



The Assumption of the Glorious Virgin our Lady Saint Mary

(The Golden Legend in Modern English)

The Unexpected Cosmology

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The Story of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

According to an account attributed to Saint John the Evangelist (though considered apocryphal), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary unfolded in the following way.

While the apostles had traveled to various parts of the world to preach, the blessed Virgin Mary was living in a house near Mount Zion. Throughout her life, she lovingly visited all the places associated with her

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Son: the sites of His baptism, His fasting, His passion, His burial, His resurrection, and His ascension.

According to Epiphanius, she lived for twenty-four years after her Son's ascension. He also notes that she was fourteen years old when she conceived Jesus, gave birth to Him at fifteen, and lived with Him for thirty-three years. Following His death, she lived another twenty-four years—meaning she passed away at the age of seventy-two. However, another common tradition suggests she lived for twelve years after the ascension, making her sixty years old at her passing.

The Angel's Visit

One day, while the apostles were scattered across the world preaching, the glorious Virgin was overcome with a deep longing to be reunited with her Son, Jesus Christ. She wept bitter tears because she missed the comforting presence of her Son, which had been taken from her for a time.

Suddenly, an angel appeared to her in a brilliant light and respectfully greeted her as the mother of his Lord:

“Hail, blessed Mary! You receive the blessing of Him who sent His blessing to Jacob. Look, Lady, I have brought you a palm branch from Paradise, which you should have carried before your funeral bier. Your soul will be taken from your body in three days, and your Son awaits you, His honorable mother.”

Mary replied, *“If I have found favor in your sight, please tell me your name. More importantly, I earnestly ask that my fellow apostles be brought here so I can see them with my own eyes before I die, have them bury me, and surrender my spirit to God in their presence. Furthermore, I beg you that as my spirit leaves my body, I will not see any horrible or wicked demon, and that no power of darkness may oppose me.”*

The angel answered:

“Lady, why do you ask for my name? It is great and wonderful. All the apostles will gather here with you today to perform the proper rites for your passing, and you will give up your spirit in their presence. He who carried the prophet [Habakkuk] by his hair from Judea to Babylon can certainly bring the apostles to you in an instant. And why do you fear the wicked spirit, when you have completely crushed his head and stripped him of his power? Nevertheless, your wish will be granted, and you will not see the fiend.”

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With that, the angel ascended into heaven in a blaze of light. The palm branch shone with incredible brightness, resembling a green branch whose leaves sparkled like the morning star.

The Gathering of the Apostles

At that moment, Saint John the Evangelist was preaching in Ephesus. Suddenly, the sky thundered, and a white cloud swept him up and dropped him right in front of the Virgin Mary's door. He knocked, entered, and respectfully greeted her.

Seeing him, the blessed Virgin was overwhelmed with joy and wept, saying:

"John, my son, remember the words of your Master, by which He made me a mother to you and you a son to me. Look, I am being called by your Master and my God. I am now paying the common debt of human mortality, and I entrust my body to your diligent care. I have heard that the Jews have plotted together, saying: 'Let's wait until the mother of Jesus dies, and then we will immediately seize her body and burn it in the fire.' Take this palm branch and carry it before my bier when you take my body to the tomb."

John replied, "*Oh, how I wish all my brethren the apostles were here so we could perform your funeral rites properly, as is fitting and worthy.*"

As soon as he spoke, all the apostles were swept up in clouds from the places where they were preaching and brought directly to the Virgin's doorway. Seeing each other gathered there, they marveled and asked, "*Why has the Lord brought us all together here?*"

Saint John went out and explained that our Lady was about to pass away from this world. He warned them, "*Brethren, keep from weeping when she departs, so the crowds don't get upset and say, 'Look at them—they preach the resurrection to others, yet they fear death themselves!'*"

Dionysius the Areopagite (a disciple of Paul) confirms this in his book *The Divine Names*, noting that all the apostles gathered for the assumption and death of the Virgin Mary, and each preached a sermon praising Jesus Christ and His blessed Virgin mother. Writing to Timothy, he said: "*As you well know, we, along with many of our holy brethren, gathered to witness the mother [god-bearing body] who received God. James, the brother of the Lord, was there, along with Peter, the most noble and supreme of theologians. And it seemed to me that all the heavenly hierarchies lifted her up according to her eternal virtue.*"

The Passing of the Virgin

When the blessed Virgin Mary saw all the apostles gathered, she praised the Lord and sat in their midst, surrounded by burning lamps, tapers, and lights.

