

## The Meaning of the Assumption of Mary

A reflection on the readings for August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Rev 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab  
Ps 45:10-12, 16  
1 Cor 15:20-27  
Luke 1:39-56

These scriptures can help us understand Mary's holiness and how it affected her physically. They answer the question: How could she pass directly from earth to heaven without experiencing the corruption of death in her body?

Mary was the only human after Adam and Eve who was conceived without inheriting the Original Sin. We celebrate this on December 8<sup>th</sup>, remembering her "Immaculate Conception". God the Father arranged this so that Jesus the Son – who was completely holy and fully God – could reside within her human body during pregnancy and then live in a very holy family.

This gave Mary an advantage of grace that you and I do not have. Adam and Eve had it, but when faced with temptation, they chose to sin. God had given them deathless life, but they chose a life that included corruption.

As a new Eve, Mary faced temptation but chose to remain close to God. Thus remaining full of God's grace, she was able to live in complete holiness and never experience within herself the corruption of sin and death. When she reached the end of her time on earth, God's divine life raised her from the earth and immediately resurrected her earthly body into her glorified body.



To live in God's grace, we have to cooperate with it by saying no to temptation. Since we fail at this, Jesus died on our behalf so that we can get to heaven anyway, as long as we don't completely turn away from God's grace. He gave us the Sacrament of Baptism to free us from the inheritance of Adam and Eve's Original Sin. But we don't have to be satisfied with the minimum. God wants to give us much more grace!

We have the Holy Spirit. We have God's divine life within us so that we can do what the holiness within us wants us to do. Sinning makes us miserable. We don't actually like sinning, because

our true nature, made in the image of God, desires to do what is good.

God gave Mary a ministry that did not end when she was transferred from earth to heaven. Her calling was – and still is – an eternal vocation of sharing the gift of grace that she received from God. Thus, she is able to care for us like a real mother and help us to grow in our love for Jesus and in our desire to resist temptations.

Praying the Rosary can give us a direct connection to Mary's fullness of grace. It's not just a string of repeated words. Nor is it *just* a set of meditations on the life of Jesus. It opens our spirits to the Holy Spirit through the assistance of Mary's prayers. In the Rosary, our soul join hers in magnifying the Lord. When so magnified, his love draws others to closer to him, and thus we join Mary in her ministry of giving Jesus to the world.