

Rev. Derek Fairman

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time A (Mountain: Majesty)

The first reading from the prophet Isaiah provides us with a vision of the Lord's Mountain. On this mountain, the Lord will provide for the needs of all, specifically a feast, and He will destroy death forever. He will reveal Himself on the mountain, which will bring joy to all. The hand of the Lord will rest on the mountain. This vision will find its fullness in Heaven, and in the Gospel reading, the Lord speaks of the wedding banquet, which also points to Heaven.

For the prophet Isaiah, he was looking back to Israel's beginnings, on Mt. Sinai, where the Lord came down among His people. The prophet looked to Mt. Zion in Jerusalem to be that mountain, where the Lord dwelt on earth, so that people could find joy and all that they needed. The city of Jerusalem was a disappointment, for the Lord did dwell there, but the city was also home to wickedness. Rather than find joy, the people had plenty of reasons to shed tears. The people had to suffer drought and famine, and the city was surrounded by armies more than once.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw the time when the Lord would make Jerusalem a mountain where the Lord would provide for the needs of the people, where He would reveal Himself, and the Lord would even end death. No longer would Mt. Zion be a disappointment. Mt. Zion would be a place to which people would draw, and where the people would find their hearts' delight. The Lord will bring Isaiah's vision to fulfillment in Heaven, where death will be destroyed, and we will receive all that we need. Heaven is the New Jerusalem, the New Zion.

This vision of the prophet Isaiah has been fulfilled already in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When the angel came down from Heaven, to announce that the Son of God would come down from Heaven, the Lord Jesus revealed Himself. The Virgin Mary would also be present at Pentecost, whenever the Holy Spirit came down to form the Church. The Virgin Mary was present whenever the Lord revealed Himself, fulfilling what the prophet had seen, that the people would rejoice when they saw the Lord.

The power of the Lord came upon her and overshadowed her, at the Annunciation, as the angel explained to her. This was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, that the hand of the Lord would rest on the Lord's Mountain. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary, as the angel explained, and so the Lord's hand, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, did rest upon the mountain. This was also foretold by the prophet Habakkuk, who spoke about the Lord's glory resting upon a mountain. The Holy Spirit came to the Virgin Mary and the Church at Pentecost as well.

The Virgin Mary is one who has been given immortality. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary means that she is that mountain where death has been destroyed. She has attained immortality even in her body, and so the Lord has given us a preview of what awaits His faithful servants. The Virgin Mary is the first of the Lord's servants to be in bodily splendor and resides in the beauty and grandeur of Heaven. In her, the veil and web have both been destroyed.

In the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the Lord formed the Body of the Lord Jesus, the same Body that comes to us now in the Eucharist that we celebrate. The Virgin Mary is where we can find the Lord Jesus, and she is the Mediatrix who can bring us so many good things. With her intercession, the Lord Jesus continues to provide us with all that we need.

The prophet Isaiah (52:7) reads, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings." The Virgin Mary reminds us of the Lord Jesus' good will towards us, of His care for us, and the good news that we need to hear. Sometimes that is a kind of feast that we need: a feast of hope, a feast of faith that the Lord has greater days and happier days in store for us. It is a feast of charity, a feast where we can be surrounded with joy and God's love.

Something that mountains represent is majesty. They speak to us of God's greatness, and the beauty of God. Mountains can raise our minds and our hearts up to God. The same is true of the Virgin Mary. She helps us to raise our minds and our hearts to God, and she reminds us of the goodness and splendor of God's greatness.

In the Gospel, the Lord Jesus teaches the parable about the wedding feast, in which many were invited, but few were chosen, and those originally invited did not respond to the invitation. This parable is about the wedding feast that awaits the Lord's faithful in Heaven. The initial invitation was the good news about the Son's wedding, but not all found joy, because it interfered with their own activities. It can be easy to miss the majesty and splendor of what God is doing in our lives. When people live near mountains, they just become part of the scenery, and it can be easy to take their beauty for granted. Yet the Lord does not want us to miss out on the wedding feast that He has prepared, and to which He calls us to share.

As we approach the altar, we thank the Lord for the wedding feast to which He has called us, that great feast foretold by the prophet Isaiah, which we find at Mass now, and in Heaven. We ask the Lord to keep us faithful to Him, by attending Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. We call upon the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Lord's mountain, reflecting His majesty, and who leads us to the wedding feast.