

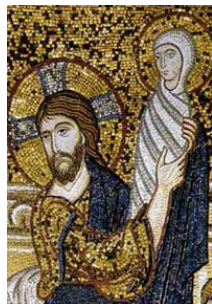
‘dormition’ as hers. In some of the writings of the Church Fathers we find Jesus himself described as coming to take His Mother at the time of her death to bring her into heavenly glory. In this way they present the death of Mary as an event of love which conducted her to her divine Son to share His immortal life. At the end of her earthly life, she must have experienced, like Paul and more strongly, the desire to be freed from her body in order to be with Christ forever. The experience of death personally enriched the Blessed Virgin: by undergoing mankind’s common destiny, she can more effectively exercise her spiritual motherhood towards those approaching the last moment of their life.”

The Dogma of the Assumption affirms that Mary, without experiencing the corruption of the grave even for a moment, immediately shared in Christ’s physical resurrection from the dead.

There is a beautiful icon in the Eastern Church. It is very common: Mary is laid out on a couch, having fallen asleep. She is surrounded by the Apostles, who came together from the ends of the earth. And our Lord is standing behind the bier, and He is holding what appears to be an infant in His arms. He is holding the infant tenderly; that is the soul of our Blessed Mother. And the Eastern Church believes that when Mary died, Jesus took her soul and brought her to the Father, and immediately restored her soul to her body, raised her body from the dead after the pattern of His resurrection, and

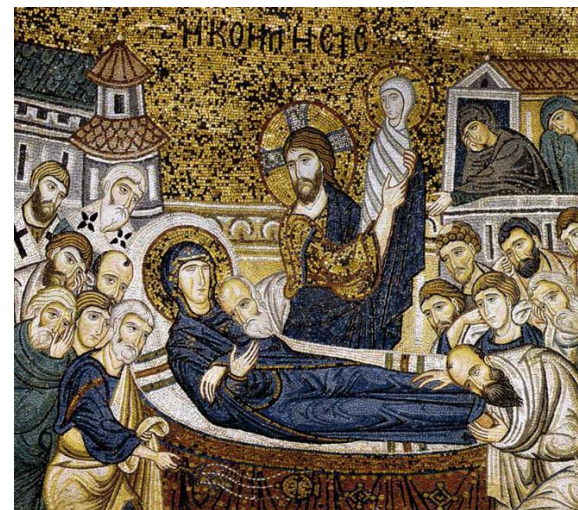
brought her, body and soul, into the Kingdom of Heaven. As tenderly as she carried Christ as a newborn child, He carried her into the Kingdom of Heaven. Another verse from the Song of Solomon has been used to describe the Blessed Mother in the mystery of her Assumption: “Who is this who grows like the dawn, as beautiful as the full moon, as pure as the sun, as awesome as an army in full array.” On this great Solemnity of the Assumption, let us turn to our Blessed Mother assumed into Heaven, and beg her for the graces that we need. The grace to have greater confidence, boundless confidence, in the power of her intercession and in her ability to intervene in our lives with saving grace. Let us beg her for the grace to teach us to do everything from the motive of the love of God, to offer all of our sufferings, especially our last sufferings and our death, in love for God and for the salvation of others.

As our Mother, Mary wants to teach us to practice the love of God in everything we do, even in our final agony and in our death. Finally, let us ask Mary, assumed into Heaven, filled with Divine life, to fill us with hope in our resurrection from the dead on the last day.... “Just as the Mother of Jesus, glorified in body and soul in Heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come, so too does she shine forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come, as a sign of sure hope and solace to the people of God during its sojourn on earth.”



*From the homily given at Irondale, Alabama, 15 August 2010, by Fr. Frederick L. Miller.
Cover: Dormition of Mary (mosaic), Church of Martorama, Palermo (12th century)*

Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



INTROIT (Apoc. 12. 1)

SIGNUM magnum apparuit in caelo: mulier amicta sole, et luna sub pedibus ejus, et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim. *Psal.* Cantate Domino canticum novum: quia mirabilia fecit. V. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. R. Amen. — Signum magnum ...

A GREAT sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. *Ps. 97. 1.* Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: because He hath done wonderful things. V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. — A great sign ...

