

St. Joseph Marian Center

&
ALBANY DIOCESAN DIVISION OF
THE BLUE ARMY OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

WINTER 2004-05



ST. JOSEPH'S BLESSING – May the poverty of my sweet and suffering little Child be your riches; His signs and His tears the consolation of your days; the love of His adorable Heart your earthly treasure, your all; and the clear vision of His adorable and glorified humanity be your eternal joy and recompense. Amen.

Mary's Assumption?

By Fr. Patrick Greenough, OFM CONV.

ON November 1, 1950, in the presence of almost 1 million people and surrounded by 700 bishops, Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary as a divinely revealed dogma.

The second Vatican Council in its dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, reaffirmed the dogma by stating, "the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be more fully conformed to her Son the Lord of Lords and conqueror of sin and death."

Assumed into Heaven

It must be emphasized that the glorified body of the virgin Mary is not situated in a place that can be located. Heaven and those who dwell there are no longer bound by time and space. Her resurrection/assumption was not like the resurrection of Lazarus whereby the body of Lazarus was re-animated, but was a supernatural transfiguration of her human body.

Mary's Privilege

The glorification of the human body that will be granted to all of the faithful at the end of time was anticipated for Mary at the end of her earthly life. While Pope Benedict XII, in 1336, decreed that the saints who are purified from the consequences of sin, can obtain the glory of the beatific vision of God without waiting for the end of time. The resurrection of their bodies in their glorious transfiguration, however, will only come

about for all mankind at the end of the world. For Mary, however, the glorification of her body took effect at the end of her earthly life.

Did Mary Die?

Pope Pius XII did not address the question of whether or not Mary died. While theologians are still discussing it, the general opinion is that Mary died before she was transfigured into glory. It was fitting that she, who imitated Christ most perfectly and united with him in his suffering on Calvary, would also want to unite with him in his dying and going down among the dead.

According to the ancient liturgies and the names for the feast of the Assumption, *Transitus Virginis*, *Dormitio*, *Depositio*, they seem to indicate the belief that Mary died. Sin makes death an act to be feared. Because of Mary's sinlessness, however, death was not something to be feared but a time of longing and fulfillment when she would be reunited with her Son, body and soul.

The Scriptures

The encyclical of Pope Pius XII does not resort to any biblical text not to any oral tradition referring explicitly to the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary. The Church however, may not teach anything contrary to Scripture and the Scriptures say nothing contrary to the Assumption. They merely do not mention it explicitly.

There are of course numerous scriptural texts that refer to the resurrection of the body and union with God for those who believe. This of course refers to the Virgin Mary, for who believed and who followed Christ more [perfectly than her?

The Universal Faith of the Church

On May 1, 1946, Pope Pius XII asked the bishops of the world, “in your wisdom and prudence, do you think that the bodily assumption of the Blessed Virgin could be proposed and defined as a dogma of the faith and do you, your clergy and your faithful want this?”

Ninety-eight of the replies were affirmative. As Catholics, we believe that Christ did not entrust His Word to a book, but to a Church to hand down his teaching and he promised the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Catholics therefore, believe that the universal Church is preserved from all error in what it teaches and in what it believes, in such a way that the universal magisterium can only teach and the faithful can only believe as a truth revealed by God.

The Universal Witness of the Church’s Tradition

Cities, dioceses and countries have entrusted their safety to the patronage of Mary assumed into heaven for centuries. Churches and basilicas have been named in honor of the Assumption of Mary. Religious institutes have been founded and taken their name after the Assumption and the rosary that has been prayed for centuries has included a mystery concerning the Assumption.

The feast of the Assumption was celebrated in the Church liturgically as early as the 6th century. Clearly the Assumption had been in the mind and heart of the Church and the faithful for centuries before it was officially declared a dogma.

Testimonies of the Saints

St. John Damascene wrote, “It was necessary that she who had preserved her virginity without stain in childbirth should preserve her body without corruption even after death.”

