



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AUGUST 15, 2014 A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

Celebrated every year on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary commemorates the death of Mary and her bodily assumption into Heaven, before her body could begin to decay a foretaste of our own bodily resurrection at the end of time. Because it signifies the Blessed Virgin's passing into eternal life, it is the most important of all Marian feasts and a Holy Day of Obligation.

History of the Assumption:

The Feast of the Assumption is a very old feast of the Church, celebrated universally by the sixth century. The feast was originally celebrated in the East, where it is known as the Feast of the Dormition, a word which means "the falling asleep." The earliest printed reference to the belief that Mary's body was assumed into Heaven dates from the fourth century, in a document entitled "The Falling Asleep of the Holy Mother of God." The document is written in the voice of the Apostle John, to whom Christ on the Cross had entrusted the care of His mother, and recounts the death, laying in the tomb, and assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Tradition variously places Mary's death at Jerusalem or at Ephesus, where John was living.



Icon of Dormition of the Mother of God by the hand of Matthew Garrett

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A Required Belief:

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven at the end of her earthly life is a defined dogma of the Catholic Church. On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII, exercising papal infallibility, declared in *Munificentissimus Deus* that it is a dogma of the Church "that 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." As a dogma, the Assumption is a required belief of all Catholics; anyone who publicly dissents from the dogma, Pope Pius declared, "has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith."

While the Eastern Orthodox believe in the Dormition, they object to the papal definition of the dogma, seeing it as unnecessary, since belief in Mary's bodily assumption, tradition holds, goes back to apostolic times.

Pope Pius XII, in the text explaining his definition of the dogma of the Assumption, refers repeatedly to the Blessed Virgin's death before her Assumption, and the consistent tradition in both the East and the West holds that Mary did die before she was assumed into Heaven. However, since the definition of the Assumption is silent on this question, Catholics can legitimately believe that Mary did not die before the Assumption.

Readings: Revelation 11:19a, 12:1-6a, 10ab; Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56

Other Names for the Feast: The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; The Assumption of Mary Into Heaven; The Dormition of the Theotokos; The Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary

LOVE CRAVES UNION WITH THE BELOVED

Love in its nature is an Ascension in Christ and an Assumption in Mary. So closely are Love and the Assumption related that a few years ago the writer, when instructing a Chinese lady, found that the one truth in Christianity which was easiest for her to believe was the Assumption. She personally knew a saintly soul who lived on a mat in the woods, whom thousands of people visited to receive her blessing. One day, according to the belief of all who knew the saint, she was "assumed" into heaven. The explanation the convert from Confucianism gave was: "Her love was so great that her body followed her soul." One thing is certain: the Assumption is easy to understand if one loves God deeply, but it is hard to understand if one loves not.

To a world that worships the body, the Church now says: "There are two bodies in Heaven, one the glorified human nature of Jesus, the other the assumed human nature of Mary. Love is the secret of the Ascension of one and of the Assumption of the other, for Love craves unity with its Beloved. The Son returns to the Father in the unity of Divine Nature; and Mary returns to Jesus in the unity of human nature. Her nuptial flight is the event to which our whole generation moves."

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, *The World's First Love*

What son would not bring his mother back to life and would not bring her into paradise after her death if he could?

-Saint Francis de Sales,

Sermon for Assumption

A GOOD HABIT

A Good Habit: Reflections from Professed Sisters Wearing the Holy Habit of Carmel
BY CARMELITE SISTERS



Our community was started in Mexico by our Foundress, Mother Luisita in the 1920's. Due to the religious persecution in Mexico at the time, it soon became not just illegal to wear the habit, but very dangerous. As a result, today our sisters wear the habit with deep gratitude and we hold dear the precious freedom to wear it in public.

Just last week, three of our 2nd year novices received the habit. Each time a new group of novices begin wearing the habit for the first time, our gratitude and appreciation for this gift are stirred anew.

Here are some reflections from our professed sisters on wearing the holy habit of Carmel....

"The wearing of the holy habit is both a blessing and a witness to the faithfulness of God's love for each of us."

-- Sister Jeannine Marie of the Precious Blood, clothed July 16, 1972

"For me, my Holy Habit is a marvelous symbol of the Mercy and Love of God who has called me to such a beautiful and lofty vocation — a friendship relationship with Him that gives meaning to every aspect of my life."

-- Sister Juanita of Jesus and Mary, clothed August 22, 2005

"The holy habit is a constant reminder that my life is to bring others to Christ...to live for eternity."

-- Sister Carmelina, clothed July 16, 1966

"A Carmelite without a habit is an incomplete Carmelite. It is part of me."

-- Sister Marinette of Saint Joseph, clothed July 1975

"The Holy Habit of Carmel is a visible reminder not only to others but also to me as I strive to give witness as His Spouse. And there is nothing that could fill me with more joy as a Spouse of Christ than to know that I am under Our Lady's protection as I go about daily carrying His sweet yoke and burden."

-- Sister Elizabeth Therese of the Most Blessed Sacrament, clothed August 21, 2000

"I love our holy habit and would not exchange it for all the most beautiful clothes in the world. It is an honor and privilege to have the freedom to be able to wear it. May it always be so."

- Sister Kateri of Mater Dolorosa, clothed Easter Sunday 1983

"The day of my investiture was a glorious day for me for that day I became a Bride of Christ, receiving our holy habit and our religious name."

-- Sister Maria Milagros of Saint John the Evangelist, clothed January 6, 1959

"Dressed as a bride, I received my holy habit during the Investiture Mass. We left the Chapel, were assisted by our sisters and returned clothed as Carmelites...a moment I had longed for since the 3rd grade, ten years before that day."

-- Sister Michelle of the Queen of Carmel, clothed January 6, 1967

"After wearing the holy habit for one year, I realize that I am not my own. Everyone who sees me is reminded that I belong to God from head to toe. Also, when they see me, they see every Carmelite Sister of the Most Sacred Heart!"

-- Sister Gianna of the Resurrection, clothed March 25, 2013

"As the bride wears her beautiful dress as she walks toward the altar to meet her bridegroom, so we wear our habit through our journey in religious life that leads us to meet Christ Our Lord at the end of our lives taking us by the hand...forever."

-- Sister Joseph Louise, clothed January 6, 1967

"One thing I love about wearing our habit is that whether I am walking down the street or walking the aisle at the store, every single person I encounter thinks of God when they see me. It might be the only thought of God they have that day! And that is what it means to be an eschatological witness...to be a walking billboard for heaven, a reminder that God wants a relationship with us FOREVER!"

--Sister Marie-Aimée of the Heavenly Father, clothed March 19, 2007

"Today the liturgy invites us to contemplate Mary, taken up body and soul into heaven. By a special privilege, she was enriched by divine grace from the moment of her conception, and Christ, who ascended to the right hand of the Father, opened the doors of his kingdom to her, first among human creatures. Now from heaven, where the Queen of the angels and saints is crowned, the Mother of God and of the Church is close to the Christian people before whom she shines as the "new and immaculate woman (who) mediated for the guilt of the first woman." -- **Saint John Paul II**