COLLECT

OMNIPOTENS sempiternus Deus, qui Immaculatam Virginem Mariam, Filii tui Genitricem, corpore et anima ad caelestem gloriam assumpsisti: concede, quaesumus; ut ad superna semper intenti, ipsius gloriae mereamur esse consortes. Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum.

ALMIGHTY everlasting God, who hast taken body and soul into heaven the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of Thy Son: grant, we beseech Thee, that by steadfastly keeping heaven as our goal we may be counted worthy to join her in glory. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth God, world without end.

LESSON

From the Book of Judith, 13.22-25; 15. 10.

THE Lord hath blessed thee by His power, because by thee He hath brought our enemies to nought. Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth. Blessed be the Lord who made heaven and earth, who hath directed thee to the cutting off the head of the prince of our enemies. Because He hath so magnified thy name this day that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men who shall be mindful of the power of the Lord, for ever: for that thou hast not spared thy life, by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people; but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people.

GRADUAL (Ps. 44. 11, 12, 14)

HEARKEN, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear: and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty. All beautiful is the King's daughter as she comes in, robed in cloth of gold.

Alleluia, alleluia. Mary has been assumed into heaven: the angelic host rejoices. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Continuation of the holy Gospel according to St. Luke, 1. 41-50.

AT that time: Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by

BENEDIXIT te Dóminus in virtúte sua, quia per te ad nihilum redégit inimícos nostros. Benedícta es tu, filia, a Dómino Deo excélsio, præ ómnibus muliéribus super terram. Benedictus Dóminus, qui creávit cœlum et terram, qui te diréxit in vúlnera cápitis princípis inimicórum nostrórum; quia hódie nomen tuum ita magnificávit, ut non recédát laus tua de ore hóminum, qui mémoires fuerint virtútis Dómini in ætérnum, pro quibus non pepercisti ánimæ tuæ propter angústias et tribulatióem géneris tui, sed subvenisti ruínæ ante conspéctum Dei nostri. Tu glória Jerúsalem, tu lætítia Israël, tu honorificéntia pópuli nostri.

AUDI, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et concupíscet rex pulchritúdinem tuam. V. Tota decóra ingréditur filia regis, textúre áureæ sunt amíctus ejus.

Allelúia, allelúia. V. Assúmpta est María in cœlum: gaudet exércitus Angelórum. Allelúia.

IN ILLO TÊMPORE: Repléta est Spírítu Sancto Elisabeth et exclamávit voce magna, et dixit: Benedícta tu inter mulieres, et benedíctus fructus ventris tui. Et unde hoc mihi ut véniat mater Dómini mei ad me? Ecce enim ut facta est vox salutatiónis tuæ in áuribus meis, exsultávit in gáudio infans in útero meo. Et beáta quæ credidisti, quóniam perficién-
tur ea, quæ dicta sunt tibi a

passage from this world to the next that the Holy Father hesitated to call that passage a death. Although we know nothing about Mary's last day on earth, except that she was taken by her Son body and soul into Heaven, many holy men and women in our Church have held, and hold, that Mary, like Christ, and like each of us, experienced bodily death.

Eastern Christians call Mary's death her Dormition, her falling asleep. Catholics of the West call her death the Assumption. Those saints and Doctors of the Church, including St. John Damascene in the East and St. Francis de Sales in the West, explained the unique significance of Mary's death. First of all, Mary died to be in solidarity with Christ, and in communion with all her sons and daughters who must face the sad reality of dying. Second, her death, unlike the death of all of her sons and daughters, was not a punishment for the Original Sin. Because she was preserved from the stain of sin by the grace of her Immaculate Conception, Mary's death was a sharing in Christ's death for the salvation of her sons and daughters. Mary's death was an act of redemptive – co-redemptive – love.

