

Solemnity of the Assumption

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- Today we celebrate the great Solemnity of the Assumption—the doctrine that the Blessed Virgin Mary was “assumed”—which means taken up body and soul--into Heaven at the end of her earthly life.
- But how does the Church come to have the dogma of the Assumption of Mary?
- Our non-Catholic Christian brethren will point out (rightly) that it isn’t in the Bible.
- But WE point out that not everything that ever happened concerning Christ and the saints is recorded in the Bible; quite the contrary.
- Scripture gives us only snapshots in time.
- And even the early Church realized this, and this is why the Church does NOT rely on scripture alone...relying also on what the early Church believed very soon after Jesus and the apostles, and by those who would have seen and heard them...what we call “Tradition”....
- And part of very early Tradition is that Mary had been taken up body and soul to Heaven—the Assumption.
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- After all, scripture itself is simply an accumulation of tradition (though certainly very special tradition), and scripture never claims to capture every significant event in Christian history.
- Not until the Protestant Reformation (1500 years after Jesus, and the advent of Christianity) did some hold that *everything* must come directly from Scripture.
- So...where the Bible does not address something specifically, we fall back onto Tradition...conscious always that authentic tradition cannot contradict scripture.
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- But from early Christianity—the earliest written references we still have are from the 300s—the Church has believed and taught about Mary’s Assumption into Heaven.
- What are other reason to believe in Mary’s Assumption into Heaven?
- Mary was chosen and formed to be the Mother of the Son of God... called by the archangel Gabriel: “*Full of grace*”, or “*Most highly*

avored daughter”.... chosen to bear Jesus, God Himself...and thus to be the “Mother of God”.

- Jesus took His own flesh from Mary...and as the Ark of the Covenant was fashioned out of purest gold, Mary—the true ark of the Word of God—was created in total purity...born without even Original sin--“the Immaculate Conception”--and would remain free from sin her entire life.
- Mary, then, would not merit corruption and death, which is punishment of sin. Scripture says: “*Thou will not allow thy holy one to undergo corruption,*” says Psalm 16.
- The Assumption is thus a consequence of her Immaculate Conception and lifelong fidelity.

- Mary bore God Himself, for 9 months...and lived with and near Him devotedly for 33 years.
- Add all these things to Mary’s special and unique threefold relationship to God: Child of the Father (as we all are), but also Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit—and the Assumption doesn’t seem far-fetched at all.
- And remember that Jesus in His humanity is bound by His own Word in the Commandments to honor His mother...and He, in His divinity, would honor her to the highest degree possible...and certainly would honor her more than any other human being.

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- What honors have men received from God? Do we read of any other persons having gone to Heaven body and soul?
 - Elijah is recorded to have been taken body & soul into Heaven in 2 Kings 2...and:
 - ...we see in Genesis 5 that the man Enoch “walked with God” in this life, and as a result, we read in the letter to the Hebrews: “*By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death...*” (Heb 11:5).
- And so...if God so treats His servants with such honor, with how much more honor will He treat His mother.

- And if Jesus was going to honor His mother above anyone else (which He was bound to do as her Son)...would that not even necessitate the Assumption in view of the honor given Enoch and Elijah?
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- Finally...Jesus promised to be with and guide His Church until His second coming...so this Church is protected from error by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in matters of faith and morals.
- And, after many centuries of debate and consideration, after receiving almost unanimous agreement of bishops around the world, Pope Pius XII declared in 1950 the Assumption to be a truth of the faith...that Mary had truly been assumed into Heaven body and soul.

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- The old golden ark of the covenant containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments simply foreshadowed what Mary would become—she who bore the true, complete and living Word of God.
 - Such a true and precious vessel as Mary, then, was given this singular grace to be conceived without sin, and, at the end of her life to be assumed body and soul into Heaven.
 - As Mother of Jesus, Mary becomes our mother as well.
 - St. John embodied all believers at the foot of the cross when Jesus said to his mother: “*Woman, behold, your son!*” Then he said to the disciple, “*Behold, your mother!*” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” (Joh 19:26-27 RSV)
 - So let us take Mary to the home of our hearts as we pray for her intercession: “*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*”

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Reading 1

[Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab](#)

God's temple in heaven was opened,
and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple.

A great sign appeared in the sky, 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.
Then another sign appeared in the sky;
it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns,
and on its heads were seven diadems.
Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky
and hurled them down to the earth.
Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth,
to devour her child when she gave birth.
She gave birth to a son, a male child,
destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod.
Her child was caught up to God and his throne.
The woman herself fled into the desert
where she had a place prepared by God.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
“Now have salvation and power come,
and the Kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Anointed One.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 45:10, 11, 12, 16](#)

R. (10bc) The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

The queen takes her place at your right hand in gold of Ophir.

R. The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Hear, O daughter, and see; turn your ear,
forget your people and your father's house.

R. The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

So shall the king desire your beauty;
for he is your lord.

R. The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

They are borne in with gladness and joy;
they enter the palace of the king.

R. The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Reading II

[1 Cor 15:20-27](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Christ has been raised from the dead,
the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
For since death came through man,
the resurrection of the dead came also through man.
For just as in Adam all die,
so too in Christ shall all be brought to life,
but each one in proper order:
Christ the firstfruits;
then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ;
then comes the end,
when he hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father,
when he has destroyed every sovereignty
and every authority and power.
For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.
The last enemy to be destroyed is death,
for “he subjected everything under his feet.”

Gospel

[Lk 1:39-56](#)

Mary set out
and traveled to the hill country in haste
to a town of Judah,
where she entered the house of Zechariah
and greeted Elizabeth.
When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting,
the infant leaped in her womb,
and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit,
cried out in a loud voice and said,
“Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
And how does this happen to me,
that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears,
the infant in my womb leaped for joy.
Blessed are you who believed
that what was spoken to you by the Lord
would be fulfilled.”

And Mary said:

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“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.”

Mary remained with her about three months
and then returned to her home.