

Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15th, 2021

On this the Feast of the Assumption, the Church has elected to the first reading from the book of Revelations. This is a fabulous Book, written after the Resurrection of Christ, and proposed to be authored by John. Which John???? Many theologians believe he was the beloved Disciple, but also many believe that the author might have been a follower of John, and perhaps a member of John's mission and ministry.

I would highly encourage you to read the book of Revelations. The purpose of the Book was to encourage the new Christians. In the Roman reign of Domitian [AD 96] tremendous persecution was taking place. Consequently, many who earlier professed belief in Jesus as Risen from the dead, now are yielding to the threats of death and martyrdom. Hence the reason for this mysterious writing.

The author used various literary devices, but his major tool was symbolism. For example:

four signifies the world, *six* imperfection, *seven* totality or perfection, *twelve* Israel's tribes or the apostles, *one thousand* immensity. Many symbolic metaphors such as Babylon seen as a harlot of pagan Rome. There are many references to "the woman". There are many who interpret "the Woman" as Mary, though never does the author declare that is it she. However, that is probably why this Book was chosen for this Feast.

...a woman clothed with the sun,
with the moon under her feet,
and on her head a crown of twelve stars.
She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth...
She gave birth to a son, a male child...

These Apocalyptic images draw fear in many of today's readers. But it was written to give hope and courage to the newly initiated. God will always win! Those who remain steadfast in their faith and confidence in the risen Lord need have no fear. Suffering, persecution, even death by martyrdom, though remaining impenetrable mysteries of evil.

It is a message of hope and consolation to the believers even today. Be not afraid – God's promises will always reign.