

Assumption on Sunday

Intro. Many of us have women of “mythic proportions” in our families: mothers, grandmothers or aunts. They are women who did amazing things, sometimes despite incredible challenges in their lives. My mother’s mother was born and grew up in Michigan just before 1900. As a young woman, she left Michigan and traveled to Arizona and taught Native American and Mexican American children. She seemed to be an extremely adventurous woman or a woman who challenged her family’s patience and who found her a job in Arizona. I never knew why. From her I learned my first words in Spanish, “Vaya con Dios” (Go with God) and “No se.” (I don’t know).

I. Today we celebrate a woman of great faith. This feast is not in the bible. Our church has two sources

of authority that anchor our faith: Scripture and Tradition. The first is the Word of God in the Bible; the second, is *the way* our people have lived His Word in everyday life. This feast became part of our church tradition by the sixth century. In some Eastern Orthodox churches it is called the “Dormition or the “Falling Asleep” of Mary.” The icon paintings show Mary as if she were peacefully sleeping as she is taken into heaven. This feast was officially proclaimed November 1, 1950, by Pope Pius XII.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reads that “When the course of her earthly life was finished, she was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory...” “The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a singular participation in her Son’s Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection

of other Christians.” [#966] Mary’s song in praise of God’s goodness to her is known as the Canticle of Mary and echoes several other women in the Old Testament also praising God for his blessings such as Miriam in Exodus (15:20-21); Deborah in Judges (5:1-31); and Hannah in 1Samuel (2:1).

Concl. There are many holy women in the histories of our family, church and world who have responded with great faith to the challenges of their lives. I wish I could tell more of the story of my grandmother to my nieces and nephews. I encourage you make sure the faith stories of *your* families are not lost. And also the stories of Elizabeth Ann Seton and Katherine Drexler, who worked to educate girls and women at a time when they often didn’t go to school; Dolores Huerta co-founded an organization that worked to improve the working conditions of

farmworkers in this country. She received the Medal of Freedom from President Obama and, at ninety-one years old, still works today. Mary, Elizabeth and women like them showed faith and humbleness in answering God’s call to serve and are examples of what a disciple is. **Mary was flesh and blood like us and was able to live with grace and simplicity.** **A way of life possible for all us.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

August 15, 2021