

Sunday Homily  
The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary C  
Rev. 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1Cor 15:20-27; Lk 1:39-56  
August 15, 2010

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Let's pretend that you and I find ourselves as patients in the hospital. We both need the same surgery to correct a very serious and life-threatening condition. We are told that there are two surgeons on staff who can perform this surgery; Dr. Smart who has two years of post-residency experience and is board certified. She is very sincere, and can quote chapter and verse from the definitive book written by the pioneer of this surgical procedure, Doctor Tradition. The other surgeon on staff is Doctor Tradition.

Both are surgeons, both are qualified, whom might you choose? I know who I would choose.

Today we celebrate the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Assumption commemorates Mary being taken by God into heaven, body and soul, at the end of her life on earth. This truth of Faith comes to us from Sacred Tradition; the teachings and practices handed down from the Apostles, whether in oral or written form, separately from but not independent of Scripture.

In a similar way that we may choose the experienced author and surgeon Dr. Tradition over Dr. Smart; so to may we choose to believe the experienced author of the Bible, our Catholic Church when it comes to the fullness of the teachings of the faith. The dogma of the Assumption of Mary, just like the dogma of the Trinity, is not formally defined in Scripture. However, in both cases we find scriptural evidence to support them.

**Scripture teaches us that the Assumption was possible.**

There are two examples in Scripture that clearly demonstrates the bodily assumption of saints. Enoch (Heb 11:5) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:1-13) were both taken up to heaven with their bodies. All things are possible for our God.

**Scripture indicates that it was likely.**

Mary's Assumption is consistent with Scripture as it is the logical result of her Immaculate Conception – the fact that Mary was born without original sin. Death and corruption of the body in the grave are the consequences of sin: “you are dust and unto dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19) Mary was born without the stain of original sin and remained sinless her entire life. Thus, her being assumed body and soul into heaven without the corruption of her body in the grave could be expected.

### **Scripture shows us that the Church has the authority to teach the faith.**

Even though Scripture tells us that the Assumption was possible and even likely, that wouldn't necessarily mean that it happened. On the other hand, the fact that it is not explicitly taught in Scripture would not mean that it didn't. The Protestant idea of Scripture alone; that all matters of faith could be found in the pages of Scripture, cannot itself be found in Scripture. What we do find in Scripture, is the establishment of an authoritative Church. The Church is called "the pillar and foundation of truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) And in Luke's essay on The Church, Jesus says, "Whoever rejects you rejects me." (Luke 10:16)

### **The Church in its authority proclaims that the assumption of Mary is a reality.**

In 1950 Pope Pius XII formally defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was not adding something new but was affirming what the Church had already believed since the earliest centuries.

For example, although two cities, Jerusalem and Ephesus both claim to be the place of Mary's tomb, no relics or artifacts of Mary have ever been shown to exist. And St. John of Damascus, in his 8<sup>th</sup> century homily on the Assumption gives evidence of the Tradition of the Church when he writes:

St. Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, at the Council of Chalcedon (451), made known to the Emperor Marcian, who wished to possess the body of the Mother of God, that Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles, but that her tomb, when opened, upon the request of St. Thomas, was found empty; where from the Apostles concluded that the body was taken up to heaven."

So as we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, we remember that Mary is not God, but she is the Mother of God. We do not worship her, for worship is only reserved to God in the Trinity, but we honor her above all others for she is God's greatest creation. It is by her dual role, as the Mother of Jesus and as our spiritual Mother given to us by Christ on the Cross, that we can have the confidence to call God our Father too.