

SIXTO GARCIA

REFLEXIÓN: SOLEMNIDAD DE LA ASUNCIÓN DE MARÍA:

NOTA: EL TEXTO ESTÁ TOMADO DE UNA HOMILÍA DE KARL RAHNER, S.J. — SE LOS ENVÍO EN LA TRADUCCIÓN AL INGLÉS DE HARVEY EGAN, S.J., ESTUDIANTE DE RAHNER

Today we celebrate the feast of Mary's Assumption. After her quiet death, the blessed Virgin and mother of God entered, body and soul, into eternal life, the life of God himself. In Mary's case, too, the fruit of her death was life, and so this feast is also the anniversary day of a death. It is a question of that mysterious moment when time and eternity, transitoriness and immortality touch one another in the existence of one human being.

Everything is endlessly a coming and going. People come into existence and pass away; they are born and they die. Everything that has its beginning here on earth must someday come to an end. The shout of joy will someday fade away; all misery will one day be wept out; someday all power will vanish like smoke. Vanity of vanities, moaned Qohelet.

This is probably why human beings, whose tremble with greed and with secret horror in the face of death, snatch up in this short interval, in this short dream that we call life, as much pleasure and honor, power and knowledge as they can. But the vessel is narrow, and everything that we pour into it is finite . . . Everything ends in death.

Still there is something in these things that does not pass away. Every wave of time that seems to rise only to sink back as if it had never existed lifts something up that it does not take back again into the frightening emptiness of the past. In the indifference of all coming and going there mysteriously lives something full of meaning, something eternal: good and evil . . . Good and evil are things of eternity; they are eternity in the things of time.

It is at once a comforting and a frightful mystery; our deeds sink into nothingness, but before they die they give birth to an eternal property that does not disappear with them. The eternal goodness and badness of our perishable works sink down into the eternal "ground" of our imperishable soul, and shape this hidden ground. Even if new transitory waters keep rushing over this deep ground of the soul, neither time nor forgetting obliterates what goodness and badness have brought about in those depths. Only new goodness and repentance can make good what evil has done there for eternity.

And then the moment comes when a person passes out of the temporal order into eternity . . . The restless fluctuation of time ceases to surge over a soul in endless rise and fall, and it sets free the ground of the soul that until now was seen by God alone . . . This means that an individual travels the path of his or her life through time into an eternity that is no longer time.

Mary has traveled this path. Today we celebrate the day when for her time became eternity. She too led this life of transitoriness. With her as with all the children of this earth, life was a restless coming to be and passing away. Her life began quiet and obscurely, somewhere in a corner of Palestine and soon it was snuffed out, gently, and the world knew it not.

So too were her hours measured out to her: a few hours of the utmost happiness in God her savior joined with many routine, ordinary hours of grief, one after another, lusterless, feeble, and seemingly so empty and dull, But finally all the hours, the sublime as well as the ordinary, had passed away; and they could all now appear as one insignificant whole, precisely because they could thus fade away into the past.

Mary's life was life of transitoriness, just like our own. And yet, in our respect it was entirely different . . . Mary, too, had her share in this common loss - but because of guilt. This is what makes our life so paradoxical and so confused. In our life, the eternal that makes up a part of our moments is sometimes good, sometimes evil.

We know of only one person besides Jesus who can enter into eternity without repentance. This is Mary, the ever-pure Virgin, the immaculate one. What our heart in its bitter experience can hardly believe has become true for one human being – Mary. She can stand by each deed of her life: not one was dark; not one passed away without enkindling and eternal light, without shining with the luminosity that entirely consumes the moral possibilities of each moment.

Such a life does not come to an end with Mary's death; when she died, only the transitory died, so that what was eternal in her life might be revealed – that eternal light from the many thousand candles enkindled by each moment of her life. Thus her whole life entered eternity – each day, each hour, each breaking of the waves of the life of her soul, every joy and every pain, the great and the small hours. Nothing was abandoned; everything lives on in the eternal goodness of the soul that has gone home.

God affectionately calls each one by name: Peter, with his repentance and threefold love, is with me; Paul, the great warrior and long-sufferer is with me; Francis, the happy beggar, is with me; Stanislaus (Kotska) is with me, and he was simply a pious, brave child.

And so God still has many names for us: he has called us by countless names, He has thereby will to entrust to us the sweet mystery of his heart; he has, as it were, placed us in intimate contact with those whom he has sheltered forever in his heart as his child, his friend, his betrothed . . . That is why the Church celebrates feast upon feast of her saints, fresh again every day; birthdays of an eternity, victory feasts of imperishable goodness, feasts of delight because love never ceases. They rouse in us anew every day from tired resignation to transitoriness: it is not true that everything passes away, for the good is immortal. Wherever in this world only a tiny light of purity, of kindness, of humility, of fortitude, of patience shines, it burns on before God's eternal light as the reflection of his own eternally blessed light.

Thus it is with the Virgin Mary, In faith we know that the charming splendor of grace that already filled her soul when the word of her maker called her into being is still an indestructible reality. The tender humility, the brightness of her grand spirit, the boundless submission to God – everything that filled her soul when she said “I am the handmaid of the Lord” – all this is always present The simple greatness of her life, the sacrifice of her Son under the cross; all this goodness and holiness that once brightened this dark world is eternal life now.

When we love goodness, we should be excited by the thought that Mary's incomprehensible goodness is own, blessed and preserved in eternity,

This is why we should fold our hands and pray: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners in this transitoriness which was also yours, and in the hour of our death, so that we may enter into that eternity that today is yours.