



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year, our normal Sunday procession through the Scriptures is interrupted by the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. As we've been moving through the Bread of Life Discourse, it has me pondering over the relationship between Mary and the Eucharist.

I have been thinking about a scientific discovery I heard about several years ago called *microchimerism*. This is defined as the presence of two genetically distinct cell populations in the same individual. While there are several reasons for this, one cause of microchimerism is the bidirectional transfer of cells between mother and baby during pregnancy. The baby's DNA can remain in a mother for decades after the birth of the child.

We know that God taking on a body is not a "fall out" of God's plan to save us, but at the very heart of His plan. Our bodiliness, and His bodiliness are not accidents, but a beautiful part of God's plan for us! When I think of this, I think about how Mary was a tabernacle of God. At the Annunciation, Mary received Almighty God into her – His very being into her being, His Body into her body. She became an Ark of the New Covenant, a Tabernacle for the dwelling of God Most High. Knowing what we know now about microchimerism, this means that after the birth of Jesus, He did not *stop* dwelling in her! She remained a Tabernacle of God. No wonder we celebrate the Assumption of Mary into heaven. How could God allow her body to decay if it was united to Jesus?!

Mary's Assumption is a foreshadowing of what we believe will happen to all of us at the end of time – that our bodies and our souls will be reunited for eternity – whether in heaven or in hell. We profess this belief in the Apostles' Creed, as we proclaim our belief in the "resurrection of the body and life everlasting." What happened to Mary is the plan for each of us – we will be bodily in heaven for ever. This is foreshadowed also by those saints who are incorrupt (meaning, that their bodies did not decomposed after death).

Now, let's take this to the Eucharist. When we receive Jesus' Body into our bodies in Holy Communion, we also become Tabernacles of the Most High. As long as we do not reject the life and grace of God (by mortal sin), we will be raised up on the Last Day. This was Jesus' promise in the Bread of Life Discourse:

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.
(John 6:54-57)

Jesus promises us that if we eat His flesh He will remain in us and He will raise us on the last day. Or to put it another way, if we have received the Eucharist in faith and not rejected Him (again, through mortal sin), then *our bodies can't stay dead!*

As we meditate on these profound mysteries, I invite you to ask Our Lady to help you allow these truths to permeate your very being. May this not just be something we talk about, or a ritual we celebrate, but may the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist enter our bodies and souls making us Tabernacles of God now and forever.