

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary | Part One of Two

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~

This Friday, August 15th, we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. It will be a holy day of obligation, so please treat Mass attendance with the same determination as you would Mass on Sunday. Masses at Holy Redeemer will be at 8:30am, 11:00am, and 7:00pm. Masses at St. Thomas will be at 8:30am and 6:00pm. Mass at Star of the Sea will be at 12:00 Noon.

What, you ask, is the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary? The Church has always taught that, like her Son, the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up body and soul into heaven (not just soul). There are a couple of differing traditions as to where this took place: Jerusalem or Ephesus in Turkey (much more likely); yet they both relate how, at the death of the BVM, her soul left her body, then returned a few days later to reenter and reanimate her body, and then ascended into heaven with apostles looking on. Along with Jesus, the BVM is the only other person who has died, who now exists with both her soul and body in heaven.

When I set out to write this pastor's column, I over did it, so this will be in two parts. Below are two highly abridged accounts of the Assumption of the BVM, both written by saintly mystics. The first is from Venerable Mary of Agreda (1665 d.) and the second is from Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich (1824 d.) If you look up the addresses below on the internet you will find much more than I have for you here. In Anne Catherine's visions you will find the Assumption nearly at the end. Enjoy.

In Christ, I Love You,



Fr. Thomas Nathe

Venerable Mary of Agreda

www.ecatholic2000.com/agreda/mystical/city.shtml#_RefHeading_Toc338962864 [Chapter 8]

On the third day after the most pure soul of Mary had taken possession of this glory never to leave it [the third day after her death], the Lord manifested to the saints His divine will, that she should return to the world, resuscitate her sacred body and unite herself with it, so that she might in body and soul be again raised to the right hand of her divine Son without waiting for the general resurrection of the dead . . . When the time for this wonder had arrived, Christ our Savior Himself descended from heaven bringing with Him at His right hand the soul of his

most Blessed Mother and accompanied by many legions of the Angels, the Patriarchs, and ancient Prophets.

. . . the most blessed Mary issued from the tomb in body and soul, without raising the stone cover and without disturbing the position of the tunic and the mantle that had enveloped her sacred body. Since it is impossible to describe her beauty and refulgent glory, I will not make the attempt. It is sufficient to say, that just as the heavenly Mother had given to her divine Son in her womb the form of man, pure, unstained and sinless, for the redemption of the world, so in return the Lord, in this resurrection and new regeneration, gave to her a glory and beauty similar to his own. In this mysterious and divine interchange each One did what was possible: most holy Mary engendered Christ, assimilating Him as much as possible to herself, and Christ resuscitated her, communicating to her of His glory as far as she was capable as a creature.

Then from the sepulcher was started a most solemn procession, moving with celestial music through the regions of the air and toward the empyrean heaven. This happened in the hour immediately after midnight, which also the Lord had risen from the grave; and therefore, not all of the Apostles were witness of this prodigy, but only some of them, who were present and watching at the sepulcher. The saints and angels entered in the order in which they had started; and in the last place came Christ our Savior and at His right hand the Queen, clothed in the gold of variety (as David says Ps. 44, 10), and so beautiful that she was the admiration of the heavenly court. All of them turned toward her to look upon her and bless her with new jubilee and songs of praise . . .

Amid this glory the most blessed Mary arrived body and soul at the throne of the most blessed Trinity. And the three divine Persons received her on it with an embrace eternally indissoluble. The eternal Father said to her: "Ascend higher, my daughter and my dove." The incarnate Word spoke: "My Mother, of whom I received human being and full return of My work in thy perfect imitation, receive now from My hand the reward thou hast merited." The Holy Ghost said: "My most beloved Spouse, enter into the eternal joy, which corresponds to the most faithful love; do thou now enjoy thy love without solicitude; for past is the winter of suffering for thou hast arrived at our eternal embraces." There the most blessed Mary was absorbed in the contemplation of the three divine Persons and as it were overwhelmed in the boundless ocean and abyss of the Divinity, while the saints were filled with wonder and new accidental delight.

