

Homily -- Assumption Seminary

August 15, 2018

Today we celebrate the glorious Assumption of Mary into heaven. Our patronal feast is like the bright sun of an August day in San Antonio – brilliant, almost overpowering!

However, the gospel we just heard is so natural and familiar: an older and a younger cousin – both pregnant – meet to share the joys (and anxieties) of childbirth. It could have taken place in any of our families. However, this is not an ordinary domestic scene. The son of the older woman will close an age. The son of the younger woman will usher in the new age of salvation history. The story is also full of great mystery. Elizabeth and her husband had not been able to have children, but now, by the action of God, despite her old age, Elizabeth is pregnant. Mary is betrothed, but not yet married; and yet, on the word of an angel, she is found to be with child by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is at work – mysteriously but certainly.

The baby in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy at the encounter with the unborn Savior. Elizabeth is inspired to bless Mary because she recognizes her as the mother of the Lord and also, very importantly, because Mary has believed God's mysterious words to

her. Mary, in turn, sings a beautiful, inspired song about how God raises the lowly, the powerless, the oppressed – and puts down the proud, the powerful, the oppressors. The full gospel – the good news of God’s saving deeds – is summed up in this simple narrative of two cousins sharing their pregnancies.

The story ends simply by telling us that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, no doubt helping her, serving her in anticipation of her beloved Son who came “to serve, not to be served.” Here is true discipleship, evangelization, and service.

Mary is an example for the whole Church, a teacher of the spiritual life – a model I hold up to you at the beginning of another year of formation and study at this seminary named in honor of Mary’s Assumption. Let us deepen our relationship with Our Lady in deep veneration, burning love, trusting invocation, loving service, zealous imitation, profound wonder, and attentive study.

With the help of Our Lady of Guadalupe, *la Morenita*, whose intercession we seek in a special way on this solemn feast, may we all recommit ourselves to the service of God and all his people! Let us also listen attentively to God’s word and respond appropriately.