

Homily based on the readings from August 15, 2025 (Revelation 11.19a, 12.1-6a, 10ab, 13-14; 1 Corinthians 15.20-27; Luke 1.39-56)

When we reflect upon the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – an event we commemorate today with Catholics around the world – it is only *natural* that our thoughts should turn to the specific details of what took place. To quote Pope Pius XII:

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. (*Munificentissimus Deus* 44)

In other words – like the Patriarch Enoch and the Prophet Elijah before her – at the end of her earthly life, Mary was *physically* taken up into heaven. Unlike Jesus, who ascended by his *own* power, Mary was *lifted* up by a force *infinitely* stronger than herself.

At a basic level, it is essential that we give witness to this fundamental tenet of our faith – which, for example, we affirm every time we pray

the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary. Nevertheless, in order to embrace the *fullness* of Mary's Assumption, we cannot just acknowledge the *reality* of what occurred – we also need to focus on the *reason* behind it. As with any of the teachings relating to the Blessed Mother, the most important factor is her *utterly* unique relationship with Jesus Christ. To quote Pope Pius once again:

[I]t seems impossible to think of her, the one who conceived Christ, brought him forth, nursed him with her milk, held him in her arms, and clasped him to her breast, as being apart from him in body, even though not in soul, after this earthly life. Since our Redeemer is the Son of Mary, he could not do otherwise, as the perfect observer of God's law, than to honor, not only his eternal Father, but also his most beloved Mother. (*Munificentissimus Deus* 38)

In other words, God would not allow his own mother to suffer death and decay, but prepared a place for her with the tenderness of a loving son.

In a sense, the Assumption of Mary is the ultimate fulfillment of the Fourth Commandment – the love and honor that is due *every* parent.

As people who bear the name of *Christian*, we are expected to *share* in the love Christ has for his mother. When our Lord was dying on the Cross, he entrusted his Blessed Mother and his Beloved Disciple to each other's care: "Woman, behold, your son!" – "Behold, your mother!" This relationship carries through to every member of the Church. To quote Pope Saint John Paul II, who had a profound and lifelong devotion to our Blessed Mother:

Mary is present in the Church as the Mother of Christ, and at the same time as that Mother whom Christ, in the mystery of the Redemption, gave to humanity in the person of the Apostle John. Thus, in her new motherhood in the Spirit, Mary embraces each and every one in the Church, and embraces each and every one through the Church. (*Redemptoris Mater* 47)

Mary's relationship with Christ is unparalleled, but she longs to share this relationship *personally* with each of us. Our connection with the Blessed Mother is not only expressed through reverence to sacred images and statues – through pious litanies and prayers – but through the primal love between a mother and her child. By the grace of God, the very arms that cradled *him* as a baby have been taken up into heaven. Those same arms are now beckoning *all* her children to follow her example, to join with her in the loving embrace of Jesus Christ.