

## **A Justice Ministry III**

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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Today, on this Feast Day of the Glorious Assumption of Mary into heaven and as we continue reflecting on a new Justice Ministry at St. Matthias, we ask the question, “What does Mary say about God’s justice?”

Mary is often depicted as a passive woman. Whether this is due to her obedience, humility, or gender, this is unfortunate. While she was passive towards God, she was not passive about God. Her cause was God’s cause. In today’s first reading from the book of Revelation, we have a great corrective to an overly passive understanding of Mary. “A great sign appeared in the sky,” we are told, “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” As the reading says, she was the pregnant woman ready to take on the huge red dragon, representing the forces of evil. We believe that this brave woman is symbolic of Mary.

In today’s Gospel, Mary has some strong words that touch upon God’s justice. In her ‘Magnificat,’ she proclaims, “You, O God, have shown the strength of your arm, and have scattered the proud in their conceit. You have cast down the mighty from their thrones, and have lifted up the lowly. You have filled the hungry with good things, and the rich you have sent away empty.” According to Mary, God’s justice is therefore situational. It both casts down and lifts up, depending on the situation. If one is proud, mighty, or rich, God casts them down so that they can rejoin the masses of humanity. If one is lowly or hungry, God

lifts them up so that they can reclaim their human dignity. The end goal of God's justice is greater equality among the human family. Simply claiming to 'treat everyone the same' from the start is not God's justice. If we adopt that approach ourselves, we are not going to bring about justice, but merely maintain the status quo. Each person is on their own unique path and cannot be treated the exact same way. Not everyone needs to be cast down and not everyone needs lifted up. Again, for God's justice, it all depends on a person's situation.

One of the hardest parts for most of us to accept about justice is the idea of preferential treatment for the lowly. It seems unfair, especially to those of us who are hardworking and live comfortably. Yet, if we think about Mary's understanding of God's justice, we should take into account the histories, situations, and present realities of the lowly and, in the name of God, lift them up. Their preferential treatment isn't to make them superior, as some might fear, but simply to make them somewhat more equal with the rest of humanity.

*According to Mary, God's justice both casts down and lifts up in order to bring about greater equality among the human family.*

Why does the message of basic human equality disturb me? Based on my life situation, does God need to raise me up or bring me down?

Next weekend, we will address the question, "Who should be interested in joining the justice ministry?" For today, let us celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Like Mary, may our souls proclaim the greatness of the Lord and rejoice in God our Savior, who is a God of justice.