



August 15th

Celebrate Mary's Assumption into Heaven

On August 15th, the Church will celebrate the Solemnity of Mary's Assumption into Heaven. This means that at the end of her life on earth, Mary experienced the "resurrection of the body" promised to all believers at the end of time who faithfully follow Jesus Christ. What are the personal implications of this Feast for us?

"Belief in the Assumption is a source of hope for Christians because it foreshadows what will one day happen to each faithful Christian. The raising of Mary, body and soul, to the glory of Heaven *anticipates* what will happen at the final judgment to all who are to be saved. It provides hope that Christians will one day experience **the resurrection of the body** that she has already experienced *through the grace of her Son, Jesus Christ*" (Catholic and Christian: An Explanation of Commonly Misunderstood Beliefs, 20th Anniversary Edition, Dr. Allen Schreck, Dynamic Catholic, p. 221).

Let us examine the evidence with which the Church assures us of the truth of this teaching, revealed by God in Scripture and Tradition. In 1950, Pope Pius XII definitively declared the Assumption of Mary in these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

Mary's Assumption is connected to

and is the natural result of:

- being conceived without Original Sin – her Immaculate Conception
- and her sinless life.

Both physical death and corruption of the body are effects of Original Sin and personal sin. When we die, our soul leaves our body and lives on, but our body decays. Since Mary was preserved from Original Sin, lived with complete adherence to God's will and freely cooperated with His plan which sustained the fullness of grace given by Him at her conception by never committing personal sin, Mary was assumed into Heaven, body and soul. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 411). Mary experienced a glorified body and an immediate union of her whole being, body and soul, with God at the end of her earthly life. Thus, Mary becomes a cause of hope for all the redeemed who seek the fullness of Christ's Resurrection, as Jesus will raise our bodies to life again on the last day, to be reunited with our soul.

The Scriptural foundation for Mary's Assumption is Genesis 3:15. This Bible verse foreshadows Mary as intimately sharing in the same absolute victory of her Son over Satan. This passage in Genesis takes place after the Original Sin of Adam and Eve, in which **God speaks to Satan** in these words: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, [Mary] and between your seed and her seed [Jesus]; He will crush your head and you will strike His heel."

Scriptural support for the Assumption also includes Luke 1:28 as we consider the greeting of the Angel to Mary, "Hail, **full of grace**", because a human person with a fullness of grace and no sin would not experience the effects of sin in the body—such as, a physical decay leading to death.

Mary "cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring the supernatural life of grace to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 61). "**...Taken up to Heaven** she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation." (no. 62). How can we not eagerly invite the generous help of this "manifold intercession" — her prayer on our behalf— that God has so graciously provided for us in the person of Mary?!

Our Blessed Mother is now in the glory of Heaven, and the glory that she possesses in body and soul "is the image and the beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. So too does she shine forth on earth...as a sign of hope and comfort for the pilgrim people as we are still on our way." (no. 68). Bring your family to join with the parish at Mass on August 15th for the holy day of celebration!

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