



I'm Here

Homily for the Feast of the Assumption

August 15, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

1. Today we celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Mary
  - we celebrate that she who bore the Savior of the world, would be the first to experience heaven
  - Mary has been at the center of Christian theology since the founding of the Church
  - She has been given over 6,000 titles, the Church has pronounced 4 Marian dogmas, teachings of the highest order
  - while all these devotions and admirations are good and helpful, the fact is, Mary was born a peasant girl in a small and insignificant town
  - it's easy to lose focus on that
2. In this little town of Nazareth
  - where people questioned if anything good could come from there
  - this young girl says “Yes” to an angel and history is changed
  - God becomes flesh through the birth of her child, Jesus
3. Mary would have known the pain of losing her parents – Joachim and Ann
  - she would become a widow when Joseph her husband died
  - and she would have wept when Jesus left Nazareth to pursue his mission
  - nothing however could have prepared her for the suffering of Jesus during his passion and crucifixion
4. A few years ago I remember watching “The Passion of the Christ” directed by Mel Gibson
  - it was a difficult movie to watch, I “felt” the film in a visceral way – each strike of the whip, or nail in the hands and feet, felt overwhelming to me
  - but there is a particular scene that will forever capture my imagination when it comes to Mary, the mother of Jesus
  - as Jesus is carrying the cross to Calvary, Mary is seen waiting in the streets of Jerusalem for her son to pass by
  - she can hear the crowd coming and just as he passes Jesus starts to fall
  - at that very point, the film cuts to a scene that takes place some 30 years earlier
  - a young boy is running up the road
  - the boy is Jesus
  - he trips in slow motion and we see him falling to the ground
  - in both scenes Mary runs to her son – in one he is a boy who hurt himself in a simple fall, in the other, an older Mary rushes to her adult son who is unimaginable pain on the way to his death
  - in both these moments, Mary's actions are the same

- she embraces her son and simply says to him, "I'm here."
5. This touching and heart wrenching moment in a movie helped me to understand that in times of suffering and sorrow, we can call on Mary and she answers, "I'm here."
  6. For parents who have lost a child to death or experienced the pain of seeing their little ones suffer for any reason you can pray Hail Mary and she will answer, I'm here.
  7. For those who have lost a loved one, perhaps the person closest to them, a person they pledged their love to forever, if you are the one still here know that you can always pray Hail Mary and she will answer, "I am here."
  8. There are many people who have seen their parents divorce, or live in homes where there is little happiness and peace
    - If you live with fear know that you can call on Mary and she will answer, "I'm here."
  9. There are many people who come to church having lost their jobs, or young people wondering if they'll ever find meaningful work – in your frustration you can always pray, "Hail Mary and she will respond, "I'm here."
  10. There may be women who find themselves pregnant and the person that said they loved them has hit the road, you can always pray to Mary and she will embrace you with, "I'm here."
  11. Suffering, it turns out, is part of what it means to be human
    - Jesus came into the world in part to show us that very fact
    - he chose not to escape it at the hour of his death
    - and in John's Gospel, he looks down from the cross and says to John, "Here is your mother."
  12. In that moment, Jesus made us a child of his Mother Mary, and in doing so, became our brother too
  13. Mary's role in our lives has been and always will be there to be there for us in our times of challenge and suffering
    - she answers our prayer with a simple reminder – "I'm here"
  14. This is why we pray, Hail Mary . . . .