

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 15 August 2021*

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, *Buongiorno* and happy feast day!

In today's Gospel, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, the *Magnificat* resounds in the liturgy. This hymn of praise is like a "photograph" of the Mother of God. Mary "rejoices in God because he has looked on the *humility* of his handmaid" (cf *Lk* 1:47-48).

Mary's secret is humility. It is her humility that attracted God's gaze to her. The human eye always looks for grandeur and allows itself to be dazzled by what is flashy. Instead, God does not look at the appearance. God looks at the heart (cf 1 *Sam* 16:7) and is enchanted by humility. Humility of heart enchants God. Today, looking at Mary assumed into heaven, we can say that humility is the way that leads to Heaven. The word "humility" comes from the Latin word *humus*, which means "earth". It is paradoxical: to arrive on high, into Heaven, what is needed is to stay low, like the earth! Jesus teaches this: "he who humbles himself will be exalted" (*Lk* 14:11). God does not exalt us because of our gifts, because of our wealth or because of our skills, but because of humility. God loves humility. God lifts up those who humble themselves; he lifts up those who serve. Mary, in fact, attributes no other "title" except servant to herself: she is, "the handmaid of the Lord" (*Lk* 1:38). She says nothing else about herself, she seeks nothing else for herself.

Today, then, let us ask ourselves, each one of us in our heart: how am I doing with humility? Do I seek to be recognized by others, to affirm myself and to be praised, or do I think rather about serving? Do I know how to listen, like Mary, or do I want only to speak and receive attention? Do I know how to keep silence, like Mary, or am I always chattering? Do I know how to take a step back, defuse quarrels and arguments, or do I always want to stand out? Let us think about these questions: how am I doing with humility?

In her littleness, Mary wins Heaven first. The secret of her success is precisely that she recognizes her lowliness, that she recognizes her need. With God, only those who recognize themselves as nothing

can receive the all. Only those who empty themselves can be filled by him. And Mary is the “full of grace” (v. 28) precisely because of her humility. For us too, humility is always the point of departure, the beginning of our having faith. It is fundamental to be poor in spirit, that is, *in need of God*. Those who are filled with themselves have no space for God — and we are often full of ourselves — but those who remain humble allow the Lord to accomplish great things (cf v. 49).

The poet Dante calls the Virgin Mary, “humbler and loftier than any creature” (Paradise, XXXIII, 2). It is beautiful to think that the humblest and loftiest creature in history, the first to win heaven with her entire being, in soul and body, lived out her life for the most part within the domestic walls, in the ordinary, in humility. The days of the *Full of Grace* were not all that striking. They followed one another, often exactly the same, in silence: externally, nothing extraordinary. But God’s gaze was always upon her, admiring her humility, her availability, the beauty of her heart never stained by sin.

It is a huge message of hope for each of us, for you whose days are always the same, tiring and often difficult. Mary reminds you today that God calls you too to this glorious destiny. These are not beautiful words: it is the truth. It is not a well-crafted, beautiful ending, a pious illusion or a false consolation. No, it is pure reality, living and true as Our Lady assumed into Heaven. Let us celebrate her today with the love of children, let us celebrate her joyfully but humbly, enlivened by the hope of one day being with her in Heaven!

And let us pray to her now that she may accompany us on our journey that leads from Earth to Heaven. May she remind us that the secret to the journey is contained in the word humility. Let us not forget this word, and that lowliness and service are the secrets for obtaining the goal, of reaching heaven.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I join in the unanimous concern for the situation in Afghanistan. I ask you to pray with me to the God of peace so that the clamour of weapons might cease and solutions can be found at the table of dialogue. Only thus can the battered population of that country — men, women, elderly and children — return to their own homes, and live in peace and safety, in total mutual respect.

I greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from various countries: families, associations and individual members of the faithful. In particular, I greet the group from Santa Giustina in Colle, the young people from Carugate, and those from Sabbio Bergamasco and from Verona.

In addition, I would like to address a thought to those who are spending these days of *Ferragosto* in various holiday destinations: I wish them serenity and peace. I cannot, however, forget those who cannot go on holiday, those who remain at the service of the community and also those who find themselves in uncomfortable conditions, aggravated by the strong heat and by the lack of certain services due to summer holiday closings. I think especially of the sick, the elderly, the incarcerated,

the unemployed, refugees and all those who are alone or in difficulty. May Mary extend her maternal protection over each one of you.

I invite you to perform a beautiful gesture today: go to a Marian Shrine to venerate Our Lady. Those who are in Rome could go to pray before the icon of the *Salus Populi Romani*, in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday and a happy Feast of the Assumption! Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci* !

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