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June 21, 2020

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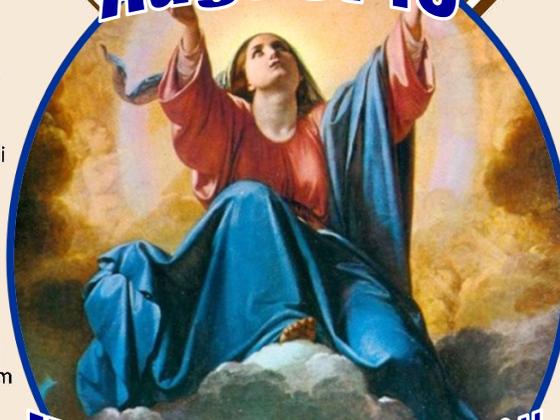


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August 15



FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

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Saturday Vigil: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Mornings: 7:30, 9:00, 11:00 a.m.,
Traditional Latin High Mass: 1:00 p.m.
and Sunday Evening at 5:00 p.m.;

Monday-Saturday in the Church: Noon

Carmelite Nuns' Cloister: 7:30 a.m.
(Chapel closed to the public on Sundays)

Confessions in the Parking Lot: Sat: 3:30-5:00



Mary: The FIRST Disciple



Next Saturday, August 15, is the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven. It is normally a holy day of obligation, but because it falls on a Saturday and because Archbishop Gomez' Dispensation is still in effect, you are not obligated to attend Mass. However, we encourage you to join us to honor the Virgin Mary at the 9:00 a.m. Mass that day. ~~~ **The following is an article by Fr. Billy Swann of Ireland:**



Of all the world's religions, none insists on the dignity of the human person more than Christianity. With our Jewish brothers and sisters, we hold that we bear the image of our creator. If that claim wasn't extraordinary enough, Christianity takes it a stage further and says that every baptized person is also a beloved child of God the Father, a temple of the Holy Spirit, and co-heir of Christ. This means that we have been adopted in love by the Father and given an inheritance that St. Paul describes as "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3). With the words of the Father in the parable of the prodigal son, God reminds us that because we are co-heirs with Christ, "all I have is yours" (Luke 15:31). Christians hold that this amazing inheritance as sons and daughters of God is enjoyed by us not only in the present but that its full benefits will also be enjoyed in a future preserved for us by God.

In the course of human history, this divinely conferred dignity of the human person has often been reduced or ignored—with tragic consequences. There are several examples we could mention, including the horrors of the Second World War. In the aftermath of that conflict, the world struggled to come to terms with the barbaric examples it had witnessed of man's inhumanity to man. In response, the United Nations drew up its Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In the Church, the Dogma of the Assumption of Mary was defined in Rome on November 1, 1950, by Pope Pius XII. To most people at the time, the Dogma had only to do with Mary and the confirmation of something that Christians had held for centuries beforehand, namely that Mary was assumed body and soul into Heaven at the end of her earthly life. But, perhaps without fully realizing it, the Church was making an extremely important affirmation not only about the dignity and destiny of Mary but also about the dignity and destiny of every human being. Only five short years after World War II had ended, the totality of human existence—its dignity before God and its future—was being asserted as a direct consequence of Mary's Assumption. It was a message the world badly needed to hear then, just as it does now.

**"Where She Has Gone,
We Hope to Follow"**

From the moment Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb, the relationship between the Lord and His Mother was unique. Mary's life and soul were profoundly united to her Son in a bond of love beyond all telling. Because of this great love and her faith in Jesus, Mary's life and destiny were united to His. As she shared in His life and suffering on earth, so she shared in His glory in Heaven. Mary's Assumption means that at the end of her earthly life, by the power of her Son's Resurrection, she was fully united to God in the totality of her existence, body and soul. In her, we see a woman of faith who has reached the destiny promised her by God, where her whole existence is radiant with God's light in the glory of Heaven. In Mary we see the great

An Article by Fr. Billy Swan of Ferns, Ireland

plan of the Father fulfilled, that all who love Christ and believe in His Resurrection will be joined with Him in that new life. As St. Paul teaches, this coming to new life in Christ would take place “all in their proper order...Christ the first-fruits and next, at His coming, all who belong to Him” (1 Cor. 15:23-24). From “all who belong to him,” **Mary is the First Disciple**, as well as the Mother of the Lord. So it is fitting that she should be the first to share fully in the Resurrection of her Son in body and soul.

