

12th Sunday after Pentecost, 2007

"I will go unto the Altar of God. Unto God Who giveth joy to my youth."

(Ps. 42.4)

Those words of sacred scripture are familiar to us all; we hear them and perhaps say them in our heart, every time we attend holy Mass; yet do we realise the great mystery which they unfold to us? Every priest in whichever church he may be declares his intention to go up unto the altar of God. We have here a mystery in itself whereby many altars become one; not only that, but they become the Altar of God. As children, in the simple Catechism, we were asked: "Where is Jesus Christ?" And we answered: "As God He is everywhere; as God made man He is in Heaven and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar."

Our late Holy Father, John Paul II, devoted a whole year to the Great Mystery of Faith — the Blessed Eucharist; and throughout that time he spoke to us of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as Heaven coming down to earth; and earth being raised to Heaven; and that is indeed what happens when we "go up unto the Altar of God". The Sacrifice of Christ is one sacrifice — one and eternal; so that no matter what number of priests offer the Sacrifice; and no matter on how many altars Christ is made present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, it is the one sacrifice offered at the Altar of God in heaven, where our gloriously risen Saviour, bearing still the wounds, the trophies of his redemptive Sacrifice on the Cross and His victory over Satan and sin, never ceases to make intercession for us. Later on in the same opening prayers of the Mass this becomes very clear when we pray: "O send out Thy Light and Thy truth: they have led me and brought me unto Thy holy hill, even unto Thy tabernacles."



Let us now consider "Unto God, Who giveth joy to my youth." Through the merits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, we will eventually dwell in our eternal home, where, after the great day of the Lord, our risen bodies will have no defects, and we shall enjoy eternal youth being restored to that perfection which Adam enjoyed before the fall. We should have been reminded of this recently, when we celebrated the glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the only one of all the human race who reigns Body and Soul in heaven. St Peter Canisius, speaking to us in his homily for the feast, says: "O happy day, which raised up and exalted the humble handmaid of the Lord to such a height that she became the most glorious Queen of Heaven and

Mistress of the world; nor could she have risen higher, since she was exalted to the very throne of the Kingdom and seated in a glory second only to Christ's!" Clearly this happy day is to be honoured, which established and proclaimed as our Queen and Mother one who is at once so powerful and so merciful that we may have her, who ever remains the Mother of the Judge, as a Mother of mercy protecting and interceding for us with Christ and faithfully watching out for whatever concerns our salvation.

A tradition tells of the Rosary beads being so formed as to signify the age of our Blessed Lady — namely 60 years. But in heaven she enjoys eternal youth. In those earthly visitations of the Blessed Virgin, approved by the Church, the visionaries could not describe her radiant beauty; after many years of effort for instance, Sister Lucia was not satisfied by any artists attempt to portray the Blessed Virgin as she appeared. Perhaps the prophetic vision of the Apocalypse gives us an account that is more pleasing to the soul:


“And the temple of God was opened in heaven: and the Ark of His testament was seen in His temple, and there were lightnings, and voices and an earthquake, and great hail ... And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and being with child, she cried travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered.”

We must remember here that *heaven* means the Church: this passage applied to our Blessed Lady. As the personification of the Church she is clothed with the sun, that is with Christ; she has the moon, that is the changeable things of the world, under her feet; and the twelve stars with which she is crowned are the twelve apostles; she is in labour and pain, whilst she brings forth her children, and Christ in them, in the midst of afflictions and persecutions. Remember it was at the foot of the Cross that we became her children. John Paul II, writing of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, states:

“In the ‘memorial’ of Calvary all that Christ accomplished by His Passion and His death is present. Consequently all that Christ did with regard to His Mother for our sake is also present. To her He gave the beloved disciple and, in him, each of us: ‘Behold thy son!’ To each of us also He says: ‘Behold thy Mother!’ Experiencing the Memorial of Christ’s death in the Eucharist also means continually receiving this gift. It means accepting – like John – the one who is given to us anew as our Mother. It also means taking on a commitment to be conformed to Christ, putting ourselves at the school of His Mother and allowing her to accompany us. Mary is present, with the Church and as Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist. If the Church and the Eucharist are inseparably united, the same ought to be said of Mary and the Eucharist. This is one reason why, since ancient times, the commemoration of Mary has always been part of the Eucharistic celebrations of the Churches of East and West ... The Eucharist has been given to us so that our life, like that of Mary, may become completely a Magnificat.”

Dwell on this: Mary loves each one of us with the most perfect motherly love; may this thought added to all I have said above lead us to a more fervently devout

relationship as Children of Mary as we pray our rosary; asking her to lead us through the mysteries of her adorable Son's life, death and resurrection.

orrowful and Immaculate
Heart of Mary, pray for us.

*The Seven Sorrows of the
Blessed Virgin Mary*

- + Prophecy of Simeon
- + Flight into Egypt
- + Loss of Jesus in Jerusalem
- + Way of the Cross
- + Jesus dying on the Cross
- + Jesus' body placed
in His Mother's arms
- + Jesus placed in the tomb



***Four Special Graces Promised to Those
Devoted to the Seven Dolors of Our Lady***

According to St. Alphonsus Liguori, Our Lord revealed to St. Elizabeth of Hungary four special graces that are given to those who are devoted to the dolors of His holy Mother.

1. That those who before death invoke the Blessed Mother in the name of her sorrows, should obtain true repentance of all their sins.
2. That He would protect in their tribulations all who remember this devotion, and that He would protect them especially at the hour of death.
3. That He would impress upon their minds the remembrance of His Passion, and that they should have their reward for it in Heaven.
4. That He would commit such devout clients to the hands of Mary, so that she might obtain for these souls all the graces she wanted to lavish upon them.