



School Sisters of Notre Dame

Atlantic-Midwest Province



Assumed Hearts: Eyes Always on Christ

When we see statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary or depictions of her in various artworks, we are accustomed to seeing her looking down at us, such a motherly gesture. Here, we see her gazing upwards. The Church affirms her exaltedness as the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven. Yet, during her time on earth, she acknowledged her lowliness in her *Magnificat*, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.” The Feast of the Assumption is a testament to Mary’s life, a perfect disciple who modeled for us to a path to follow, eyes always on Christ.

It is fitting that Mary, who shared in Christ’s life intimately as a mother and as a disciple, was assumed into heaven, body and soul. Silent, constantly pondering things in her heart, she stayed close to Christ as he set out to fulfill his mission. Her faithfulness is exemplary, instructing us to follow Christ as she instructed at the Wedding Feast at Cana, “Do whatever he tells you,” (John 2: 5). She maintained that unity which Christ prayed for in John’s Gospel, “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me,” (John 17: 20-21).

David Richo in *Everything Ablaze*, notes three instances in which we share in the life of Mary:

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- a. Mary held the infant Jesus and she holds us in a dangerous world.
- b. Mary held Jesus at the foot of the cross, and she is holding us in our sufferings.
- c. Mary sat with the apostles at Pentecost as she is sitting beside us when the Holy Spirit come upon us in Pentecostal fire, now and anytime.

Mary, even in her suffering, always kept her eyes on Christ. Amidst the unrest posed by the pandemic, civil unrest, climate change, where do we fix our eyes? Do we fixate on the rising numbers of those unemployed or persons infected with the coronavirus? Do we fixate on the presidential polls for the upcoming elections? Whatever it may be, Mary challenges us to keep our eyes on what is transcendent and eternal. When she said “Yes” to the angel Gabriel, she never fully knew what God’s invitation would bring to her life. An unrelenting trust in God’s providence kept her focused.

In her lowliness, Mary was exalted by her Gospel Poverty, which we can turn to and are impelled by in *Love Gives Everything*, “We embrace Gospel Poverty, probe its meaning deeper, and risk opening ourselves to be transformed.” (YAS, C 15-17; GD). We turn to Mary, our protectress, for the necessary graces to be faithful disciples to the end. Let us assume our hearts with a resounding “Yes” to God’s invitation to lean on him more, especially during times of uncertainty. May we embrace Gospel Poverty, to be free of the worldly attachments of fear, anger and control, and focus on the divine through goodness, truth and beauty.

David Richo continues, “When we turn to Mary, therefore, we are turning to earth. When we turn to Mary’s heart, we are looking into the heart of the earth and into our own hearts. This is the mystical unity we have longed for all our lives and have exuberantly found in Mary, human flesh, celestial soul.” If we believe in God’s working hand and bear witness to that belief by living out this faith, the Lord will also lift us up. In her *Magnificat*, her soul exclaims the greatness of the Lord for lifting up the lowly and remembering his promise of mercy. As disciples, let us always look up to the Lord in Heaven, seek the Christ in the cosmos, and keep our eyes on him through our belief.

As you meditate on the Feast of the Assumption this weekend, ask yourself:

How can I keep my eyes fixed on Christ and away from the things that prevent me from seeing his grace working in tough situations?

How can Gospel Poverty impel me to let go of worldly attachments and surrender myself more fully to Christ’s unfailing love?

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