In the first centuries of the Church, there was never any formal denial or rejection of the Assumption and there was never any veneration of Mary’s relics as there was of all the apostles. Every major doctor and theologian of the church, from St. Bonaventure to Thomas Aquinas to St. Robert Bellarmine to St. Francis de Sales, taught and preached her Assumption.

The Assumption of the New Eve

If Mary, the New Eve as the early Church taught concerning her, was associated at the foot of the Cross with the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, the New Adam, it was fitting that at the moment of her death, she should be associated with the victory of Jesus over death.

Mary, Mother of the Risen Christ

All of Mary’s privileges rest on her being the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Her Assumption relates to two articles of faith—the general resurrection at the end of time and her divine motherhood.



Mary uniquely and singularly participated in the redemptive acts of Christ from the incarnation of the Cross and resurrection to Pentecost. Therefore, it follows that she should participate in an immediate way in the resurrection of Christ without any delay at the moment of her death.

Eventually, the entire Church will know the same resurrection on the last day. Mary is the first, and her privilege is that her resurrection was realized immediately after her earthly life.

The Glory of the Human Body

In celebrating and teaching the Assumption, the Church exalts the true dignity and holiness of the human body. During the Holocaust, the human body was viewed as so much garbage to literally be hauled away and burned in the concentration camps.

Nowadays, the human body is being exalted by the media as the goal and purpose of human existence. The Assumption of Mary teaches us that at the end of time, the human body will become glorious not through exercise and diets, but by doing the Will of God.

—reprint article used by permission from the Immaculata magazine of Aug.-Sept. 2004

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

- ❖ Greet people with a “Merry Christmas” instead of “Happy Holiday”.
- ❖ Send only religious Christmas cards.

- ❖ Display religious symbols on your lawn and in your windows.
- ❖ Give religious gifts wherever you can.
- ❖ Welcome the Christ Child with a Happy Birthday candle and greeting when you gather with your family around your Christmas tree. Give him thanks and praise and ask the Holy Family to bless you and your family.
- ❖ Most important, attend Mass with your family and welcome Jesus into your heart when you receive Him in Holy Communion.
- ❖ Pray the Rosary daily. Respond to Our Lady of Fatima's constant request to obtain peace for the world.

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

“My Immaculate Heart is the way that will lead you to God” – by Fr. Austin Green, O.P.

With these words, Mary indicated to Lucia on June 13, 1917, the path that her life would take for the rest of her life on earth. She would not have the company of her dearest friends Jacinta and Francisco Marto, because her little cousins would soon be taken to heaven. Mary consoled Lucia by offering herself as the dearest companion on Lucia. “My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to heaven.” As we ponder these words now, 87 years after Our Lady uttered them, we see that Mary’s promise to Lucia has been fulfilled in a way that she could never have imagined. When she first heard them, she accepted them with a heart that trusted completely in Our Lady despite her personal fears and timidity about her own limitations.

This appearance of Our Lady in June was her second one made to the three children, yet the children were not totally unprepared for these apparitions. Consider what had happened in the previous year of 1916. An angel had appeared to the children three times, the guardian angel of Portugal, and had taught them first of all the need to pray. They memorized the angel’s prayer to the Holy Trinity and, after the angel had again appeared to them and urged them to, “pray very much,” they used to spend hours in adoration of the Holy Trinity, offering this prayer while kneeling or prostrate on the ground. Second, he taught them the need to sacrifice. When Lucia asked “How?”, he replied, “Make everything you can a sacrifice.”

In this way they learned the value of sacrifices offered in reparation to God and to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Third, he taught them the value of adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In his third appearance to the children he brought a host and also a chalice into which the host dripped blood. He showed the children how to adore Jesus, hidden under the appearances of bread and wine. It was after this that the children referred to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament as the “hidden Jesus.”