Around the third hour of the night, Jesus Christ arrived with sweet music and song, accompanied by orders of angels, ranks of patriarchs, assemblies of martyrs, companies of confessors, and choirs of virgins. They arranged themselves before the bed of our blessed Lady, filling the air with sweet melodies. The events that followed are fully recorded in the aforementioned book attributed to Saint John.

First, Jesus said: *"Come, my chosen one, and I will place you upon my throne, for I have desired your beauty."*

Our Lady answered: *"Lord, my heart is ready."*

Then, those who had come with Christ sang sweetly: *"This is she who never knew the bed of marriage, yet she shall bear fruit for the refreshment of holy souls."*

Mary herself sang: *"All generations shall call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is holy."*

Then the chief singer sang out more beautifully than all the rest: *"Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, come and be crowned."*

And she replied: *"I come, for it is written of me in the beginning of the book that I should do your will; my spirit rejoices in You, O God, my salvation."*

In the morning, her soul left her body and flew straight into the arms of her Son. She was entirely untouched by physical pain or bodily decay.

Then the Lord instructed the apostles: *"Take the body of this virgin, my mother, to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, lay her in a new tomb you will find there, and wait for me for three days until I return to you."*

The Journey to the Tomb

Instantly, her body was surrounded by red roses (representing the company of martyrs) and valley lilies (representing the angels, confessors, and virgins). The apostles cried out after her: *"Righteous virgin, where are you going? Lady, remember us!"*

The saints accompanying her awoke to the sound of their singing and came out to meet her. Seeing their King carrying the soul of a woman in

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His arms and uniting that soul to Himself, they were amazed and cried out: *“Who is this coming up from the desert, full of delights, united to her friend?”*

Her companions replied: *“This is the fairest among the daughters of Jerusalem. Just as you have seen her full of charity and love, so is she joyously received and seated in glory on the right hand of her Son.”*

The apostles looked upon her soul and saw that it was so dazzlingly white that no mortal tongue could describe it. Three maidens present then removed the outer garments to wash her body. The moment they touched her to wash her, her body shone with such intense light that they could feel her by touch, but they could not physically see her due to the brightness. The light lasted the entire time they were washing her.

The Procession and Interruption

The apostles respectfully lifted her body onto the bier. John said to Peter, *“You must carry this palm branch before the bier, because our Lord has ordained you above us, making you the pastor and prince of His sheep.”*

Peter replied, *“It is more fitting for you to carry it, for you are the virgin chosen by our Lord. You ought to carry this palm of light to honor her chastity and holiness, you who drank from the fountain of eternal clarity. I will help carry the holy bier, and our brother apostles will walk around the body giving thanks to God.”*

Then Saint Paul spoke up: *“I, who am the least of the apostles and of you all, will help carry it with you.”*

Peter and Paul lifted the bier, and Peter began to sing, *“When Israel came out of Egypt...”* with the other apostles joining in the song.

Our Lord covered both the bier and the apostles in a cloud so they couldn't be seen, though their voices could still be heard. The angels joined the apostles in song, filling the entire region with marvelous sweetness.

Stirred by the beautiful music, the townspeople rushed out of the city to see what was happening. When some people told them, *“Mary that woman has died, and the disciples of her son Jesus are carrying her body and making the music you hear,”* anger flared up.

They quickly armed themselves and shouted to one another, *“Come on, let's kill all the disciples and burn the body of the woman who gave birth to this traitor!”*

When the high priest saw this, filled with rage and bitterness, he cried out: *“Look! Here is the tabernacle of the one who caused trouble for us and our ancestors.”*

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Look at the glory she is receiving now!" With that, he reached out his hands to grab the bier, intending to flip it over and knock it to the ground.

Right away, both of his hands shriveled up and stuck to the funeral bier, leaving him dangling by his hands, in terrible pain, weeping, and crying out. Meanwhile, the angels hidden in the clouds blinded everyone else so they couldn't see a thing.

The high priest pleaded: "Saint Peter, please don't abandon me in this trial. I beg you to pray for our Lord on my behalf. Remember when the royal chamberlain, who was the usher, accused you, and I stood up for you?"

