

## ASSUMPTION OF THE B.V.MARY: HOMILY

**THEME: IF WE CONTINUE RECEIVING CHRIST AS MARY DID WE SHALL ALSO GO TO HEAVEN**

**Objective: That we remain devoted to Mary and to receiving Holy Communion.**

“From now on all generations will call me blessed”, says Mary in Lk 1:48. Yes, we are calling her blessed, not only because she conceived the Son of God but also because she was taken to heaven body and soul and made Queen over all things (Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraph 966). This is what we call assumption.

Tradition has it that St. Thomas was not present when Mary was buried. When he came back he doubted her burial. So, her tomb was opened only to find it empty. It is said that Mary then dropped her girdle from heaven to St. Thomas as a proof of her assumption. There is a tomb at the foot of the Mt. of Olives where ancient tradition says that Mary was laid. But there is nothing inside.

Although there is no direct reference to Mary's death and Assumption in the New Testament, two cases of assumption are mentioned in the Old Testament, namely, that of Enoch (Genesis 5: 24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).

These references support the possibility of Mary's assumption. The possibility of bodily assumption is also indirectly suggested by Matthew 27: 52-53 and I Cor. 15: 23-24; Ps 131:8, Cant 3:6; 8:5 and Rev 12, Is 61:13.

There is uninterrupted tradition starting from the first century apocryphal book entitled *Transitus Mariae*, and the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, such as St John Damascene, Origen (3<sup>rd</sup> century), Jerome, Augustine (5<sup>th</sup> century), and Gregory supporting and promoting the popular belief in the Assumption of Mary.

This assumption became an established teaching in the Western, Eastern, Coptic and Oriental Orthodox Churches, from at least the late seventh century, the festival date settling at August fifteenth. Basing himself on this tradition and theology, Pope Pius the Twelfth, on first November 1950, in his apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, defined Mary's assumption dogmatically and infallibly.

The degeneration or decay of the body after death is the result of original sin. However, since, through a special intervention of God, Mary was born without

original sin, it is not proper that God would permit her body to degenerate in the tomb.

In the Book of Revelation (11:19), Mary is first symbolized by the temple of the Lord, for the Lord was present in her as he was present in Jewish temples; then she is signified by the ark of the covenant for she carried the Word of God in her womb like the ark of the covenant carried God's Commandments. This implies that the Old Testament temple and the Ark of the Covenant were just predicting Mary's arrival.

**In the same Book (12:1-2) a pregnant woman, representing the Israelites, appears clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. The sun is the divine glory that has enshrouded the people. The moon is the idol worshiped by pagan neighbors, enemies of Israel. This idol – symbol of evil – is overpowered and defeated by the holy people. The twelve stars refer to the twelve tribes of Israel and the apostles. The woman, that gives birth to 'the child', the Messiah, is the woman-Israel: Mary herself, representing the Church that bears Christ.**

The red dragon, ready to eat the child (Rev.12:3-10), is the embodiment of evil working contrary to the salvation of humankind.

As we celebrate and receive the Eucharist, the body and blood from the Blessed Virgin Mary, let us congratulate her upon her victory over evil and upon her assumption to heaven and thank her for the intercession she does for us. Like Mary, all the holy people will defeat the forces of evil like hatred, injustices, selfishness and death and join Mary in heaven, because, as St. Paul has said, “in Christ shall all be brought to life.” (1 Cor. 15:22).

Let us remain devoted to Mary and to receiving Holy Communion, keeping our bodies pure and holy so that we, too may go to heaven.

**N.B. Blessed=hallowed, consecrated, beatified: Beatification=the second stage in the process of canonization, in which a person is declared entitled to public religious honor. Blessed=consecrated=declared sacred or holy, set apart, devoted to the service or worship of God; hence=rendered.**