

August 15, 2021 – Deacon Jim- The Assumption of Mary

There are a lot of Christian denominations that don't understand our devotion to our Blessed Mother. They think that Catholics worship Mary. We, of course don't worship Mary, but we give her a place of honor which when you think about it, it falls short of the blessings that God bestowed on her, but it's nothing less than she deserves. God gave Mary the gift of motherhood through the Holy Spirit. Jesus in turn gave us his mother when he was dying on the cross.

One gentleman in particular actually spent a good deal of time trying to convince Catholics that they were wrong about Mary. His name is Tim Staples. We was a pastor from the "Assembly of God" church.

Through his diligence in trying to convert Catholics he actually ended up converting to the faith himself. He since has written many books about the faith this one in particular is called "Behold Your Mother". In the introduction he writes, "When I was on the outside looking in at the Catholic Church, I truly believed the emphasis on Mary in Catholic Theology led to a loss of focus on Jesus. My aim, in speaking with Catholics, was not only to debunk Catholic theology's many myths about Mary, but also to point them back to what really matters for salvation: Jesus Christ.

The first chapter of this book is call "The Greatest of all Marian Titles" Theotokos, which is Greek for God bearer. The Church has always recognized Mary as the Mother of God, and she is also known as the first tabernacle of Christ here on earth.

Think about what a tabernacle is. It's where Christ resides in our churches. When he is present in the tabernacle we kneel, we bow or we simply cross ourselves, but when the tabernacle is vacant on the one day of the year during Lent the door to the tabernacle is left open and the eternal flame extinguished. We do not reverence the tabernacle when Jesus is not present. It's like a church with no people, it's just a vacant building, it's truly a church when the followers of Christ are present. The tabernacle is just a fancy box when Jesus is not present.

Mary was a living tabernacle because Jesus was present in her womb. For the nine months that she was pregnant she was the "Theotokos, the God bearer and that why she deserves the title "Mother of God".

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She carried the Son of God inside her. That's one of many reasons why she has a special place in heaven as Queen, and why she deserves to be honored by us as she stands beside by her Son watching over us as a mother watches over her children.

I'd like you all to take out your copies of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and read along with me #966. Just kidding, I went to a men's conference in Worcester several years ago, and a priest named Fr Larry Richards was giving a talk and he said "gentlemen I want you to take out your bibles and read along with me". "What no one has their bible with them? I bet the protestants have their bibles with them, you can read along with them." I had my bible in my backpack.

Anyway getting back to #966 it says;

"Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of sin, when the course of earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her son, the Lord of Lords and conqueror of sin and death." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians."

Mary's Assumption was a fulfillment of what began with the annunciation. "Hail full of grace the Lord is with thee". That was a declaration to Mary that she would be an integral part of our salvation. She was conceived without sin and she would be sinless, and her assumption would carry God's grace bestowed on her back with her to her Son in heaven.

Listen to these words I read in the Magnificat for today's Mass.

I don't know who wrote this but it's beautiful.

"The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven reveals what God begins, he brings to completion. In predestining her to be the Mother of the Savior, the Lord prepared her through the Immaculate Conception, which preserved her from original sin. Grace continued to expand and flower

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within her, giving her strength to stand by Jesus on the cross. She was preserved from the corruption of the tomb and enjoys already a bodily participation in the glory of Christ in heaven. From there, she prays for us – that grace may come to perfection in us, and that we may share in her glory with Jesus,”

The words that really stood out to me in this paragraph were “what God begins, he brings to completion”.

The Bible is a book written by man through Divine Inspiration it starts with Genesis which is the story of creation and ends with Revelation which describes the end times. It’s the story of what God began, he brings to completion.

The Assumption of Mary was the end of her story here on earth but it wasn’t the end of her involvement with us. As our mother in heaven, Mary has always been there for us. Praying for us, Interceding for us and even appearing when times have been dire and we were in need of her miraculous visitations.

She asked the children of Fatima to pray the rosary. When we pray the rosary we are not worshipping Mary but calling for her intercession and asking her to go to Jesus on our behalf.