In fact, St. Francis de Sales preached that Mary would have died with Christ on Calvary, she would have died with him of love, had He not prevented her from dying. Christ willed that she remain with His newborn Church, to strengthen His disciples in faith and charity, and to bear witness of the mystery of the Incarnation. According to St. John Damascene and St. Francis de Sales, Mary's death was beautiful. It was not surrounded by fear and anxiety, there was no struggle. Rather, when

it came time for her to pass from this life to the Father, she literally died of love of her Son. Our Lady freely, even joyfully, handed over her soul to the Father in the last act of love, an act of love like Christ's act of love on the Cross, when he cried out, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Christ had taught Mary how to die on Calvary, and when the moment came, drawing upon His grace, she freely offered her life and her death for us and for our salvation. Pope John Paul II described Mary's passage from this life in this way:

"The New Testament provides no information on the circumstances of Mary's death. This silence leads one to suppose that it happened naturally, with no detail particularly worthy of



mention. If this were not the case, how could the information about it have remained hidden from her contemporaries and not have been passed down to us in some way? As to the cause of Mary's death, the opinions that wish to exclude her from death by natural causes seem groundless. It is more important to look for the Blessed Virgin's spiritual attitude at the moment of her departure from this world. In this regard, St. Francis de Sales maintains that Mary's death was due to a transport of love. He speaks of a dying 'in love, from love and through love,' going so far as to say that the Mother of God died of love for her Son Jesus. Whatever from the physical point of view was the organic, biological cause of the end of her bodily life, it can be said that for Mary the passage from this life to the next was the full development of grace in glory, so that no death can ever be so fittingly described as a

COMMUNION (Luke 1. 48-49)

ALL generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me.

BEÁTAM me dicent omnes generatiónes, quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est.

POSTCOMMUNION

THROUGH the merits and prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by Thee assumed into heaven, may we, O Lord, who have received the sacraments of salvation, come to the glory of the resurrection. Through our Lord...

SUMPTIS, Dómine, salutáribus sacraméntis, da quæsumus, ut, méritis et intercessióne beátæ Virgínis Mariæ in cœlum assumptæ, ad resurrectionis glóriam perducámur. Per Dóminum nostrum ...

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The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

THE TEACHING of the Catholic Church is clear: Mary, the Mother of God, is the first member of the human race to benefit fully from Christ's victory over sin and death. Christ's victory over sin was realized in Mary's Immaculate Conception. By virtue of our Lord's sacrifice, Mary was preserved from inheriting the stain of Adam's sin. She was full of grace from the first moment of her conception, beautiful in soul and body, prepared by grace to be the perfect, pure response to God's words. These words from the Song of Solomon have for centuries been applied to Our Lady in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception: "You are altogether beautiful, my beloved, and there is no stain in you."



Christ's victory over death was realized in Mary's Assumption into Heaven. At the end of her life on earth, Mary, without experiencing the corruption of the grave, was taken body and soul into the glory of Heaven. St. Paul, in the First Letter to the Corinthians, explains that the Christian who dies in the grace of Christ will share in the glory of his Resurrection, when the Lord returns

at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead: "In fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then, at His coming, those who belong to Christ. And then comes the end, when He delivers His Kingdom to God the Father, after destroying every rule and every authority and power, for He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death."

The Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven reminds us each year that Christ's victory over death has happened in one human person, in one woman. In 1950, when Pope Pius XII solemnly defined the dogma of the Assumption, he simply said, "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." So mysterious was Mary's

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OFFERTORY (Genesis 3. 15)

INIMICÍTIAS ponam inter te et Mulierem et semen tuum et Semen illius.

I WILL put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her Seed.

SECRET

ASCÉNDAT ad te, Dómine, nostræ devotiónis oblátio, et, beatíssima Virgine Mariá in cœlum assumpta intercedente, corda nostra, caritátis igne suwccénsa, ad te júgiter adspirant. Per Dóminum nostrum ...

MAY our offering of due service rise unto Thee, O Lord: and through the prayer of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, assumed by Thee into heaven, may our hearts be set on fire with love and ever yearn for Thee. Through our Lord ...

PREFACE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

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IT is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God: and that we should praise and bless and proclaim Thee in the Assumption of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin: who conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and the glory of her virginity still abiding, gave forth to the world the eternal Light, Jesus Christ our Lord: through Whom Angels praise Thy Majesty, Dominations worship, Powers stand in awe. The Heavens and the hosts of heaven with blessed Seraphim unite, exult, and celebrate; and we entreat that Thou wouldst bid our voices too be heard with theirs, singing with lowly praise: — *Sanctus.*

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