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### Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Paradise)

This day we celebrate the Virgin Mary being taken into Heaven. The Virgin Mary has gone to Heaven body and soul, and she now enjoys the radiance and glory of Heaven. The Lord has given her a share in His own glory, and this glory shines not only in her soul, but in her body. The Virgin Mary is the New Eve, and in a way, she is a new Paradise into which the Lord entered this world.

This New Paradise began with Mary's Immaculate Conception. Just like the Garden of Eden, before sin entered it, Mary's soul was free from any sin. Whereas the Garden of Eden had a variety of plants and was very peaceful and beautiful, Mary's soul had all virtues planted within her soul and her soul was radiant. The Lord Jesus came down from Heaven and dwelt in Mary's womb for nine months, as the Lord dwelt in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

Mary as a paradise also pertains to the enclosed garden and sealed fountain found in the Song of Songs, to the Lord's own tomb that was in a garden, and the New Jerusalem, the heavenly mansions which the Lord has prepared for those who love Him. Mary's role as the New Eve does not just harken back to the old Paradise, in which Adam and Eve dwelt, but the Paradise that awaits us in Heaven.

At the Resurrection, the Lord Jesus was glorified even in His Body. The divine glory which He possessed from all eternity with the Father was seen in His Resurrection, much like the way that the apostles Peter, James, and John witnessed the Lord Jesus' glory at the Transfiguration. The Lord Jesus' humanity no longer hid His divine glory at the Resurrection, but allowed it to shine for the Apostles and the holy women to see. The Lord's soul and body could reflect this divine glory without the Lord Jesus losing any of His humanity.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is not simply a continuation of Mary's earthly life in Heaven. She experiences a new life now. It is a way in which the Virgin Mary participates in her Son's victory over sin and death. It is a way in which she radiates her Son's glory, even in her body. The New Eve, who once bore the Lord Jesus in her womb, now bears her Son's glory.

In the first reading from the Book of Revelation, we hear about the Woman about to give birth. The Child is the Messiah, and since there is only one Mother of the Messiah, the figure of the Woman is Mary. The Woman is clothed with the sun, meaning that she bears the Lord's

glory or is clothed with the Lord's glory. The Woman is also standing above the moon. Why is the Woman standing above the moon? For one thing, the moon and its phases represent what is changeable. The Woman is above that which comes and goes.

The Virgin Mary could be compared to the moon, because she reflects God's glory, just as the moon reflects the sun's light. The Virgin Mary, though, is above the moon. It is only half of the moon's surface which reflects the sun's light; the other half of the surface and the inside remain dark. The Virgin Mary reflects the Lord's glory in every fiber of her being. Imagine what the moon would look like if the *entire* moon would reflect the sun's light! It would be incredibly bright. The Virgin Mary reflects the Lord's glory in every part of her soul, heart, and her body.

What does this mean for us? First, we know that our bodies are far from exempt from pain and suffering now. We know the different effects that age and sickness can have upon us. Despite all that we must endure in our bodies, we can look to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary to have hope that our bodies can one day be glorified. Whatever weakness we have now will be changed into strengths. Whatever ailments we have now will be changed into light and life.

Second, our bodies may not be able to bear God's glory now, but our souls can radiate God's glory. Our souls can reflect the Lord's light. We want to reflect the Lord's light in every part of our being, not just on the surface. It is not easy to allow God's grace to penetrate our souls. Sometimes we are fine with our faith, but there are parts of ourselves which we want to keep away from the light. There are parts of our lives, or maybe certain emotional elements, which we want to keep to ourselves, and not give to God.

We need the intercession of the Mother of God to help us. The Woman in the Book of Revelation is also crowned with twelve stars, which may symbolically mean that she has a certain dominion over all the stars and the heavens. The Virgin Mary is Queen, and whenever we come to her in prayer, we can be sure that she will answer us, and that her prayer is efficacious. From her place in Heaven, the New Jerusalem and the New Paradise, the Virgin Mary is near her Son, pleading with her Son on our behalf.

As we approach the altar, we ask the Lord to give us hope in His promises in the eternal life to come. We ask the Lord to give us health and life. We ask the Lord to increase in our souls the beauty and radiance of His grace. We ask the Lord to make the Church radiant and beautiful, driving out any sin or stain. We put our faith in the intercession of the Mother of God, who is Mother of the Church, our spiritual mother, and our Queen, the Queen of Paradise.