

# **CELEBRATING THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY INTO HEAVEN**

God is glorified in Mary who is taken into heaven and who intercedes for us.

The Feast of the Assumption is also known as the Feast of the Dormition (falling asleep) of Mary. The feast commemorates Mary's assumption into heaven.

***“We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory.” With these words, Pope Pius XII officially and infallibly declared the Assumption of Mary, the Mother of God (theotokos), to be dogma in 1950. In this pronouncement, Pope Pius was simply stating dogmatically what the Church, East and West, had believed devotionally for many years.***

Although probably not unknown in the early Church, the earliest references to the Assumption of Mary appear around the later 4th century. Some of the Fathers believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) was assumed while still alive, others that she was assumed after she had died. Both views are permitted under the infallible definition of Pius XII.

Festivals commemorating the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary were common from the 5th century onwards, although the exact dates were never fixed. As the cult of Mary grew in the West, there was more pressure for the Catholic Church to define the exact nature of the Assumption. Pope Pius did this in 1950, in terms that are still rather general, and can be accepted by Western Catholics, Eastern Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox.

Protestants have rejected the Assumption of Mary (except for some, mostly Anglicans, who hold the opinion privately and devotionally), probably because it is not explicitly biblical. It is, however, an ancient belief certainly fitting the honor of the one chosen to bear the Son of God. It is also solidly within the biblical tradition of holy, unique individuals being taken bodily to heaven (like Elijah and Enoch). She who is “Mother of the Lord,” “full of grace,” and whom “all generations shall call blessed” is certainly worthy of this honor. Many Reformation denominations (like Anglicanism and Lutheranism) have set aside August 15th as a day commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary, although without the explicit context of the Assumption.

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**With joyful praise and exultation we remember that  
we live and move and have our being in the living God  
Who is alive in us and we in Him.**

**My soul gives glory to God and my spirit rejoices in my God.**

**Holy is God;  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Living forever!**

**“The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son’s resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians: ‘In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition (falling asleep) you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death’”**

**– Catechism of the Catholic Church #966**



**By the royal command of God, the divinely inspired apostles are caught up from over all the world into the clouds on high.**

**Reaching your immaculate body, the source of Life, they salute it with mighty honor.**

**The highest powers of heaven stood by with their own Master.**

**Seized with dread they accompany your inviolate body that had held God, and they went on high before you, crying, unseen, to the hierarchies above: ‘Lo, the Queen of all, the Maid of God, is nigh.’**

**Open wide the gates and receive above the world the Mother of the everlasting Light.**

**For through her the salvation of all mankind has come.**

**We have not the strength to look upon her, and are unable to render honors worthy of her, for her excellence is past all understanding.**

**Therefore, O most pure Theotokos, who lives forever with your Son, the King Who brings life, pray without ceasing that your newborn people be guarded on every side and saved from all adverse assault: for we are under your protection, and we bless you in beauty and light unto all ages.”**

**– From the Vespers of the Dormition  
(tr. by Mother Mary and Bp. Kallistos Ware)**

Let us pray:

Father in heaven,

all creation rightly gives You praise

for all life and all holiness come from You.

In the plan of Your wisdom

she who bore the Christ in her womb

was raised body and soul in glory to be with Him in heaven.

May we follow her example in reflecting Your holiness?

and join in her hymn of endless life and praise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL)

O Holy Spirit, open our minds and hearts to hear Your holy Word proclaimed to us this day. May it invigorate our lives and enliven our minds.

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### **Revelation 12: 1 – 6, 10**

And a great portent appeared in heaven, 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 she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.

And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads.

His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth;

she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

### **Luke 1: 39 – 47**

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy.

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

## **Reflection: Father William Saunders**

**The Feast of the Assumption gives each of us great hope as we contemplate this one facet of the beautiful woman of faith, our Blessed Mother. Mary moves us by example and prayer to grow in God's grace, to be receptive to His will, to convert our lives through sacrifice and penance, and seek that everlasting union in the heavenly Kingdom.**

**The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their letter Behold Your Mother," stated, "Christ has risen from the dead, we need no further assurance of our faith. Mary assumed into heaven serves rather as a gracious reminder to the Church that our Lord wishes all whom the Father has given Him to be raised with Him. In Mary taken to glory, to union with Christ, the Church sees herself answering the invitation of the heavenly Bridegroom."**

