

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Citizen of Heaven

In the name of the Father ...

The Blessed Virgin's greatest privilege is her divine maternity, that she is the mother of a divine person. All her other privileges are subordinated to this principal one, as ordered to it and flowing from it.

Of these other privileges, one pertains to the very beginning of her earthly sojourn, another to its end, both being the object of extraordinary papal definitions.

As pertaining to the very beginning of her earthly sojourn, by a special grace of God and in view of the foreseen merits of her divine son – or better, on account of the personal identity of her divine son – the Blessed Virgin was preserved free from all stain of Original Sin, that corruption of human nature which threatens all the progeny of Adam and Eve and which – with only two exceptions – they contract. Because Original Sin was a real threat, and yet she was spared – by prevention – from contracting it, hers was a true redemption.

The Blessed Virgin's Immaculate Conception was solemnly defined by Blessed Pope Pius IX in 1854: *Wherefore, in humility and fasting, we unceasingly offered our private prayers as well as the public prayers of the Church to God the Father through his Son, that he would deign to direct and strengthen our mind by the power of the Holy Spirit. In like manner did we implore the help of the entire heavenly host as we ardently invoked the Paraclete. Accordingly, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the honor of the Holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and for the furtherance of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own: We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.*¹

As pertaining to the end of her earthly sojourn, the Blessed Virgin was assumed body and soul into heaven. She who had experienced perfect redemption, being preserved from Original and all actual sin, could not, in justice, be allowed to undergo corruption – the punishment of sin which God inflicted upon Adam: *Because you have done this... by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*²

¹[Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus, Dec 8, 1854](#)

²[Gen 3:19](#)

The Blessed Virgin's Assumption into heaven was solemnly defined by Venerable Pope Pius XII in 1950: *For which reason, after we have poured forth prayers of supplication again and again to God, and have invoked the light of the Spirit of Truth, for the glory of Almighty God who has lavished his special affection upon the Virgin Mary, for the honor of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages and the Victor over sin and death, for the increase of the glory of that same august Mother, and for the joy and exultation of the entire Church; by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. Hence if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willfully to deny or to call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith.*³

These two singular privileges of the Blessed Virgin, then, united in being the objects of extraordinary definitions, frame her earthly sojourn and her principal privilege of the divine maternity.

And yet the two are not only temporally but theologically united. For by her Immaculate Conception, although the Blessed Virgin sojourned on earth, her soul was always united to – we might say in manner of speaking, in – heaven. For unlike all other progeny of Adam and Eve – excepting only her divine son – there never was a moment when her soul was not infused with grace, when her will was not aflame with *charity*. For it is *charity* which is the one thing necessary, which unites us to heaven even now, and will be the same in heaven. Thus, St Paul writes: *for our citizenship is in heaven*;⁴ we are fellow citizens with the angels and saints for – provided we are in a state of grace – we share with them the bond of their society, that society constituted to worship God in face-to-face vision.

Thus, from the very beginning of her existence, from the very start of her earthly sojourn, the Blessed Virgin was and always remained, a citizen of heaven. When her earthly life, then, had run its course – and Pius XII's definition is silent about whether she died or not – she was assumed bodily to where spiritually – not just in intention but in true citizenship – she had always dwelt.

Queen assumed into heaven: pray for us.

In the name of the Father ...

³[Pius XII, Munificentissimis Deus, Nov 1, 1950](#)

⁴[Phil 3:20](#): Paul writes - *ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει* – pertaining to the *πολις* or city; the Latin Vulgate has - *nostra autem conversatio in caelis est* – *conversatio* from *convorsor* (1) variously meaning to consort, abide, dwell.