At Vatican II, the teaching on Mary found itself within the Constitution on the Church, emphasizing that she is one of the Church and a type of the Church. This means that we look to her in hope for our future destiny in God and with God. **Where she has gone, we hope to follow.** Her present is tied to our future. In the words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “In the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity...the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as Mother of her Lord and as her own Mother” (CCC 972). Mary’s Assumption reminds us that God’s infinite desire is that we be with Him for all eternity. It was Jesus Himself who revealed this desire when He prayed: “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am” (John 17:24). Here is the God who loves our company, a Father who loves His children and wants us to be with Him forever. With the Feast of the Assumption, God’s Word beckons us: “Here in glory with me is where I want you to be. Here is your future and your fulfillment. Never take your eyes off the destiny of your journey in life and never depart from the path that leads here.”



The Assumption of Mary also speaks to the modern world of the innate dignity of every human being, body and soul. It speaks of human dignity being once again “lifted up” after a horrific time of war in the last century. God wants us to know that dignity, to cherish it in ourselves and honor it in others. He wants us to know where our dignity comes from and who has conferred it upon us. Mary’s glorification in body and soul is a sign that every aspect of our lives is important to God and is touched by His saving Spirit. The salvation Christ won for us is not just about our souls getting to Heaven in the future but about our whole existence being sanctified in the present in a way that leads to future fulfillment. By our whole existence is meant every part of who we are—our past, present and future, our bodies, our health, our minds, our wills, emotions, sexuality, our memories, our deepest desires, and all things human. All of these aspects of our existence have been redeemed by Christ in the present and will be fulfilled in the future.

This is why the events of the Holocaust were so horrific, where millions of people suffered abuse of their bodies, minds, and spirits, annihilating their futures on a mass scale. We are persons of soul, flesh, and spirit. When all of these aspects are recognized, held together, and respected, God’s saving power makes itself felt. Human dignity is “assumed” and lifted closer towards its future in the company of Mary, in whose life the seeds of resurrection have fully blossomed. This is why Mary is a profound symbol of hope and healing for body and soul in a broken world.

Mary’s Assumption takes us “back to the future” and urges us never to forget the destiny of the journey we are making. Mary assumed into Heaven is a window of beauty in which we see our entire existence transfigured and radiant with God’s glory—something already true in the present and which will be consummated in the future. The Assumption is an inspiration for us to protect human rights and defend human dignity, especially for those in danger of their futures being taken away through violence or neglect. In every age and time, dark forces try to reduce the dignity of the human person or convince Christians that their insistence on the sacredness of human life is too high. The Assumption of Mary holds before us the awesome truth of what the Gospel teaches and the awesome dignity to which God has raised humanity.

Questions About the Jewish Roots of Mary,



Question: Why did statues of Mary once bother you and why don't they anymore?

Brant Pitre: Because I was raised Catholic, statues of Mary did not bother me when I was young. They only started bothering me when I realized that in the book of Exodus, God explicitly forbids making a “graven image” (Exodus 20:4). They stopped bothering me once I studied a bit further and discovered that later in the same book, God actually commands the Israelites to make *golden statues of angels* and to put them on top of the Ark of the Covenant, right in the middle of the Israelite place of worship (Exodus 25:10–22)! In other words, according to the Bible, God does not forbid the making of *any* images whatsoever. He simply prohibits the worship of graven images of false gods—that is, idolatry. Well, that is precisely what Catholic and Orthodox Christians do *NOT* do with Mary. We do *NOT* worship Mary. We honor her and we ask her to pray for us. But we do not sacrifice to her as if she were a goddess. That would be idolatry.

As I show in my book, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary*, the worship of Mary was rejected by Catholics as being idolatry way back in the fourth century A.D., when a group of heretics known as the *Collyridians* were condemned for offering the “loaves” (Greek, *kollyra*) of the Eucharist to Mary as if she were divine. In other words, statues of Mary bothered me only because I didn't understand the ancient Jewish and Christian

distinction between graven images of false gods and sacred images like those of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant. The latter are meant to help Christians realize that when they enter into a church sanctuary today, they are, in a sense, entering into “Heaven on earth,” where Jesus, Mary, the angels, and the saints dwell.

Question: Why is it so important to understand the Jewish roots of Mary?

Pitre: The Jewish roots of Mary matter because Mary is not a doctrine or a dogma, but a person. Mary, like Jesus, was a Jew. If you want to understand her on her own terms and in the historical context in which she lived as a human being, you've got to try to see her through ancient Jewish eyes. When you begin to do so, you realize that Mary is much more than just an ordinary Jewish woman. As Mother of the Messiah, she is also the new Eve, the Ark of the New Covenant, and the Queen Mother of Jesus' Kingdom. The Jewish roots of Mary are also important because, since the Protestant Reformation, Catholic beliefs about her represent a stark dividing line between Christians—and the stakes are high. If Protestants are right about Mary, then over half of the world's Christian population—some one billion Catholics—are committing idolatry on a regular basis. If Catholic and Orthodox Christians are right about Mary, then Protestants—who represent a little less than half of the world's Christians—are missing out on what the Bible itself reveals about her.

