

# THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, YrC

August 15, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
Rev. Jeff McGowan

**1<sup>ST</sup> READING: REVELATIONS 11:19A, 12:1-6A, 10AB**

A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

**PSALM 45**

The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

**2<sup>ND</sup> READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-27**

For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life.

**GOSPEL: LUKE 1: 39-56**

From this day, all generations shall call me blessed.

+++++

***It's the most wonderful time of the year!*** A new school year is beginning.

Last year may have ended with terrific grades, a great graduation or promotion or with mom and dad arguing over which side of the family you take after. But a new page has turned in your book of life and new opportunities, new teachers, new courses are beginning. We have been refreshed by vacation time and we're ready to take on a new year. Oh yes, the calendar begins January 1<sup>st</sup>, but in Gainesville it feels like the New Year begins now and we will find ourselves reinvigorated September 5<sup>th</sup> [the first UF football game]

These are the days we plant the seeds for next year's harvest. This is the time to set goals that are challenging but realistic and make our plans. Teachers prepare their syllabus or class schedule. Businesses plan their marketing strategies. Families plan their budgets so they will have the money to vacation next summer. A student can't set a goal of being promoted unless she does her homework. An athlete can't set a goal of playing at the next level unless he trains heartily now. Our goals become realistic when we plan and work our plan. There is an old saying that those who fail to plan, plan to fail.

God also has a goal that is challenging. God's goal is to change the human heart. Mary is part of God's plan to make it happen. Mary is like a basketball player who never misses a shot—not because she has magic powers or because she is not human—but because she practiced, practiced, practiced

and she is just that good at trusting God. Most of her life was spent among dishes, cooking pots, oil and flour, trips to the well and local vendors, clothes to be made, washed and mended. We may call her the “Queen of Heaven and Earth, our Queen of Peace,” but she is also the “Queen of the Ordinary.” Mary is a mother, a mentor and a “mensch.” A “mensch” is a Yiddish word meaning someone who does all things well and is admirable.

She was a mother who had the joy of raising her son, loving him and being loved by him. She was with him from the moment of the incarnation through inconvenient pregnancy and birth, the days he was lost on the Temple, to his torture, humiliation and crucifixion. All along she practiced letting go and trusting God. Maybe a parent who had a child die could begin to understand her grief. We represent it by saying a “sword pierced her heart.” (That’s the inspiration for the stained glass in our Mary Chapel.) We call her “Blessed Mother,” ironically that translates, “Happy Mother.”

She was a mentor for Jesus. Her great trust in God came through as God’s magnificent plan for all of us. She was the one who taught Jesus about human life from this side of heaven. In today’s Gospel we hear her express to Elizabeth her trust in what we now call the “Magnificat,” a prayer we priests and religious say every evening. This is the radical trust Jesus expressed when he preached about wealth and power. Some may covet them, but they have no lasting value in God’s eyes.

And Mary is a “mensch.” She does all things well with integrity, grace and wisdom and she is worthy of our admiration. In an era when women were powerless and dependent on men, she was true to her God and to herself. Her strength and survival lay in her absolute trust and dependence on God. She has inspired poets, musicians, troubadours and artists throughout the Christian era. Yes, she is a significant part of God’s plan.

Today we celebrate our doctrinal belief that God assumed her body to heaven when she died. There is no biblical basis for our belief. Once we believe that God took human flesh, lived, suffered, died and rose from the dead, it is not such a stretch to believe that God would affirm the goodness of the human body

and the resurrection of the body by lifting up the body that welcomed Jesus to this side of heaven. This is God's goal, this is God's plan, this is our good news!