

## THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

Today we celebrate the dying of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her assumption to heaven body and soul. The only human body in heaven other than the body of Jesus is the body of a woman, the body of the mother of our Lord. Jesus has a special love for this woman who conceived him in her body.

Among us that same love for women is often not ours. Either women are not recognized by us for the gifts they bring; or, and far worst, they are abused.

How great was the love of Jesus for his mother. How great should our love and respect be for all women.

Today's gospel. The story of a mother, but also, above all the story of a woman.

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah to the house of Elizabeth.

Women like men they travel but unlike men women seldom travel alone. (Careful, I stand behind my words: "women seldom travel alone.") And the reason- the reason is that women always seek companionship and always find it. They find it at home and away from home. There is no mention in the gospel that Mary traveled with others but she did, she had to. Her close companions, she could not ask them to come along because she left in haste but Mary ~~being a woman on the way to Elizabeth she found companions.~~ She made acquaintance with others, men as well as women traveling together to the town of Judah.

Those days all traveling caravans took in not only passengers but also animals to be sold at the market and ridden by the women. The men on foot led the caravans. With their physical strength they made the caravan to move along. The women were grateful to them. They recognized the need for these men to bring them safely to where they were going.

On the way over to Elizabeth, Mary had a lot of time to think of what happened the day before her leaving. **First**, there was Zachariah, the priest who had lost the power of speech. I read: "In the course of performing his duty of offering the incense at the Temple of the Lord, the angel Gabriel told the priest Zachariah that his wife would bear a son. Zachariah's faith wavered at this, and consequently asked for some sign, some proof that the promise of the angel would be fulfilled. The promise that his wife would bear him a son. "I am Gabriel, he said to the priest, I stand in God's presence and I have been sent to bring to you this good news. Zachariah listen! Since you have wavered in your faith you will be silenced and have no power of speech. **Second**, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to Mary. Gabriel so beautiful, so obedient to God. Mary kept thinking what the angel had said to her "**you are to bear a son.**" Without her faith wavering, she had replied "**I am the handmaid of the lord. Let what you have said be done to me.**" The priest, the man Zachariah, his faith had wavered. Not Mary, not the woman Mary even if she did not understand it at all.