

4. Mary, Woman clothed with the sun, help us to fix our gaze on Christ amid the inevitable sufferings and problems of everyday life.

Help us not to be afraid of following him to the very end, even when the cross seems unbearably heavy. Make us understand that this alone is the way which leads to the heights of eternal salvation.

And from heaven, where you shine forth as Queen and Mother of mercy, watch over each one of your children.

Guide them to love, adore and serve Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, O clement, O loving,

O sweet Virgin Mary!

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