Saint Peter replied, "We are right in the middle of our Lady's service and cannot deal with your healing just yet. However, if you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and in the woman who bore him, I truly hope and expect you will soon be completely healed and whole."

The priest answered, "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that Mary is his truly holy mother."

Instantly, his hands came loose from the bier, though the dryness and pain didn't entirely vanish right away.

Then Saint Peter told him: "Kiss the bier and say: 'I believe in God Jesus Christ, whom this woman carried in her womb and who remained a virgin after giving birth.'"

As soon as he said that he was completely cured.

Peter then instructed him: "Take this palm branch from our brother John's hand and touch the blind people with it. Those who believe will regain their sight, but those who refuse to believe will remain blind forever."

The Assumption of Mary

The apostles carried Mary's body to the tomb and sat beside it, exactly as Jesus had instructed. On the third day, Jesus Christ arrived with a massive host of angels, greeted them, and said, "Peace be with you."

They responded, "God, glory be to you, who alone perform great miracles and wonders."

Jesus asked the apostles, "What do you think I should do to honor and grace my mother?"

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They replied, “Lord, it seems fitting to your servants that, just as you conquered death and reign forever, you should also raise your mother’s body and seat her at your right hand for eternity.”

He granted their request. Archangel Michael then presented Mary’s soul to Jesus.

The Savior spoke: “Arise, hurry, my dove, tabernacle of glory, vessel of life, heavenly temple! Just as you never suffered the taint of conception, your body will never suffer corruption in the grave.”

Instantly, Mary’s soul reunited with her body. She stepped gloriously out of the tomb and was welcomed into the heavenly chambers, surrounded by a vast company of angels.

Saint Thomas had not been there, and when he returned, he initially refused to believe it. But right then, the belt (girdle) that had wrapped her body drifted down to him from the sky. Catching it, he realized she had been assumed into heaven.

Historical Notes and Visions

Everything recounted above is traditionally classified as apocryphal literature. Saint Jerome noted in a sermon to Paula and Eustochia that while these books are called apocrypha, they contain details worthy of faith and approved by saints regarding certain key events: the apostles being comforted and gathered around the Virgin, her dying without pain, her burial in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, Christ’s devotion, the arrival of the heavenly host, the persecution by the Jews, the shining miracles, and her assumption into heaven, body and soul.

However, many extra details—such as Thomas missing the event and doubting—are more imaginative fiction than strict truth. It is far better to believe that her clothes and vestments were left in the tomb to comfort faithful Christians.

Regarding her garments, a famous miracle occurred when the Duke of Normandy besieged the city of Chartres. The bishop placed our Lady’s coat on a spear like a banner and marched out bravely with the townspeople. Instantly, the enemy army panicked, went blind, trembled, and became completely disoriented. Seeing this divine intervention, the citizens rushed forward and routed their enemies. This violence displeased the Virgin Mary; her coat miraculously vanished and was later found sitting in the enemy duke’s lap.

Visions of Saint Elizabeth

In the revelations of Saint Elizabeth, it is recorded that she was once caught up in a spirit vision and saw a glowing tomb surrounded by light, shaped like a woman inside, guarded by countless angels. Soon after, the figure was lifted high into the sky by the angelic host. A man bearing a cross and endless angels approached, joyfully welcoming her and leading her into heaven with great music.

When Elizabeth later asked an angel about this vision, she was told: "This vision shows you that the Virgin Mary is assumed into heaven in both body and soul." Elizabeth learned that this assumption happened forty days after her soul left her body, and that Mary had lived exactly one year and a few extra days past Christ's Ascension. Mary herself reportedly told Elizabeth that all the apostles were present at her passing, buried her honorably, and that she was raised forty days later. When Elizabeth asked whether to keep this secret or share it, Mary replied: "Do not share it with worldly or unbelieving people, but do not hide it from devout Christians."

Theological Reasons for the Assumption

Saint Bernard argued that God honored the bodies of Saint Peter and Saint James so greatly that their resting places are revered worldwide. Surely God would honor his own mother's body on earth just as much, if not more, than the bodies of other saints.

Saint Jerome noted that Mary ascended into heaven on August 18 (the eighteenth before the calends of September). The church prefers to faithfully believe in the bodily assumption of Mary rather than over-analyze it. Furthermore, if others rose bodily with Christ during his resurrection, why not the Blessed Virgin? Many also believe Saint John the Evangelist was glorified in the flesh with Christ; how much more should our Lady, body and soul, be glorified by the Son who commanded us to honor our father and mother?

