

## **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary 2021**

**Apocalypse 11:19; 12:1-6, 10 1Cor 15:20-26 Luke 1:39-56**

A priest I used to help in his parish many years ago, was a gifted singer. One Sunday after Holy Communion he sang: "You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains, you raise me up, to walk on stormy seas..." (Josh Groban)

And then the next day he got an email from a parishioner, complaining about that song!

"How could you?" the email began.

"How could you sing that secular song in church? How could you interrupt Mass with a love song? How could a celibate priest sing a song about how loving someone raises him up above stormy seas?"

Well, the parish priest was singing a love song about the fact that someone's love does, in fact, raise us up!

But the key to the song is found in this question – WHO is it that does the raising? Who is it that has a love powerful enough to raise us up?

I hope you've guessed the answer – GOD is the one to whom the priest was singing the love song! God's love is worth singing about! God is the one whose love raises us up!

In today's Gospel reading, Mary herself sings a love song too. And Mary sings about a God who raises her up, a God who lifts up all those who feel weighed down. In fact, all of today's readings are about a God who raises us up, who lifts us up when we can't lift ourselves.

In the first reading, we have the image of the Woman in the Book of Revelation: she gives birth to the Messiah.

When that saving child is born, the Book of Revelation says that there is a threat to the child's life – a dragon, ready to devour the baby.

And what does God do when the child is in danger? God snatches up the child into heaven. God saves the child, by lifting up, raising up the child.

God always does the heavy lifting of salvation.

This is the God we hear Mary singing about in her love song in today's passage from Luke's Gospel. As she sings her song, called the Magnificat, Mary praises the Lord who does the heavy lifting. She sings:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

My spirit rejoices in God my saviour,

For God has looked upon his lowly servant...

Yes from this day forward all generation will call me blessed...

God has shown the strength of his arm...

he casts down the mighty...

God has lifted up the lowly...

Did you hear that? Mary sings about the God who lifts up, raises up, the lowly.

It was this same God who raised up Jesus from the dead, as Paul proclaims in the second reading. God raised Jesus to eternal life. Isn't that kind of life-giving love worth singing about?

In today's feast of the Assumption, we proclaim that God is capable of doing the same thing for Mary. At the end of her earthly life, God lifts up Mary, body, and soul, into the glory of heaven.

But we can't stop there, because St Paul tells us that God will do that same heavy lifting for us. What was done for Jesus, is done for Mary. What was done for Mary, will be done for us.

This feast of Mary is the feast of our future. A future lifted up, raised up, by the God who loves us.

And until that future comes, we have hope because we have Jesus... Jesus, the first one who was raised and lifted by God our Father.

Until that future comes, we have hope, because Mary keeps encouraging us to believe in the God who can lift us up whenever life knocks us down.

Until the future comes, it is our privilege as brothers and sisters to try to lift each other up, with the help of God's grace. So many of us feel weighed down by life, worn down by our worries, wearied by our work, on our knees because of our crosses.

No matter what pushes us down, God is the one who can lift us up. No matter what tries to hold us down, God does the heavy lifting, and His love raises us up. Isn't it a privilege to try to bring that Good News to another struggling soul?

Isn't it a blessing, that, with Mary and all the saints, we can sing a love song to our Eternal God, a love song from our heart about the Lord who raises us up; a love song which brings us back to the table where bread and wine are lifted up, so that we can rise forever?

The feast of Mary's Assumption challenges us to imitate Mary's self-sacrificing love, her strong Faith, her perfect obedience, her holy life and to pray for her special care and loving protection in helping us lead a purer and holier life.

**Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**

**Fr Patrick**