

On the 8th day (Octave) after the Assumption of Mary, we celebrate the Memorial of The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Christians in good times and especially in difficult times, have always prayed to the Queen of Heaven and sung her praises. Mary, “the Virgin Mother of God, reigns with a mother’s (care) over the entire world, just as she is crowned in heavenly blessedness with the glory of a Queen” (ACR 1)ⁱ. These words of Pope Pius XII were addressed to the world in 1954, four years after he had defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

There can be no queenship for Mary without Christ the King. When the Angel Gabriel came to her and invited her to say ‘yes’ to God’s plan, Mary consented by saying “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). With Mary’s cooperation, Jesus was able to humble himself being born into poverty in Bethlehem.

At the end of Jesus’ life as he hung upon the cross at Calvary, Mary’s motherly role was extended to the whole church. “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (John 19:26-27). From that hour, Jesus asks all of humanity to open our hearts and welcome her as Mother of the Church.

In the Old Testament the mother of the king held an honored place. “She enjoyed a position superior to all the other women at court, for ... she sat at the right hand of the king adorned with a crown” (Hahn 747). Pope Pius XII explained that as the early “Christians reflected upon the intimate connection that obtains between a mother and a son, they readily acknowledged the supreme royal dignity of the Mother of God” (ACR 8):

- In the fourth century Saint Ephrem spoke of Mary’s honor in heaven bringing back images from the Old Testament. “How much more honorable and venerable than the throne of a king is her mother.” Saint Ephrem prays, “Majestic and Heavenly Maid, Lady, Queen, protect and keep me under your wing” (ACR 10).
- Saint Jerome, the biblical scholar who translated most of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Latinⁱⁱ, noted, “We should realize that Mary means Lady in the Syrian Language.”
- Saint Chrysologus is even more emphatic in drawing the royal connection, “The Hebrew word ‘Mary’ means ‘Domina.’ [Latin for Lady]. The Angel therefore addresses her as ‘Lady’ to preclude all servile fear in the Lord’s Mother, who was born and was called ‘Lady’ by the authority and command of her own Son” (ACR 14).

Many a saint has made the same point throughout the centuries about Mary as Queen of heaven and earth.

The church at prayer, “sings that sweet and ancient prayer called the Hail, Holy Queen and the lovely antiphons Hail, Queen of the Heavens, O Queen of Heaven, Rejoice, [as well as]...The Queen stood at Thy right hand in golden vesture surrounded with beauty; Heaven and earth praise thee as a powerful Queen; Today the Virgin Mary ascends into heaven: rejoice because she reigns with Christ forever” (ACR 30).

“Because the Virgin Mary was raised to such a lofty dignity as to be the mother of the King of kings, it is deservedly and by every right that the Church has honored her with the title of Queen” (ACR 25, Alphonsus Ligouri). I am reminded of an observation of Saint Therese of Lisieux, “There is no artist who does not like his work praised, and the Divine Artist of souls is pleased when we do not stop at the exterior, but penetrating even to the inmost sanctuary which

He has chosen for His dwelling, we admire its beauty” (Story of A Soul, Chap. IX).ⁱⁱⁱ Our recognition of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth is no less than praise for Christ the King of the Universe.

Happy Birthday KQHE in Fairbanks, whose call sign was chosen to invoke the blessings of Mary Queen of Heaven and Earth.

ⁱ vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_11101954_Ad-Caeli-Reginam

ⁱⁱ franciscanmedia.org/saint-jerome/

ⁱⁱⁱ littleflower.org/therese/words-of-st-therese/love-for-others/