As I write in my book, the key to unlocking the biblical roots of Catholic beliefs about Mary is found in the Old Testament. You can't just look at what the New Testament says about Mary in isolation. You have to read what it says about her through ancient Jewish eyes. Once you begin doing this, you suddenly discover that the portrait of Mary in the New Testament is like a tapestry that is woven entirely out of Old Testament threads. All the Catholic beliefs about Mary—her Immaculate Conception, her sinlessness, her perpetual virginity, her bodily assumption into heaven—flow directly out of what the Bible says about Mary as the New Eve, the New Ark of the Covenant, the Queen Mother, and her Jewish vow of virginity.

Answered by Dr. Brant Pitre

Question: Is there something about the Abrahamic faiths and Mary that we had best appreciate about now?

Pitre: Wow, that's a huge question. I would say that Mary, in a special way, connects Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to one another. For one thing, Mary herself was Jewish, and needs to be understood in her Jewish context. Moreover, Mary is also regarded by Christians as the first person to believe in Jesus. She is, so to speak, the first "Christian" disciple. Finally, although it may come as a surprise to many, Mary is also honored in Islam as *Maryam*, the spotless Mother of Jesus, who is regarded as a prophet. In fact, Mary is mentioned more times in the Quran than she is in the New Testament! In short, Mary provides an important but often forgotten link between the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. That's one reason that I wrote *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary* for anyone—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, atheist—who is interested in learning more about what the Bible says about the Mother of Jesus.

Question: Why do Protestants have a hard time accepting Mary?

Pitre: I think it's because for a lot of people (including some Catholics), the Catholic Church's teachings about Mary just seem to be downright *unbiblical*. Think about it: Where does the Bible ever say that Mary was conceived without sin or that she never committed sin? Doesn't Paul say, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)? How can Catholics make an exception for Mary? And where does the New Testament ever say that Mary was assumed into heaven? Why shouldn't I believe that she died and was buried, like all other human beings? Worst of all: don't the Gospels explicitly mention Jesus' "brothers" and "sisters" (Mark 6:3)? How can the Catholic Church teach Mary had no other children? Why would a *married* woman remain a virgin anyway? What does it matter? As I try to show in *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary*, if you only look at Mary in the New Testament, you will never see the biblical roots of Catholic beliefs. You've got to look at what the whole Bible—including the Old Testament—reveals. You have to try and see Mary through ancient Jewish eyes. Once you do this, you'll discover that all of the Catholic beliefs about Mary flow out of what the Old Testament reveals about her—not just the New Testament.

Question: How can Mary be the "Mother of God," since God created her?

Pitre: Because when Catholics say that Mary is the "Mother of God," they *don't* mean that she is somehow superhuman, or that she existed before God, or anything like that. Mary is a human being, plain and simple.

When Catholics say "Mother of God," what they mean is that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. Since Mary is the Mother of Jesus, and because Jesus is God the Son, then it logically follows that Mary is the Mother of God. In other words, what Catholics believe about Mary is based on what they believe about *Jesus*. In fact, in ancient Greek, the expression "Mother of God" (Greek *theotokos*) literally means "God-bearer." It comes straight from the first chapter of the New Testament, which says that Mary will conceive and "bear" (Greek *tiktō*) a Son, who will be called Emmanuel, meaning "God (Greek *theos*) with Us" (Matthew 1:23). Put these two Greek words together, and what do you get? "God-bearer" (Greek *theo-tokos*), or "Mother of God." In sum, if Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us," and Mary is His Mother, then according to the New Testament, she is the Mother of "God with us."



Meditation on Today's Readings



How do we encounter God in the midst of the trials and storms of our lives? Our readings help us reflect upon God's presence with us in difficult times. In the First Reading, we hear of the prophet Elijah, who had just boldly demonstrated God's power but is now terrified as he flees for his life, desperately seeking God's presence. In the Second Reading, we hear of Peter, after briefly walking on water during the storm, sinking fast as fear overwhelms him. At times our fears, sadness, or fatigue might severely test even our strongest desires to care for others and to serve God. Perhaps these are the moments when, as we encounter our weaknesses, we may open ourselves more deeply to God's strength. **Often with difficulty, and perhaps over a lifetime, we can learn to depend on God, who always extends a loving hand toward us, especially during the storms of our lives.**

Today's passage from St. Paul's letter to the Roman begins an extended reflection, in Chapters 9 through 11, of Paul's coming to terms with the mixed but generally negative reception of his fellow Jews toward his proclamation of Christ.