The heavenly Father in His Kindness prepared the children spiritually for the appearance of Mary. This is an instruction for all who wish a deeper devotion to Mary and to her Son, that we must develop our own spiritual life by prayer, by sacrifice, and by adoration of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

In her first appearance on May 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared as Our Lady of Light, and indeed she appeared that way in all subsequent appearances. She radiated light, a light that was brighter than the sun, but unlike the rays of the sun, her light did not hurt the eyes of the beholders, but rather attracted them to contemplate her great beauty in God. Mary radiated God’s light especially through her hands, and when she opened them the rays of the divine light, which enveloped her, also enveloped the children and they saw themselves in that light as in the light of God himself.

In reply to Lucia’s questions that Lady assured her that she would go to heaven, as would Jacinta and Francisco, though she added that Francisco must say many rosaries. She also told them to pray the rosary daily and to meet her at the same place and the same date on the following month.

The Lady of Light, faithful to her words, appeared a second time to the children on June 13, 1917. When Lucia again asked her what she wanted of her, the Lady replied, “I want you to come here the 13th of next month, to pray the rosary every day. Later I will tell you what I want.” When Lucia asked the Lady to take them to heaven she replied that she would take Jacinta and Francisco soon, but the Lucia must stay in the world a while as God’s instrument to make Mary known and loved. “God wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.”

This reply saddened Lucia as she thought of losing her two dear companions and cousins, but Our Lady comforted her, “Are you suffering a great deal? Don’t lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”

As Mary said these words, she opened her hands and the children were enveloped in the rays of God’s light. Jacinta and Francisco were in the rays that were directed toward heaven while Lucia was in

the ray directed toward earth. Thus Lucia understood that her cousins were to go to God while she would stay on earth. Mary also held in her right hand a heart encircled with thorns and Lucia understood that was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, outraged by the sins of mankind and seeking reparation.

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart is then, devotion to a living woman, to Mary the Mother of God, not an abstraction. If we ask why the special title of Immaculate Heart is important, Mary might reply, "Because the heart is the symbol of love and the seat of all other human affections, I want to be a 'heart' for you; with my Mother's love joined to yours I want to help you return in your limited way the unbounded love which God the Father shows you through His Son and mine, Jesus Christ." "I am the Immaculate Heart because through the gracious privilege of God I am without sin." This title of mine also reminds you how important it is to avoid sin in your own life. As a dark cloud shuts off the light of the sun so the cloud of sin shuts off the light of God's grace from you.

"By showing my Immaculate Heart surrounded and pierced with thorns, I remind those who love me to remove those thorns by your acts of reparation offered to my Heart. "You make this reparation in three ways:



- 1) Prayer, especially the daily rosary, which I recommend to the Fatima children and which through them I recommend to all, joining the rosary to meditation on the mysteries.
- 2) Making sacrifices for sinners, remembering that you, too, are a sinner and in making up for your own sins, using the sacrament or penance regularly, once a month, you foster that spirit of reparation.
- 3) Adoring our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, of which the communion of reparation on the 1st Saturday of every month is one concrete manifestation.

This imagined reply of Mary is based on what actually happened to prepare the Fatima children to live Mary's message to them.

We live in what has been described as a "culture of death." What is as counter cultural to that as devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary? When Mary appeared to Lucia and told her she was from heaven, Lucia's first reaction was to ask, "Will I go to heaven" Immaculate Heart?" Mary awakened in that young heart a longing for the eternal beauty of heaven. This longing is fostered and strengthened in the hearts of all those who practice true devotion to

the Immaculate Heart. They realize more deeply that they were made for eternal life.

Our age is also obsessed with a desire for material things and pleasures of the flesh. It is reported that Jacinta, wondering what were the sins that caused so many to fall into hell, asked Our Lady. And Mary replied that it was sins of the flesh which caused many to fall. What is the antidote to this but a spirit of sacrifice and reparation on the part of those who take Mary's words seriously?

