

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In union with the whole Church, we celebrate the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul, into the glory of heaven. Mary's Assumption shows us our own destiny as God's adoptive children and members of the body of Christ. Like Mary our Mother, we are called to share fully in the Lord's victory over sin and death, and to reign with him in his eternal Kingdom.

The "great sign" presented in today's first reading – a woman clothed in the sun and crowned by stars (cf. Rev 12:1) – invites us to contemplate Mary enthroned in glory beside her divine Son. It also invites us to acknowledge the future which even now the Risen Lord is opening before us. Koreans traditionally celebrate this feast in the light of their historical experience, seeing the loving intercession of Our Lady at work in the history of the nation and the lives of its people.

In today's second reading, we heard Saint Paul tell us that Christ is the new Adam, whose obedience to the Father's will has overturned the reign of sin and bondage and inaugurated the reign of life and freedom (cf. 1 Cor 15:24-25). True freedom is found in our loving embrace of the Father's will. From Mary, full of grace, we learn that Christian freedom is more than liberation from sin. It is freedom for a new, spiritual way of seeing earthly realities. It is the freedom to love God and our brothers and sisters with a pure heart, and to live a life of joyful hope for the coming of Christ's Kingdom.

Today, in venerating Mary, Queen of Heaven, we also turn to her as Mother of the Church in Korea. We ask her to help us to be faithful to the royal freedom we received on the day of our Baptism, to guide our efforts to transform the world in accordance with God's plan, and to enable the Church in this country to be ever more fully a leaven of his Kingdom in the midst of Korean society. May the Christians of this nation be a generous force for spiritual renewal at every level of society. May they combat the allure of a materialism that stifles authentic spiritual and cultural values and the spirit of unbridled competition which generates selfishness and strife. May they also reject inhumane economic models which create new forms of poverty and marginalize workers, and the culture of death which

devalues the image of God, the God of life, and violates the dignity of every man, woman and child.

As Korean Catholics, heirs to a noble tradition, you are called to cherish this legacy and transmit it to future generations. This will demand of everyone a renewed conversion to the word of God and a passionate concern for the poor, the needy and the vulnerable in our midst.

In celebrating this feast, we join the Church throughout the world in looking to Mary as our Mother of Hope. Her song of praise reminds us that God never forgets his promise of mercy (cf. Lk 1:54-55). Mary is the one who is blessed because “she believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord” (Lk 1:45). In her, all God’s promises have been proved trustworthy. Enthroned in glory, she shows us that our hope is real; even now it reaches as “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Heb 6:19) to where Jesus is seated in glory.

This hope, dear brothers and sisters, the hope held out by the Gospel, is the antidote to the spirit of despair that seems to grow like a cancer in societies which are outwardly affluent, yet often experience inner sadness and emptiness. Upon how many of our young has this despair taken its toll! May they, the young who surround us in these days with their joy and confidence, never be robbed of their hope!

Let us turn to Our Lady and implore the grace to rejoice in the freedom of the children of God, to use that freedom wisely in the service of our brothers and sisters, and to live and work as signs of the hope which will find its fulfillment in that eternal Kingdom where to reign is to serve. Amen.

Pope Francis. Daejeon, Korea, 15 August 2014