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Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich

https://archive.org/stream/TheLifeOfJesusChristAndBiblicalRevelationsComplete/TheLifeOfJesusChristAndBiblicalRevelations_djvu.txt

As the Blessed Virgin felt her end approaching, in accordance with the directions of her Divine Son, she called the Apostles to her by prayer. She was now in her sixty-third year. At the time of Christ's birth, she was in her fifteenth. Before His Ascension Jesus had made known to His most holy Mother what she should say at the end of her earthly career to the Apostles and some of the disciples who should be with her. He told her also that she should bless them, and that it would conduce very much to their welfare and eternal salvation. He entrusted to her also certain spiritual labors for the general good, which being accomplished, her longing after Heaven was to be realized...

At the prayer of the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles received, through angels, an admonition to repair [go] to her at Ephesus. The journeys of the Apostles, so distant, so exceedingly remote, were not made without divine assistance.

When called to Mary, Peter was in the region of Antioch with another Apostle. Andrew, who had shortly before been in Jerusalem, but had there been persecuted, was not far from Peter. I saw them both on their way to Ephesus at places not very distant from each other. They passed the nights in those open inns that are met along the roads in hot countries. As Peter was lying one night near a wall, a resplendent youth approached him, took him by the hand, and bade him arise and hasten to Mary. On the way, the youth said he would meet Andrew. Peter, who had grown stiff from age and fatigue, rose to a sitting posture and, clasping his hands round his knees to support himself, listened to the angel's words. Then he stood up, put on his mantle, girded himself, took his staff, and started on his journey. He soon came up with Andrew, who had been called by the same apparition. After travelling some distance they were met by Thaddeus, who also had received a similar warning. They journeyed together to Mary, with whom they found John.

Jude Thaddeus and Simon were in Persia when they received their summons. Thomas, who was in stature thick and short and had reddish-brown or auburn hair, was of all the Apostles the farthest off. He arrived only after Mary's death. John had shortly before been in Jericho, for he often journeyed to Palestine. He usually abode in Ephesus, however, and the country around. Bartholomew was in Asia east of the Red Sea. He had already converted a king and all the royal family. Paul was not summoned. Those were only called that were related to or acquainted with the Holy Family.

Peter, Andrew, and John were the first to reach the Blessed Virgin's house. She was already near death. She was lying calmly on her couch in her sleeping place. I saw the maidservant looking very sorrowful in this and that corner of the house, also outdoors, where she prayed prostrate with outstretched arms. I saw also two of Mary's sisters and five disciples coming together to the house. All looked tired and exhausted. They embraced each other tenderly when they met. Many wept from mingled feelings of joy and sorrow at meeting on such an occasion. Then with deep emotion they drew near Mary's couch to salute her, though she could now say only a few words.

When the Apostles went all together into Mary's little sleeping chamber in order to take leave of her, they wore their long white albs and broad mantles. I saw that Mary sat upright, that the Apostles knelt in turn at the side of her couch, and that she prayed over each and blessed them with her hands laid upon them crosswise. When Peter stepped up to the couch, I saw that he had a roll of Scriptures in his hand. Mary then addressed them in a body, and did all that Jesus had in Bethania directed her to do. I saw also that she told John what was to be done with her remains, and that he should see that her clothes were divided between her own maidservant and a maiden of the neighborhood who came sometimes to render her service.

Peter here celebrated the Holy Mass with the same ceremonies as I had seen him first observe in the church at the Pool of Bethesda. Mary was in a sitting posture on her couch during the whole celebration. Peter was vested in the large mantle and the pallium, whose colors glanced from white to red. These he wore over the white robe. The four Apostles assisting him were also vested in festal mantles. After the Communion, Peter gave the Blessed Sacrament to all present. During this Holy Mass, Philip arrived from Egypt. Weeping bitterly, he received the benediction of the Blessed Virgin, and after the others the Blessed Sacrament.

Peter bore the Blessed Sacrament to Mary in the cross hanging on his breast, and John carried in a shallow dish the chalice containing the Most Sacred Blood. Thaddeus now brought forward a little incense basin. Peter first gave the Blessed Virgin the last anointing, just as that Sacrament is administered at the present day. Next, he administered Holy Communion, which she received sitting up without support. Then she sank back again on her pillow, and after the Apostles had offered a short prayer, she received the chalice from John, but not now in so upright a posture.

(To be continued next week.)