

WORDS FROM THE PASTOR
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
August 15th, 2021

Calendar:

- **08/20/21 Friday:** Friday Men's Prayer Breakfast St. John's: 5:30 Breakfast; 6AM Discussion and Prayer; 7AM Eucharistic Adoration; 8AM Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
- **08/21/21 Saturday:** 7AM Chanted Morning Prayer and Holy Hour; 8AM Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Breakfast to Follow

Words from the Pastor

8 Reasons Why the Assumption of Mary Is So Important by Stephen Beale: The Assumption of Mary, which we celebrate on August 15, is not just a Catholic extra or add-on to the fundamentals of the faith. It is a vitally important teaching with deep roots in Scripture and direct relevance to our daily lives. Here are eight ways it is significant.

1. We will share in Christ's resurrection: At the core of our faith is the belief, based on the biblical accounts, that Christ experienced a bodily resurrection from the dead and ascended, while still bodily form, to heaven. The Assumption of Mary confirms that this extraordinary reversal of death is not limited to Christ. If Mary can end up in heaven, body and soul, so can we who share in her humanity.

2. Our hope is for a physical resurrection: The whole point of the dogma is its emphasis on Mary's bodily assumption. Otherwise there would be no need for it. Arguing that Mary's soul went to heaven at the end of her earthly life is to claim nothing different than what happens to every other person who died in a state of grace. (Of course, those who aren't saints would have to stop in purgatory before entering into the fullness of heaven, but still the overall point holds.) Mary's assumption reminds us that salvation is holistic. God does not just save half of us. He doesn't just pluck the soul out of the husk of a sinful body. We are saved in the fullness of our humanity, body and soul. (Pope Pius XII makes this argument in his definition of the dogma.)

3. Heaven is for saints: One of the peculiarities of the Old Testament—at least from our perspective—is that it did not have a well-defined concept of heaven. When people died, even the righteous, they ended up in Sheol, the shadowy underworld that is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek Hades. The ancient Israelites did understand that there was a heavenly temple from which God reigned. This is beautifully depicted in Isaiah's vision. But they didn't necessarily view heaven as a destination for saints. Enoch, Elijah, and Moses were exceptions to the rule. The Assumption of Mary clarifies and confirms that the heaven of the New Testament is a place where the saints experience the presence of God. She is the first one to enter under the New Covenant. (We cannot be sure that the Good Thief went

directly to heaven.) In a way, Mary opened up heaven for rest of the saints, just as she opened up the earth to the fullness of God's Incarnate presence.

4. The final reversal of the Fall: The Church teaches that Mary shares in Christ's lot. This is based upon her role as the New Eve to His New Adam, which is evident in Simeon's prophecy and her presence at the crucifixion. Mary's Assumption to heaven is the final reversal of the evils of sin and death unleashed by the Fall.

5. Man is not meant to be alone: To be human is to live in relation to another. This is one of the first things Scripture teaches about man. In the Garden of Eden Adam was in paradise, presumably lacking for nothing, including the company of fellow creatures, yet it was 'not good' for him to be 'alone.' So God created Eve. Christ, who was perfectly human, 'needs' the perfect companionship of another human, especially in paradise, as theologian Matthew Levering points out in his book on the assumption. Christ is not a solitary savior. In His divinity he enjoys the communion of the Trinity. In His humanity he reigns from heaven with his Mother.

6. Marian veneration is Christo-centric: Mary's assumption means that there are no bones or tombs of Our Lady to venerate. This means that, contrary to the Protestant accusations, Marian veneration is particularly Christo-centric. Thanks to the assumption, it is impossible to think of her without thinking of her being in the fullness of Christ's heavenly presence.

7. Mary is uniquely positioned to help us: Although souls in heaven are not deprived of the beatific vision they are somewhat limited by not having bodies, according to St. Thomas Aquinas. He explains that souls without bodies are in an unnatural state, lacks perfection, and are denied the fullness of happiness. Even the beatific vision is affected in a way. Although God is seeing through the eye of the intellect, souls need bodies in order to see His glory reflected in other creatures, according to Aquinas. The Assumption of Mary ensures that she has none of these limitations. Having her body is particularly crucial for her given that it is a source of so much of her power: in the Incarnation God took flesh from Mary and it was through her body that He was born. The upshot of this is that Mary has everything she needs to see our problems—as well as our potential for holiness—and to help us grow into little Christs.

8. Mary's beauty is perfected: One further implication of what has just been stated above is that Mary's beauty in heaven is perfected. She is not a disembodied soul. She is not a spirit flitting about in paradise. The beauty that became espoused to the Holy Spirit lives in her fullness in heaven, as the vision of Revelation 12 shows us so well. This is one reason that the Church venerates Mary above all other saints.

In May of 2021 the Diocese of Fargo granted St. John Nepomucene an emergency loan for \$82,100 for the repair of its roof. \$60,750 plus 3% interest remains on this loan. Thank you for everyone's immediate and generous response to this unforeseen need! \$15,000 was received this week. **Thank You!**

St. John Nepomucene, St. Joseph, and Sts. Peter & Paul, Pray for Us!