Saint Augustine supported this with three strong reasons:

1. **The Unity of Flesh:** Decay and worms are the curse of human nature, which Jesus never touched. Because Jesus took his flesh directly from Mary, her nature is likewise exempt from this corruption.

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2. **The Dignity of Her Body:** Her body was the throne of God, the chamber of the Lord, and the tabernacle of Christ. Such a precious treasure belongs in heaven, not in the earth.
3. **Her Pure Virginity:** Having given birth without losing her virginity, her body should remain completely uncorrupted, living eternally with the Son she bore, nursed, and raised.

The Triumphant Ascent

Gerard, bishop and martyr, described the heavenly reception: the heavens welcomed the Virgin while angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, cherubim, and seraphim sang praises, played harps, and escorted her to the throne of the divine majesty.

Saint Jerome marveled at how the heavenly chivalry rushed to meet the mother of God with brilliant light and spiritual songs, welcoming her into the embrace of her Son. Even hell and its cursed devils howl and tremble before her.

A Devotional Epilogue

A certain pious clerk used to pray daily to comfort the Virgin regarding the five wounds of Christ, reciting praises to her unbefouled purity. When this clerk grew desperately ill and neared death, he became terrified.

Our blessed Lady then appeared to him and said: “My son, why are you trembling with such great fear when you have so often brought me joy? Rejoice now yourself, and so that you may live in everlasting joy, come with me.”

The Monk and the Virgin Mary

There was a monk who was pretty carefree and lived a loose lifestyle, but he was deeply devoted to the Virgin Mary. One night, he set out to go indulge in his usual sinful habits. As he walked past the altar of the Virgin Mary, he bowed to her and then left the church.

On his way across a river, he fell in and drowned, and the demons immediately took his soul. Soon after, angels arrived to claim it, leading the demons to protest, “Why are you here? You have no claim to this soul!”

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Suddenly, the Blessed Virgin showed up and scolded the demons for stealing someone who belonged to her. The demons argued, “We found him dying right in the middle of his evil deeds!”

She replied, “That’s a lie. I happen to know that every single time he left or entered a place, he gave me a greeting first. If you think I’m being unfair, let’s take this up with the Sovereign King Himself.”

When they brought the dispute before God, He decided that the soul should return to the body so the monk could repent of his sins and mistakes.

Meanwhile, back at the monastery, the other monks realized matins (morning prayers) were running way too late. They looked for the sexton, searched down by the river, and found his dead body in the water. Not knowing what to do and completely baffled by what had happened, they watched in shock as he suddenly came back to life. He told everyone what had happened to him, and from then on, he lived out the rest of his life doing good deeds.

The Knight, the Devil, and the Virgin Mary

There was once a powerful and rich knight who squandered all his money on foolish things. He fell into such deep poverty that a man who used to give away grand gifts was now forced to beg for scraps. He had a very chaste wife who was deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A major religious holiday was coming up, an occasion where the knight usually gave away many gifts. Having nothing to give, he felt utterly ashamed. Overwhelmed by grief and crying heavily, he wandered off into the wilderness so he could miss the feast, mourn his bad luck, and avoid public humiliation.

Suddenly, a terrifying knight on a horse appeared, approached him, and asked why he was so miserable. The knight told him the whole story from start to finish.

The creepy knight offered a deal: “If you obey me just a little bit, you’ll have more wealth and glory than you ever did before.”

The knight agreed, promising the devil he would do whatever he asked if he delivered on his promise.

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The devil told him, “Go back home, and you’ll find a huge stash of gold, silver, and precious stones in a specific spot. In exchange, all you have to do is bring your wife to me on a certain day.”

The knight hurried home and found everything just as the devil had promised. He bought a mansion, started handing out lavish gifts, recovered his family estate, and rehired his servants.

When the appointed day arrived to hand his wife over to the fiend, he said to her, “Let’s go for a horseback ride. You need to come with me to a place far away.”

Terrified and trembling, she didn’t dare disobey her husband. She quietly prayed to the Blessed Virgin for protection and rode out behind him. After riding for a while, they passed a church. She got down off her horse, went inside, and her husband waited outside.

