



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

### ***The Ark of the Covenant***

*Readings: Ap 11:19;12: 1-6, 10; Ps 44, 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, Luke 1: 39-56*

When a man gives his word he is not merely beating the air with hollow words or engraving meaningless phrases in ink upon an empty page. When a man gives his word he is giving his very self. This is, for example, the heart of the sacrament of marriage.

So when God gives His Word, He is not merely issuing a set of commands, a culturally nuanced piece of advice or a set of convenient slogans. When God gives His Word He is giving His very self.

That promise, that oath, that covenant, that *sacramentum*, which binds the giver and the gifted in a sacred bond of love is exhibited peculiarly in two notable occasions in the Bible, in the history of salvation.

In the first we see Moses, the liberator, go the mountaintop for a series of extraordinary encounters with the living God and return with the gift of the Law on two tablets of stone. This relationship with God is to the defining reality for the Hebrew people and what will hold them together for three millennia. The precious nature of that gift is underlined in tonight's first

reading. The sacred tablets of the Law are to have built for them a special container which will be called an Ark as a reminder of God's salvation. It will be decorated with gold and with the cherubim as a reminder of the sovereignty of God and of His Presence with His people. Upon it will rest the mercy seat – the place to which the faithful will come in love and hope to receive the promise.

The second time is when God establishes the New Covenant, the New Testament, by giving Himself absolutely in the flesh in the Person of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. This is The Word who made all things, by whom all things came into being. This is the Word who became flesh in the womb of Mary. This is the ultimate bond and *Sacramentum* between God and Man in which His Divinity condescends to our humanity and our humanity is swept up into His Divinity.

Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that one of the most beautiful titles of Our Lady should be 'The Ark of the Covenant'. She is the beautiful house of gold prepared to carry and cradle and process and present the Word of God who is salvation Himself, Jesus. She is, like her faithful children, The Church, the loving bearer of the Word of God, upon whom rests the mercy seat, the good news of salvation. In her earthly life Mary has given her children an example – open to the Spirit of God, she becomes the Christ bearer. In her glorious Assumption she has given us a vision of the destiny of the Church in Heaven. That is why we celebrate tonight.