He was concerned for the Jewish people certainly, but also for the members of the early Church, who were both Jew and Gentile. His primary concern was that their Christian faith should always be grounded in God's faithfulness. So Paul rejected any notion that God somehow had abandoned Israel or God's covenant with them.

In Matthew's Gospel, Peter often serves as a representative of Jesus' other disciples, and of all who strive to follow Jesus. When Peter desires to imitate Jesus by walking on the water in the middle of the storm, maybe wishing to show how strong his faith is, he encounters his own limitations and his need to be rescued by Jesus. Jesus then says to Peter, with tenderness as well as with challenge, "O, ye of little faith." Jesus accepted the fragile and limited faith of Peter and the other disciples and loved them unconditionally. The early Church identified with Peter, as people with "little" faith. Their faith was not fully mature or as extraordinary as others' faith might seem to be. But they knew that their faith, however small or imperfect, was real and true. We might remember that our own "little" faith is cherished by God. God loves us as we are, and always seeks to form us toward a fully mature Christian life of faith.

As Catholic teaching confirms, especially in the Second Vatican Council, the Church shares with the Jewish people the tradition of God's faithfulness. We pray continually with and for the Jewish people as our sisters and brothers in faith.

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Mass Intentions

Believe in the Impossible

For the Week of August 8 through August 15, 2020

Saturday:

5:00 p.m.: Gaudencio & Angelita Lahoz, RIP

Sunday

*7:30 a.m.: Claudia Gutierrez, INT

7:30 a.m.: Kin Cheah & Florence Goh, INT

9:00 a.m.: Parishioners

11:00 a.m.: Vir Odone, B-day INT

1:00 p.m.: (Latin): Souls in Purgatory

5:00 p.m.: Roland de la Rosa, RIP

Monday:

*7:30 a.m.: Dominador Tugade, Sr. & T. Tugade, RIP

9:00 a.m.: George Watson, RIP

Freddy Grimm, 15th B-day INT

Tuesday:

*7:30 a.m.: Ruth Laigo, INT

9:00 a.m.: George Watson, RIP

Mark Holman, B-day INT

Wednesday

*7:30 a.m.: Felicisima Mascarenas, RIP

9:00 a.m.: Gabriel Anyanwu & Family, INT

Daisy Torres, RIP

Thursday:

*7:30 a.m.: Colett Lahoz, B-day INT

9:00 a.m.: Gabriel Anyanwu & Family, INT

Elliot Vasquez, RIP

Friday:

*7:30 a.m.: Fr. Ignacio Bach & Fr. Kevin McArdle, RIP

9:00 a.m.: McAllister Family, INT

Charlie Tittmann, 13th B-day, INT

Saturday:

*7:30 a.m.: Carmelite Community

9:00 a.m.: Paulus Santoso, INT

Fr. Matthias Lambrecht, OCD, INT

*Held at the *Carmelite Chapel,
215 East Alhambra Road.

The 9:00 a.m. daily Mass (Monday—Saturday) is celebrated outside for the public; it is live streamed on Facebook and posted later that day to our YouTube Channel.



Why did Jesus walk on water to the disciples in the boat? Did he want to scare them? No, His first words to them were "Do not be afraid." While they were being tossed by wind and waves, He showed them that He was not affected by the storm. If they had had faith, they might have realized that if Jesus was safe, they would be, too. We, too, must make that leap of faith, especially when we are afraid.

Peter seemed to be willing to take the leap as he stepped into the water. But when his attention was distracted by the strong winds, he began to falter. This is where we can apply the story to ourselves. Our growth in faith is not a steady progression. For every two steps forward, we may take one step backward. For example, we receive God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and rejoice in God's loving mercy, but later we fall back into sin. We ask God's help in prayer and when our prayer is answered, our faith in God grows. Then we become ill or wreck the car, and think that God has abandoned us. But isn't that a natural reaction?

It is natural to doubt God in times of trouble, but we are choosing to live in the supernatural when we become followers of Christ. Like Peter, we need to keep our attention on the Lord. As long as Peter looked to Jesus, he could walk on water. Only when he focused on the wind did he lose his nerve and begin to sink. In a similar way, we can lose our focus on the Lord. We see someone we love who is gravely sick. We make a serious mistake that gets us in trouble. We lose our job and have no leads to a new one. We are frightened by news of terrorist activity. These seem more real than faith in an invisible God.

These are the times when we must remember that true faith allows us to believe when it doesn't seem to make sense. Faith tells us that though apparently invisible, God is more real than anything we can see. Remember Jesus on the Cross saying, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The Father never abandoned His Son—and He will **never** abandon us.



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