

Assumption of the Virgin Mary

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse

11:19; 12:1-6. 10

The sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the ark of the covenant could be seen inside it. Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon which had seven heads and ten horns, and each of the seven heads crowned with a coronet. Its tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and dropped them to the earth, and the dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert, where God had made a place of safety ready. Then I heard a voice shout from heaven, 'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ.'

This is the word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

- ❶ The daughters of kings are among your loved ones.
On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.
Listen, O daughter, give ear to my words:
forget your own people and your father's house.

R./

- ❷ So will the king desire your beauty:
He is your lord, pay homage to him.
They are escorted amid gladness and joy;
they pass within the palace of the king.

R./

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

15:20-26

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet.

This is the word of the Lord.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Mary is taken up to heaven,
and the angels of God shout for joy.*

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

1:39-56

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? From the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

And Mary said:

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
and my spirit exults in God my saviour;
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me
blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is his name,
and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who
fear him.
He has shown the power of his arm,
he has routed the proud of heart.
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and
exalted the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich
sent empty away.
He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful
of his mercy – according to the promise he made to
our ancestors – of his mercy to Abraham and to his
descendants for ever.'

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



The Assumption of Mary

What does Catholicism teach about the assumption of Mary? And why is this event contemplated in the fourth glorious mystery? Let us begin by considering a few key points from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (see 966).

First, in discussing the assumption, the *Catechism* affirms that Mary did not suffer from original sin but was conceived full of grace. According to this doctrine, known as the Immaculate Conception, God's supernatural life dwelt in Mary from the very beginning of her existence.

It is important to emphasize that from a Catholic perspective, the Immaculate Conception is not simply about Mary. This doctrine, which has its roots in early Christianity, ultimately is about the mystery of Jesus Christ. God became man in Mary's womb. Since Jesus truly is the all-holy God, the Second Person of the Trinity, Catholics believe he is worthy to dwell in a pure vessel, a holy temple. Thus, it is fitting that God would prepare Mary as an immaculate dwelling place, full of grace and not stained by sin, for the God-man.

Mary's Death?

Second, the *Catechism* teaches that Mary was taken to heaven when the course of her earthly life was finished. The Church does not declare whether Mary died and then was assumed into heaven or whether she was assumed before she died. It leaves open both possibilities. However, the majority of theologians and saints throughout the centuries have affirmed that Mary did experience death—not as a penalty for sin but in conformity to her son, who willingly experienced death on our behalf. In support of this latter view, [John Paul II](#) said, "The Mother is not superior to the Son who underwent death, giving it a new meaning and changing it into a means of salvation."

Third, the *Catechism* affirms that Mary was taken body and soul into heavenly glory right at the end of her earthly life. One of the consequences of original sin is the corruption of the body (see CCC, 400; Genesis 3:19). If Mary was full of grace and did not suffer from original sin, it is fitting that she, like her son, would not experience such bodily corruption.

An Event of Love

Let us consider what a moment the Assumption must have been for Mary! In describing this scene, some Church Fathers spoke of Jesus himself coming back to earth to take his mother and bring

her to her heavenly home. More recently, John Paul II said that the Assumption truly was an event of love, in which Mary's ardent longing to be with her son was finally fulfilled. In fact, many paintings of the Assumption portray Mary rising in splendor on a cloud to heaven, received by the angels with trumpets and celebration, and reunited joyfully with her beloved son.

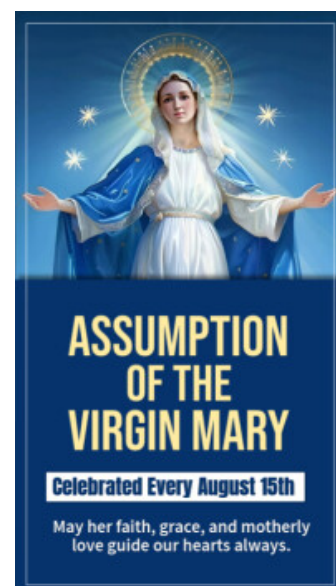
While artistic depictions of this triumphant event in Mary's life are often celebrated, not as well-known are the many pieces of art that portray her last moments on earth, just before her assumption. Yet such a depiction of the end of Mary's life—her moment between heaven and earth—can be found on one of the main doors of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

There Mary is surprisingly portrayed as falling, as if she were definitively letting go of all the trials and sufferings of this life and allowing herself to fall asleep. Indeed, she is letting go of life itself as she passes from this world to the next. It is just at this moment of abandoning herself into the Father's hands that the angels rush down to catch her and bring her up to heaven.

This depiction captures an aspect of Mary's assumption that offers us hope in the midst of our trials in this "valley of tears." This is the hope that God will carry us through our distress and lift up our heavy hearts. **So take a moment right now and ask yourself, what burdens, troubles, and worries are weighing you down? How can you entrust yourself more to God's loving care?**

With whatever we're facing in life, may we, like Mary, fall into the Father's arms, so that we may have a more profound experience of his supporting us in our present sufferings and raising us to himself—both now and at the [hour of our death](#).

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/the-assumption-of-mary/>



O Queen of Heaven, pray for us.