

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
The message of hope from the Book of Revelation

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. Unfortunately, most of our parishes are not be able to celebrate the public Masses due to the severe spread of COVID-19. For this reason, I have taken the opportunity to post a brief video message for you to watch on the official website of our diocese as I did in May. May Our Lady be with each one of you and protect you from all evil.

Many of you have probably watched various movies in theaters and on YouTube during this pandemic. One of the movies I watched was very apocalyptic, depicting earthquakes and tsunamis in various parts of the earth, including Japan, and global climate changes such as forest fires caused by long-term drought due to global warming.

On the other hand, scientists are proposing solutions for them. The government and politics are also fighting hard to save humanity. Also, several movies I watched addressed the pandemic.

In the midst of the various struggles to save humanity, I am amazed at the extraordinary things that are happening: there are people who want to take advantage of the crisis to gain wealth for themselves, and there are even schemes to use the damage to expand their power. The movie depicts the battle between good and evil. First the forces of evil appear, and in the end the good people appear and the good wins....

"Principle of Hope" (Ernst Bloch)

For some reason, these films were filled with a strange sense of urgency and fascination. What they portrayed was the magnitude of the damage caused by out-of-control nature as a result of the way we humans have been treating it.

However, there are always in different parts of the world groups of men and women, both young and old, who unite their wisdom and give their lives to save this earth. What motivates many people to save and rebuild this wounded planet is called the "principle of hope" in theology. It was advocated by an economist named Ernst Bloch. It is an inner force that is moving many people around the world to save humanity. The list includes scientists, politicians, religious leaders, doctors, self-defense forces, workers, and teachers.

Twenty years ago, or even ten years ago, we would never have thought that the degradation of the global environment would so severely and quickly affect tens of thousands of people and force countless others to migrate. And now, by God's grace, we have been made aware of it, and we are not only aware of the crisis and anxious about this situation but also trying to challenge ourselves to see if we can do something about it.

The message of hope conveyed by the Book of Revelation

Today's first reading was from the eleventh chapter of the Book of Revelation. I imagine that Pope Francis is very familiar with this view of chapter 11. We see it in his various writings, including the encyclicals, and in his speeches during his pastoral visits.

I ask you all to listen to the strong call of the world leaders. Let's also make a strong call to influence the religious leaders, the politicians, and those who can control the economy of this society through military power and other means. We all must work together to change the way we consume the earth's resources. And we must be caretakers of our common home.

In the Book of Revelation, the dragon is about to take the life of a woman and the

life that is about to be born there. The emphasis is on the battle. This woman is a symbol not only of the church, but of humanity. The church and humanity are being attacked by the forces of evil present in those who use their power to rule the world as they wish. The temptation of power, especially in political and religious leaders, is a permanent temptation. The Book of Revelation symbolically describes this struggle. In the midst of the chaos the ark of the covenant appears, which speaks of the presence of God.

We know that in each age and in each moment humanity is living in tension. We live in a time when humanity is about to drown in wars, natural disasters, and pandemics like the one we are facing now. Tens of thousands of people have to migrate, risking their lives. In some cases they will have to walk for miles day and night, looking for a place where they can settle down and start a new life.

Like Mary of the Visitation: Committed to be a servant of the better world

Brothers and sisters, let us commit ourselves to strive to build a world that is more just, more united, and more in solidarity. When we see those who need our support among our brothers and sisters in our own church community, or among our friends, neighbors and relatives, let us make an effort to encourage them, to help them financially if necessary, and to do what we can. Let us continue our efforts, asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to intercede with God so that the most needy can live a more dignified life as human beings.

Note: All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE).