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### THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



**EDWIN SULEWSKI**  
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

### Why is there such an emphasis on death and grief today?

There have been great advances in medical science which have removed death from the daily lives of most Americans. Because of this we are generally unfamiliar with death and grief. We are fortunate that our experience with death has lessened, but nevertheless it's important to learn about the things we can do to help ourselves and friends. Making wills and understanding how to help our grieving friends will help us cope better when the stress of a death comes into our lives. Avoiding death by ignoring it, by not making wills or by not going to funerals or visitations is a denial of reality!

We purchase all forms of insurance to protect our family & assets, not because we expect the worst to happen, but to be prepared. Doesn't it make sense then to prepare for what will happen? Let our trained counselors assist you with the many options available in planning for a worry-free future.

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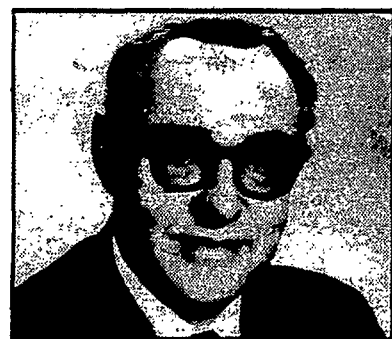
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Evenings by Appointment

## Columnists

### The woman clothed with the sun

By Father Albert Shamon

Assumption readings: (R3) Luke 1:39-56; (R1) Revelation 11:19-12:1-6, 10; (R2) 1 Corinthians 15:20-26.

One day, Jelena, one of the two girls to whom Our Lady speaks at Medjugorje, asked the Mother of God, "My Lady, why are you so beautiful?"

Our Lady answered, "I am beautiful because I love. If you want to become beautiful, love and you will not need the mirror so much."

When Doris Day was asked what kept her looking so young, she answered, "Not expensive face creams, nor 14 hours sleep at night. It's the thoughts I think. If you think ugly thoughts, you will look ugly. If beautiful thoughts, you will look beautiful!"

The Middle Ages — the age of faith — were filled with joy and merriment. It was the age of troubadours, minnesingers, Chaucerian pilgrimages, knights errant, art that glittered with the gold and the cerulean blues of Cimabue and Giotto. This was so because faith had lifted up the minds and hearts of people to all that was true and good and beautiful in life, rather than to the seamy and sordid side.

That is why the Church encourages us in these dark days to think of Mary. Thoughts of her will beget hope, will bring back joy to a joyless society. Merry England was merry when it was truly Mary's.

Think of Mary's Assumption. It is a happy-ending story. It is a story of hope because what happened to her, God means to happen to us.

The Holy Father purposely closed the Marian Year on the Feast of the Assumption to emphasize the great sign in heaven (R1) — a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim people of God (*Redemptoris Mater*, No. 50).

Actually, the woman clothed with the sun and confronted with the dragon flaming red is a space-age image, depicting a veritable "Star Wars" between impeccable goodness and gargantuan evil, between Beauty and the Beast.

The seed of the woman clothed with the sun has already crushed the head of the serpent. But the woman still appears, as at Fatima and

### A Word for Sunday

Medjugorje, spinning the sun, as a sign of her power over the atom and the nuclear bomb, bringing hope to all her other seed — those who turn to her and her Son.

The second reading is from Paul's great chapter expounding the doctrine of the Resurrection. As Christ rose from the dead, body and soul, so has Mary. That is what her Assumption means. For Mary, death was "but the blinking of an eyelid which does not interrupt vision." The Eastern Church speaks of Mary's death as her Dormition, a sleep. Sleep is only a brief interruption in life.

Sin, the greatest evil, and decomposition, the great evil of death, were both warded off from Mary.

The Scriptural basis for this can be found in Elizabeth's greeting to Mary: "Whom am I that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (R3).

When St. Luke put the title "Mother of my Lord" into Elizabeth's mouth, he reflected the early Church's devotion to Mary. Elizabeth considered Mary like the Queen Mother in the days of Israel's kings. For Mary's fiat, "be it done to me according to thy word," had made possible her Son's reign as King of kings. As Queen Mother, she shares in a unique way in the blessings of His kingdom: incorruption, victory over sin and death. The Immaculate Conception and the Assumption say as much.

Each day, we ask our Queen Mother to "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." We are asking that she preserve us from the evil that ends in sin, and the death that does not end in assumption.

### Gabriel and the saddest day ever

By Cindy Bassett

The story of Jesus Christ begins on the saddest day the world has ever known. For on that day, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden because of their failure to trust in God.

As God sadly watched the first man and woman leave Eden, he posted his angels to guard the gates of the paradise that had been lost forever. Or so it seemed.

"Forever is an awfully long time," commented Gabriel, one of God's favorite angels.

"Yes, it certainly is," God agreed, "but one day, all will be right again. I promise."

"Adam and Eve are going to have to put their noses to the grindstone," Gabriel continued. "And when all is said and done — after all that work — they will die."

"They will never lose my care of them," God said. "My help is theirs for the asking. I will be listening to every word they say to me. It will be called praying."

"I knew it!" Gabriel cried. "There's hope even in the midst of the mess they've made. By the way, what's that promise you were talking about?"

"Oh, you'll see in time," God replied. "A little patience, Gabriel, please."

Many years passed, and a population explosion occurred all over the world. Some of the people called upon God when the going got rough. Others even remembered to thank Him for the times of joy in their lives.

One day, before forever, Gabriel heard the sound of the Lord walking in the Garden of Eden. He seemed to be in a very thoughtful mood, so Gabriel asked: "What's on your mind today?"

"Gabriel, do you remember the saddest day the world has ever known?"

"How could I forget such a terrible thing?" Gabriel replied. "You were depressed for years after that."

"Well, today is the day in which I am going to start fulfilling my promise to make things right again," the Lord told him.

Gabriel hesitated. "That's a pretty big job, even for the best human around."

"I know," God said, smiling. "That's why I am sending my only son for the job."

"I'm worried!" Gabriel admitted. "These humans don't have the best track record for believing. How will you tell them?"

"Not to worry, Gabriel. In the first place, the prophets down there have been talking

### The Bible Corner

about my son's arrival for centuries. He is known as the Messiah, the One sent by me to save the world," God explained.

"But what if they still don't accept your Son?" Gabriel continued.

"I'll leave that choice to them. But, before I send my son, we need someone to announce his arrival. Therefore, Gabriel, I am sending you on a mission. It's actually a two-part mission," God said, and began to explain the plan.

Within seconds, Gabriel was standing in the inner room of the temple of the Lord, just to the right of the altar. A godly man, Zechariah, was just about to light the incense to God, while the rest of the worshippers prayed outside in the large hall.

Zechariah was getting on in years, and his eyesight wasn't the best. So in the dim light of the sanctuary, he felt certain that Gabriel was a ghost. He stiffened with fear.

"Don't be afraid, Zechariah," Gabriel said. "I've got great news. God has heard every prayer you've ever said. One of your oldest prayers is about to be answered. Your wife, Elizabeth, will have a son. Call him John. But that's not the best part. His job will be to prepare the people of Israel for the Messiah, who is finally coming."

Zechariah was stunned. "How can this be true?" he asked. "I'm an old guy and my wife is well-past her childbearing years."

That same old doubt in God had muddled things again. But God's plans are accomplished no matter what, and because of Zechariah's failure to believe, he was struck speechless. Gabriel was somewhat dismayed by the glitch in his mission, and he brought the whole matter before God.

"Don't be concerned, Gabriel," God said. "Zechariah's lack of speech is just a temporary inconvenience. Besides, Elizabeth more than made up for his doubts. Didn't you hear what she said? 'It was God who did this for me.' Part of your mission has been accomplished."

Scripture reference: Genesis 3; Luke 1:5-25.