



## From the Pastor's Desk:

"Society has always needed morality, and morality has always needed religion. Destroy religion, you destroy morality; destroy morality, you destroy society. That's history's bottom line." ~ A Refutation of Moral Relativism by Peter Kreeft.

As I am writing this ... I receive a call to come to the front office. The daughter of one of our parishioners is here to thank me for a visit to her mom last evening in the hospital. But she continues talking and says to me "If anyone ever questions the purpose of the new glass doors you had installed on the church, tell them this story. A friend's daughter was having a severe time with drugs and wanted drugs badly. She walked by the church [OLPH] that night and looked in the front door and saw the Tabernacle all light up. She was so moved that she has not returned to drugs since."

Our Catholic Faith is rich in truth about the sacredness of life, from conception to natural death. This story is true, it is about real life and how our Catholic Faith can and does change people's lives, if only they let them. At the heart of our Faith is Christ, present in the Eucharist here in our Tabernacle. He is here because a woman valiantly said "YES" to God and became the Mother of Jesus. She gave birth and looked into His eyes to see the power of God and His great love for us that He would become one of us. Mary kept her faith alive and in death was blessed with a gift because of her total fidelity to God the Father, in Jesus Christ. That gift was that in death, her body was assumed along with her soul into the eternal kingdom of heaven. This is the Solemn Feast we celebrate today. Because of Mary's faith, we have Jesus in the Eucharist and because of Jesus in the Eucharist, this anonymous women found the strength to not take drugs.

On August 16, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI, at his General Audience at Castel Gondolfo, offered these words of reflection on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "By contemplating Mary in heavenly glory, we understand that the earth is not the definitive homeland for us either, and that if we live with our gaze fixed on eternal goods we will one day share in this same glory and the earth will become more beautiful. Consequently, we must not lose our serenity and peace even amid the thousands of daily difficulties. The luminous sign of Our Lady taken up into Heaven shines out even more brightly when sad shadows of suffering and violence seem to loom on the horizon.

"We may be sure of it: from on high, Mary follows our footsteps with gentle concern, dispels the gloom in moments of darkness and distress, reassures us with her motherly hand. Supported by awareness of this, let us continue confidently on our path of Christian commitment wherever Providence may lead us. Let us forge ahead in our lives under Mary's guidance".

The Catholic Church teaches as dogma that Mary, "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." This doctrine was dogmatically and infallibly defined by Pope Pius XII in his Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. In this dogmatic statement, the phrase "having completed the course of her earthly life" leaves open the question of whether the Virgin Mary died before her assumption or whether she was assumed before death; both possibilities are allowed. Mary's assumption is said to have been a divine gift to her as the 'Mother of God'.

On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly declared:

*"By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."*

Roman Catholic theologians consider this declaration by Pius XII to be an ex cathedra use of Papal Infallibility. Although Pope Pius XII deliberately left open the question of whether Mary died before her Assumption, the more common teaching of the early Fathers is that she did.

The next time you pass the church at night, look through the glass doors and thank Jesus for your life...then thank Mary for letting us see Him. The moral stability of our world depends on how well we bring to life truths of our Catholic Christian Faith.

May God +bless you and yours now and forever.

*Father Anthony*