## **Intercessions**

**God, You chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus and the mother of the Church:  
Bless all who follow her example and bring Christ to the world.**

**Mighty Lord, Mary's glory is her union with Your Will;  
Through her intercession may we always do what is pleasing in Your sight.**

**Jesus, through Your mother, Mary, You learned to pray;  
Teach us to pray and to be open to Your Spirit as she was.**

**Lord of Miracles, You changed water into wine at the request of Your mother;  
Increase our faith in Your care for us.**

**O Holy One, Mary was clothed in holiness and faithfulness all her days;  
May we lead lives worthy of You, O Lord, all the days of our lives.**

**The Savior dwelt within You, O holy Mother of God and now you dwell with Christ forever;  
May we be true to our Baptismal commitment and sing for joy.**

## **Litany of Mary**

**Heavenly Father, of Whom Mary is the Daughter, have mercy on us.**

**Eternal Word, of Whom Mary is the Mother...**

**Holy Spirit, of Whom Mary is the spouse...**

**Divine Trinity, of Whom Mary is the Handmaid...**

**Mary, Mother of the Living God, pray for us**

**Mary, daughter of the Light Eternal..**

**Mary, chief work of God...**

**Mary, the beloved of God...**

**Mary, Immaculate Virgin...**

**Mary, all fair...**

**Mary, light in darkness...**

**Mary, house of God...**

**Mary, sanctuary of the Lord...**

**Mary, Virgin Mother...**

**Mary, Star of the Sea...**

**Mary, pierced with a sword of sorrow...**

**Mary, submissive to the law of God...**

**Mary, standing by the Cross of Jesus...**

**Mary, Our mother...**

**Mary, advocate of the Church...**

**Mary, Queen of Mercy...**

**Mary, consoler of the Church Suffering...**

**Mary, joy of Israel...**

**Mary, honor of our people...**

**Mary, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception...**

**Mary, Our Lady of the Assumption.,,**

**Son of Mary, hear us.**

**Son of Mary, graciously hear us.**

**I will declare your name unto my brothers and sisters.**

**I will praise you in the assembly of the faithful.**

## **Let Us Pray**

**O Almighty God, Who beholds Your servants earnestly desiring to place themselves under the shadow of the name and protection of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, grant, we beseech You, that by her charitable intercession, we may be delivered from all evil on earth, and may arrive at everlasting joys in Heaven, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.**



**...The skies speed up to meet you, and the seas  
Swim you the silver of their crests.  
If you delay to come, we'll see the meteors by night,  
Skimming before your way,-  
Lighting the time of death's dismay  
In lights as little as animals.  
And God will blaze your pathway with incandescent stars.**

**But oh! Queen of all grace and counsel,  
Cause of our joy, Oh Clement Virgin, come:  
Show us those eyes as chaste as lightning,  
Kinder than June and true as Scripture.  
Heal with your looks the poisons of the universe,  
And claim your Son's regenerate world!...  
- "Canticle of the Blessed Virgin" Thomas Merton**

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### **The Magnificat - Luke 1:46-55**

**And Mary said:  
"I sing Your praises, O my God,  
with all my heart,  
and I rejoice in You, O God of Life,  
for You have looked upon my lowliness.  
Who am I to merit Your attention?**

**I may henceforth regard myself as happy  
Because You have done great things for me.  
Every generation gives assent,  
For You are God and Your name is holy.**

**You give Your grace anew in every age  
To those who live in reverence all their lives.  
Grace is Your strength  
But You unmask all pride;  
You strip us bare of our self-conceit.**

**Dethroned are those who hold authority;  
Poor and humble people You uphold.  
You give in great abundance to the hungry  
And send the rich away with empty hands.  
Your people Israel You have remembered,  
For mercy has been sent to all the faithful,  
Just as You promised to those before us,  
To Abraham, to Sarah, their children forever."**



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle,  
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,  
help us to be removed and freed from the corruption of the world  
and to have a true purity of mind and body.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!**

### **HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

**If our faith is weak, we should turn to Mary.  
St. John tells us that it was because of the miracle  
that Christ performed,  
at His mother's request, at the marriage feast at Cana,  
that His disciples learned to believe in Him.  
Our mother is always interceding with her Son,  
so that He may attend to our needs and show Himself to us  
in such a way that we can cry out, "You are the Son of God."**

**- Saint Josemaria Escriva**