

The Solemnity of the Assumption (15th August)

This solemnity has a lot more to do with us than we realise. It celebrates the fulfilment of the promise that those who are faithful to Christ will share eternity with him.

The gospel text is that of the Visitation. Mary had just made her first communion – she had received Jesus for the first time. And what does she do? She makes haste and goes on a missionary journey which brings so much joy to an old woman that even the child in the older one leaps for joy. How nice if we could bring joy to others like that.

What about the child in me? It is often said that there is a child in each of us. This inner child represents innocence, helplessness and the ability to say it like it is. Think of how many of our complexes would be resolved if this child is allowed to articulate itself from time to time.

Just a short note on how the text starts: the original states ‘arising in those days Mary went to the hill country ...’ The attentive Bible reader would ask: ‘in which days?’ and if attentive enough will realise that the phrase ‘in those days’ is a formula which introduces the new covenant in Jer 31. In fact that formula occurs four times in the context of the new covenant. It signals the promise of new blessings, restoration to the Promised Land, and a new and more intimate relationship with God. The Bible reader will then realise that the time for the fulfilment of the new covenant has come. In the annunciation and the word taking flesh God is fulfilling the ancient promises. Do you think it is mere coincidence that the new covenant is quoted verbatim and in its entirety when the priestly work of Jesus Christ is described in the 8th chapter of Hebrews?

Elizabeth’s response would remind the attentive Bible reader of what David said when the ark of the first covenant was brought to him: ‘why should the ark of the Lord be brought to me?’ Now Elizabeth asks why the ark of the new covenant should be brought to her. God is indeed doing something new. What a pity it would be if we do not embrace this newness.

I wish you a joyful celebration of the fulfilment of God’s promise. LJC et MI.

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