

FR. JOHN'S HOMILY

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15, 2021

I mentioned St. Maximillian Kolbe last weekend. I talked about his comments on the most important part of Mass. It is not the consecration he says, but it is Communion. St. Maximillian was deeply touched by the Real Presence of Jesus, the God-man under the Eucharist. He says that God dwells in our midst, in the Blessed Sacrament at the Altar. He was fascinated that Jesus in the sacrament gives Himself to us as food. The feast day of St. Maximillian Kolbe is August 14, and this is why I am referring to him today. Not only did St. Maximillian have a great love for Jesus in the Eucharist, he had a great love for the Blessed Mother. He states, *"We should let ourselves be guided by Mary and rest quiet and secure in her hands. She will watch out for us; provide for us; answer our needs of body and spirit, and dissolve all our difficulties and worries."* Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth, pray for us today and always. Amen.

Remember St. Maximillian lived during WWII and the Holocaust. He gave his life to Jesus and served him with his heart, body, mind and soul. Mary, our Mother, helped him on his journey, and even in his darkest time he knew she was there assisting him along the way. This is why St Maximillian could find hope in a hopeless situation. He could be at peace when he was surrounded by war and killing. He could be forgiving around evil and hatred. He could reflect Heaven when he was living Hell on earth. He could be joyful in the face of starvation and even death.

Jesus is the one that gave St. Maximillian this grace to witness for the Kingdom of God in an evil time. Knowing of this power of God' grace, we continue to reflect upon Jesus as the Bread of Life and open our hearts to the Lord's love to transform us. We find hope in Jesus' presence that we too can be great witnesses for others who are struggling, lost, fearful, scared and worried. Just as Maximillian was such a witness of hope to everyone, especially to the other prisoners, we can be powerful witnesses today. It was Jesus, the Bread of Life, that lived in him. Just as Jesus, the Bread of Life, was always the center of Mary's heart. So we take time this Sunday to ponder this mystery of Mary's Assumption into Heaven body and soul. We can learn many lessons from St. Maximillian Kolbe and our Blessed Mother to better live our faith in these challenging times.

The doctrine of Mary's Assumption is firmly rooted in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. The teaching was declared infallible in 1950 by Pope Pius XII who stated, *"The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."* The church declares not knowing when or how her earthly life ended, just that when her earthly life ended, a new life in heaven began immediately. She received the fullness of Grace that Jesus made possible through this paschal mystery. The same fullness of grace we hopefully receive in the end times.

Today, with the universal Church, we affirm our belief that Mary, the Mother of God, is the perfect model of Christian life; who was preserved from the corruption of the grave and who is the Queen of Heaven and Earth. On this Solemnity, we are also reminded that

our destiny lies beyond the grave, and each day we are being called to eternity. Even in our opening prayers at Mass we heard, *“Always attentive to the things that are above, may we merit to be sharers of Mary’s glory.”*

Like Mary, we too must cooperate with God’s grace. We must strive daily to cooperate with the Lord’s grace so that we may be prepared on the day He calls us to Himself. Mary is a great example of how we are called to do this, live for heaven. In Mary’s prayer she, *“proclaims the goodness of the Lord and rejoice in God our Savior”*. Like Mary we too are called to trust in God, like in her response to angel Gabriel: *“Let it be done to me according to your word.”* Like Mary we too must be humble and faithful disciples so that our souls must magnify—not ourselves, but God and Jesus.

We are blessed not only to partake in this great Mystery of God’s love at Mass, but also blessed to have received from Jesus on the cross the gift of Mary, as our Mother. Just as she loved and cared for Jesus in His earthly life even to the end of the cross, she now as our Mother will love and care for us throughout our earthly journey. Ultimately leading us to the fullness of grace of being in heaven. Pray for us, O Mother of God, now and at the hour of our death Amen.

On this feast of the Assumption, God sends us this amazing hope of things to come. A preview of where we are going one day. We know, that where Mary went when she left this world, is exactly where we want to go. We want to be with her in Heaven. We want to be with God, and His Angels and Saints.

This Feast Day then lets us know we have a very good and blessed future ahead. Especially when we do our best to follow Jesus, avoid sin, love Him with our all hearts, and serve Him with our gifts and talents. Then where Mary is, we will be.

What we celebrate today on this Feast Day, is God’s fulfillment of His promise to Mary. At the end of her life, she who had been kept safe from sin from her first moment of conception in her Mother’s womb, Ann, to the very end of her earthly life no sin corrupted or harm this holy vessel of God. Assumed body and soul into Heaven to receive her promised reward, the same reward and promise we have in Jesus which began at our Baptism.

Heaven is for all of us. This Feast Day is to inspire all of us to follow Jesus even more closely, so that we too following His Way grow in the path of holiness. We too hope to be in that number when the saints go marching in. Today we pray that St. Maximillian and our Blessed Mother pray for us that we too we will be in that number:

*When the Saints go marching in,
Oh, when the trumpet sound its call,
Oh, when the new world is revealed,
Oh when the stars fall from the sky,
Oh Lord I want to be in that number,
When the Saints go marching in.*

St. Maximillian Kolbe, Blessed Mother Mary pray for us.