"My Immaculate Heart is the way that will lead you to God." This simple program of prayer, sacrificed and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, offered in union with the intentions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, is the way that will lead us to God. How can we refuse?

—reprint article used by permission from the Soul magazine issue 2-2004

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE – At midnight, be on your knees with your family and all people to love and adore Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Make a New Year's resolution to appreciate the presence of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ at every Mass, and in every Tabernacle. Make another resolution to visit Him more often in the Blessed Sacrament.

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE OUR STATUE OF MOTHER MARY (WITH A RELIC OF THE HOLM OAK TREE THAT SHE APPEARED ABOVE AT FATIMA TO THE THREE CHILDREN), WE ARE AVAILABLE TO COME TO YOUR HOME, FOR HOME ENTHRONEMENT, OR TO YOUR SCHOOL, CHURCH, OR PRAYER GROUPS. CONTACT ED BREITENBACH AT 518 861-6979

*The beauty of a woman is not in
The clothes she wears
The figure she carries
Or the way she combs her hair.
The beauty of a woman
Must be seen in her eyes,
Because that is the doorway to her heart,
The place where love resides.
But the true beauty in a woman
Is reflected in her soul.
It is the caring that she lovingly gives,
The passion that she shows,
The beauty of a woman
With passing years only grows.*

FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

The cry of a Father's heart from
Genesis to Revelation...

My Child ...

You may not know me, but I know everything about you... Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up... Psalm 139:2 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered... Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image... Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being... Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring ... Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived ... Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation ... Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake... Psalm 139:15-18 For all your days are written in my book ... Psalm 139:15-18 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live ... Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made... Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb... Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born... Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me... John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love... 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you... 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father... 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could... Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect Father... Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand... James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs... Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with

hope... Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love... Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore... Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing... Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you... Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession... Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul... Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things... Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me... Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart... Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires... Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine... Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager... 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles... 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you... Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart... Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes... Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth... Revelation 21:4 I am your Father and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus... John 17:23 For in Jesus my love for you is revealed... John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being... Hebrews 1:3 And He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you... Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins... 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled... 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you... John 4:18 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love... Romans 8:32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me... 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again... Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen... Luke 15:7 I have always been Father and will always be Father... Ephesians 3:14-15 My question is ... Will you be my child?... John 1:12-13 I am waiting for you... Luke 15:11-32

...Love, Your Dad, Almighty God

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CHRISTMAS WISHES to all our readers. We thank you for your prayers and financial support. We are so very grateful to you for helping us spread the Message of Fatima. Without you we could not reach so many homes and meet the expenses for publishing these newsletters. We look for to your continuing support in the year 2005!



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*May the Christ Child fill your heart and
home with an early Peace and all its Blessings!*

A VERY "MARY-MERRY" CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TO ALL. "Merry" Christmas is too earthy. Let "Mary-Merry" Christmas add the heavenly brilliance of the angels and their joy to all readers of our Fatima newsletter in this our Christmas and New Year edition. Where in the Fatima message is there reference to Christmas? In the October miracle the Fatima children were given a vision of Mary with the Christ Child and of St. Joseph holding the infant Jesus blessing the world. May we rejoice in that blessing too. Also at Fatima, the angel spoke, "Fear not. I am the angel of peace. Pray with me." How similar to the Bethlehem angelic: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will."

In our depraved times mere children need to be taught to give God glory at that early age. Their peace and that of the world depends on their recognizing God and serving Him from their youth. The fear of Hell, too, must impress them. Otherwise as more and more violence in our schools and homes and elsewhere is proving, teaching peace will be too late.

Our Christmas peace and that of the whole world needs our return to recognizing the Divinity of Jesus at His birth, in Holy Communion, in the Blessed Sacrament and in our prayers. The reverence and awe of the Fatima angel before Our Lord in Holy Communion must be renewed as our expression of reverence and love. As you will read further, it has been stated recently, that "Fatima is just beginning!" Hopefully for all of us we are not too late. —Rev. Walter Baniak

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