As she was praying intensely and devoutly to the Blessed Virgin Mary inside the church, she suddenly fell asleep. The glorious Virgin took on the exact appearance of the lady, walked out of the altar and out of the church, and mounted the knight’s horse.

The knight, completely unaware that his real wife was sleeping safely inside the church, assumed the woman on the horse was his wife and kept riding.

When they reached the designated spot, the devil rushed in furiously. But as he got close, he suddenly started shaking and trembling wildly, refusing to come any closer.

He yelled at the knight, “You total traitor! Why did you trick me and give me pain in return for the huge favor I did you? I told you to bring *your wife*, but you brought the Mother of God! I wanted your wife, and you brought me Mary. Your wife has caused me a lot of trouble, and I wanted revenge on her. Instead, you brought her here to torture me and send me straight to hell!”

Hearing this, the knight was completely stunned, couldn’t stop crying, and was too terrified and amazed to speak.

Then the Blessed Mary said, “You wicked spirit, why on earth did you try to harass and annoy my devoted servant? You won’t get away with this. I sentence you to descend straight into hell, and from now on, you are forbidden to ever try and mess with anyone who calls upon me.”

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With a loud howl, the devil vanished. The knight jumped off his horse and threw himself down at Mary's feet in prayer. The Virgin scolded him gently and told him to go back to his wife, who was still sleeping in the church, and to throw away all the devil's wealth.

He rode back, found his wife still asleep, woke her up, and told her everything that had happened. Once they got home, they got rid of all the devil's riches, lived a life dedicated to loving our Lady, and were later blessed with plenty of legitimate wealth that the Virgin provided for them.

The Sinner, the Devil, and the Heavenly Court

There was once a man whose soul was caught up in a vision before God's judgment seat because he had sinned a lot. The devil was right there, arguing, "You have no claim to this soul; it belongs to me because I have a legally binding contract."

God asked him, "Where is your contract?"

The devil answered, "I have a contract that *you* spoke with your own mouth and made to last forever. You said that the very hour they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would die. This man is a descendant of the people who ate that forbidden food. By the terms of this public contract, he legally belongs to me and must be judged in my favor."

Then God said, "Let the man speak," but the man said nothing.

The devil chimed in again, "The soul is mine, because even if he did some good deeds, his wicked deeds outweigh the good by a landslide."

God didn't want to hand down a final sentence right away, so He gave the man an eight-day extension to appear before Him again and account for everything.

As the man walked away from God's presence, sorrowful and trembling, he met a stranger who asked why he was so upset. The man told him the whole story.

The stranger said, "Don't worry or be afraid, I'll fiercely help you with the first issue."

When the man asked his name, he replied, "Truth."

Shortly after, the man ran into another figure who promised to help him with the second issue. When asked his name, he said his name was "Righteousness."

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On the eighth day, the man stood trial before the judge again. The devil brought up his first argument about the original contract.

Truth stepped up and answered, “We all know there are two types of death: physical and spiritual. The contract the devil is talking about doesn’t say anything about the death of hell; it talks about physical death. Obviously, everyone falls under that sentence—everyone’s body dies, but that’s not eternal damnation. While physical death is permanent, spiritual death was canceled out by the death of Jesus Christ.”

Realizing he had lost the first argument, the devil brought up his second point about the man’s sins outweighing his good deeds.

Righteousness stepped up and countered, “Even though he served you [the devil] for many years, common sense rules against you here. Reason always protested because he was forced to serve such a cruel master.”

However, the man had no helper for the devil’s third objection.

God commanded, “Bring out the scales, and let all his good and evil deeds be weighed.”

At that moment, Truth and Righteousness whispered to the sinner, “Quick, call out with all your heart to the Lady of Mercy who is sitting right next to the Judge, and beg her to help you!”

The man did just that. The Blessed Virgin Mary stepped forward to help him and placed her hand on the side of the scales that had only a few good deeds on it. The devil tried desperately to pull the scales down on his side, but the Mother of Mercy won out, saved the day, and delivered the sinner.

After that, the man came back to his senses in the real world and completely turned his life around.

The Boy in the Furnace

Back around 527 AD in the city of Bourges, during an Easter Sunday communion, a Jewish boy joined the other children at the church altar and took the sacrament. When he went home, his father asked him where he’d been. The boy replied that he was at school and had taken part in the mass. Enraged and out of his mind, the father grabbed the boy and threw him straight into a burning furnace.

