

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Solemnity of the Assumption, Aug. 15, 2018, Cycle B

There is a wonderful statement in our first reading from the Book of Revelation that probably captures best the essence of what we celebrate this day: "The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God." "A place prepared by God."

With Mary's Assumption we celebrate Mary's special place she won because of her total faith and her total obedience to God's will—a special place prepared by God for her.

This special place is all about Mary being the second after Jesus to share fully in her Son's victory over sin and death. With the Assumption we proclaim that like Jesus her Son—Mary did not taste decay in death—but was assumed by God fully into the New Life won for us by Jesus rising from the dead. After Jesus, Mary is the second to be raised from the dead, but we call her resurrection as assumption to be clear that it was by God's power she was raised—not anything she accomplished! A gift totally from God to her who always said: "Let it be done according to your will."

Our faith and our obedience to God will reap the rewards of Resurrection also, but as St. Paul says: "in Christ all shall be brought to life, but each one in proper order; Christ the first fruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to God." Unlike Mary our faith and our obedience to God is not total! Sin stands in our way—our selfishness, our lack of love. We need to grow out of our sin to share fully in the fruits of Christ—as St. Paul said, each in proper order!

Mary was sinless, thus it was only in proper order for her not to taste the decay of death, and reap fully the benefits of the resurrection upon her death. In proper order, because Mary always said "Yes" to God's will, she is part of the First Fruits with Christ! Thus Mary is a Sign of Hope for us—hope for what will be ours—as we let the grace of God fill us more fully to enable our faith to grow and our "yes" be more firm in obedience to God's will.

Becoming full of God's grace, then we too will be assumed into Jesus' Resurrection in proper order!