

## The Assumption and Queenship of Mary

Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her 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. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 966.)

When Pope Pius XII asked the bishops of the church for their opinion on defining the doctrine of Mary's Assumption into heaven, they universally agreed that this doctrine, already believed and venerated in the Church for centuries and *implicitly* contained in the Sacred Writings as its ultimate foundation, should be defined as a dogma. Thus, on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII issued his Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, declaring the Assumption of Mary "**body and soul into heavenly glory upon the completion of her earthly life**" a dogma of our Faith, which we celebrate on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Pope avoided the word "**death**" and stated instead, "**at the completion of her earthly life.**" For centuries it was debated whether Mary actually died. Eastern Orthodox religions speak of the "**dormition**" (falling asleep) of Mary. While Scripture speaks of Elijah being taken up to heaven, it does not state whether that means he did not die. If anyone should be taken up to heaven without dying, surely it would be Mary who is greater than all other human persons because of her sinlessness and her most exalted vocation as the Immaculate Mother of God. Some argue that neither Mary nor anyone else should be exempt from death if Jesus was not. The more praiseworthy belief is that Mary, one with Christ in life, in utmost humility would likewise desire to be one with Christ in the death He freely took on as the penalty for **our** sins, for she was called to be co-redeemer with the Redeemer, the new Eve with the new Adam in the New Covenant for mankind's salvation. One can only imagine how Mary, while making **THE** Way of the Cross with Jesus, must have longed to die with Him. Since the Church Fathers are not clear on whether Mary was assumed into heaven while still alive or shortly after she had died, both views are permitted under the infallible definition of Pope Pius XII without minimizing the truth that **Mary was assumed into heaven, body and soul** without suffering the decay of the body and without having to wait until the end of time to share in Christ's Resurrection and glory as the rest of humanity must.

Pope Pius XII explains the relationship of the dogma of Mary's **Immaculate Conception**, defined December 8, 1854 by Pope Pius IX in his encyclical *Ineffabilis Deus*, to that of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary into heaven which he defined.

For these two privileges are most closely related to each other. Christ has overcome sin and death by His own death; and one who is reborn in a heavenly way through baptism has, through Christ Himself, conquered sin and death. However, in accord with His general rule, God does not wish to grant the full effect of victory over death to the just until the end of time shall have come.... Yet God wished that the Blessed Virgin Mary be exempt from this general law.

For she, by a completely singular privilege, conquered sin in her Immaculate Conception, and thus was not liable to that law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, nor did she have to wait for the end of time for the redemption of her body.

For the likeness of the Mother of God and the Divine Son in regard to nobility of soul and body--a likeness which forbids the very thought that the heavenly Queen should be separated from the heavenly King--absolutely demands that Mary 'must not be anywhere but where Christ is.' And furthermore, it is reasonable and fitting that not only the soul and body of a man, but also the soul and body of a woman should have already attained heavenly glory. Finally, since the Church has never sought for bodily relics of the Blessed Virgin, nor exposed them for the veneration of the faithful, we have an argument which can be considered as 'practically a proof by sensory experience'. (Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950, Paragraphs 4,5, 33.)

We understand that all of Mary's singular privileges--her divine motherhood, her Immaculate Conception, her Perpetual Virginity, and her glorious Assumption—point to her role as Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of Grace in the plan of salvation. Along with this role comes the proclamation of Mary's Queenship which Pope Pius XII established in his encyclical letter *Ad Caeli Reginam, To the Queen of Heaven* just four years after defining the dogma of the Assumption. He fittingly proclaimed that Queenship on the feast of the Maternity of Mary, October 11, 1954. Scripture speaks to Mary's Queenship at the Annunciation when the angel Gabriel announces that Mary's Son would receive the throne of David and would rule forever. Elizabeth addresses Mary as "Mother of my Lord" for in the Old Testament the mother of the king had great influence in the court. The Dominican rosary and the Franciscan crown as well as numerous invocations in Mary's litany celebrate her Queenship. Reference: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/queenship-of-mary/>

The proclamation of Mary's Queenship was not a new truth to be believed by Christians, since the title and the arguments for Mary's queenly dignity have been rooted in ancient documents of the Church and in the books of the sacred liturgy. The Queenship of Mary is a logical follow-up to the Assumption and is celebrated on the octave day of that feast. Mary deserves the title because she is Mother of God, because she is closely associated with Jesus' redemptive work, because of her preeminent perfection, and because of her intercessory power. As Saint Paul suggests, God has predestined human beings from all eternity to share the image of His Son. Who could share that image more than the Mother of the Son? If Jesus was to be king of all creation, Mary, destined to share His mission, was to be queen. All titles to queenship derive from this eternal intention of God. As Jesus exercised His kingship on earth in obedience to the Father and for love of mankind, so did Mary exercise her Queenship in obedience to the will of God and in love for all the living. As the glorified Jesus remains with us as our king till the end of time (Matthew 28:20), so does Mary, who was assumed into heaven and crowned queen of heaven **and** earth. If Christ as the new Adam must be called a King not merely because He is Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer, so, analogously, the Most Blessed Virgin is Queen not only because she is Mother of God, but also because, as the new Eve, she is Co-Redemptrix with the new Adam. Pope Pius XII

bids us approach our Queen and Mother in all our adversities, seeking strength, light, consolation, and above all, freedom from the slavery of sin. Let us offer unceasing homage and devotion to our Queen-Mother, honoring her feast-days, praying the Rosary, gathering in prayer to sing her praises in churches, homes, hospitals, prisons, anywhere where there is a need for her help. May Mary's name be held in highest reverence, a name sweeter than honey and more precious than jewels; may none utter blasphemous words, the sign of a defiled soul, against that name graced with such dignity and revered for its motherly goodness; let no one be so bold as to speak a syllable which lacks the proper respect due it. Reference: Pope Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam, To the Queen of Heaven*

One of the Church's most exalted prayers honoring Mary's Queenship is the Salve Regina which we pray after every rosary.

**Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,  
Our life, our sweetness and our hope.  
To thee do we cry,  
Poor banished children of Eve;  
To thee do we send up our sighs,  
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.  
Turn then, most gracious advocate,  
Thine eyes of mercy toward us;  
And after this our exile,  
Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
O clement, O loving,  
O sweet Virgin Mary.  
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,**

In a letter dated May 5, 1957, Sister Mildred Neuzil describes Our Lady of America's appearance as the Mother of Mercy, echoing the ancient Salve Regina hymn.

**Our Lady showed herself to me today as the Mother of Mercy. With her arms extended, her blue mantle affording a safe refuge for the sinner, she said, "I am the Mother of Mercy. Under my mantle I will hide my children. The justice of God will not reach them if they seek refuge [be]neath the protection of my mercy. My Son gives to me all those souls who come to me with confidence, calling upon my aid. Their salvation is in my hands. I will obtain for them the necessary graces to save their souls.**

**Come to me, poor, suffering and frightened ones. I am your Mother. Never will I forsake you. Only come to me with a wholehearted and loving trust. Place your souls into my keeping. I am that faithful Mother who never forsakes her children. Honor me by your confidence and love. This I desire and ask of you, my poor children. Do not deny the wishes of your Mother."**

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