Instantly, the Virgin Mary appeared—looking just like the statue the boy had seen standing on the altar—and shielded him from the flames so he

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didn't get hurt at all. Hearing the mother's frantic screams, a crowd of Christians and Jews rushed over. They pulled the unharmed boy out of the furnace and asked how he managed to survive. He answered, "That honored lady who stood on the altar came, helped me, and pushed all the fire away." Realizing this was a miracle involving the image of Our Lady, the Christians grabbed the father, threw him into the furnace, and he was burned to ashes right away.

The Monks and the Devils

Before dawn one morning, some monks were hanging out by a river, gossiping and chatting idly. Suddenly, they heard the loud, fast splashing of oars. The monks called out, "Who's there?" A voice replied, "We are demons taking the soul of Ebronien—provost of the French king's household and a runaway monk from the monastery of Saint Gall—down to hell."

Terrified, the monks shouted, "Saint Mary, pray for us!" The demons shouted back, "Good thing you called on Mary! Otherwise, we would have torn you apart and drowned you for wasting time with your idle gossip." With that, the monks hurried back to their convent, and the demons headed down to hell.

The Haunted Woman

A woman was being tormented by a demon who kept showing up in human form to harass her. She tried everything to get rid of him—holy water and various other remedies—but he wouldn't stop coming back. Finally, a holy man gave her some advice: the next time the demon showed up, she should raise her hands to heaven and cry, "Saint Mary, help me!"

She did just that, and the demon panicked and fled as if he'd been struck by a stone. Standing a safe distance away, he cursed, "A plague on whoever taught you that!" and vanished for good, never to bother her again.

The Assumption of Our Blessed Lady

The story of how the holy Virgin Mary was assumed into heaven comes from a traditional sermon compiled from various sayings of the saints. It is read solemnly in many churches and contains everything I've been able

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to find from the early holy fathers about her departure from this life, which I've gathered here to praise and honor her.

Saint Cosmas, surnamed Vestitor, says he learned from his predecessors—things that ought not to be forgotten—that Jesus Christ planned the end of His mother's life. He sent an angel, as was his custom, to warn her beforehand about her passing so she wouldn't be caught off guard or distressed.

When Jesus was still on earth, Mary had asked him face-to-face that she might never have to look upon an evil spirit. So, sending the angel ahead, the Lord said:

"It's time to take my mother with me. Just as you filled the earth with joy, bring joy to heaven now. Open up my Father's mansions, comfort the spirits of my saints, and don't be sad to leave this corruptible world behind for the heavenly palace. Mother, don't be afraid to leave your flesh behind; you are called to eternal life, unfailing joy, peaceful rest, unfading light, unending day, and indescribable glory. Come to me—your son and the maker of all things—because I am eternal life, unchanging love, unshakeable home, endless light, and boundless goodness. Give back to the earth what belongs to it, without fear. No one will ever snatch you from my hands, for the ends of the earth are mine. Hand over your body to me, for I placed my very divinity inside you. Death will never have the victory over you, because you carried the true Light; destruction will never surround you, for you were chosen to be my vessel. Come straight to the one who was born of you, to receive the rewards of a mother's womb and the repayment for the milk you gave me as food. Hurry now, and join me—your only son. I know you won't hesitate out of love for any other child, since I am the one who proves you are both virgin and mother.

I am your wall of unshakeable faith, your arch of salvation, a bridge for those crossing over, a staff for the weak, a ladder for those climbing up to heaven, and the kindest advocate for sinners. I will bring the apostles to you so they can bury you with their own hands. It's only right that my spiritual children—to whom I gave the Holy Spirit—should take care of your marvelous departure from this earth."

After the angel finished, he handed our Lady a palm branch from paradise as a symbol of her victory over the corruption of death, along with garments of immortality. With that, he ascended back into heaven.

Then the Blessed Virgin Mary gathered her neighbors and told them: *"I want you to know for certain that I am at the end of my time on earth and will be leaving very soon. Stay awake and watch, because when anyone passes from this world, both good angels and wicked spirits show up."*

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Hearing this, they began to weep and said: *"You—who are afraid of evil spirits? You who deserved to be the mother of the Creator, who gave birth to the one who robbed hell, and whose seat is higher than the Cherubim and Seraphim? What will happen to us? Where can we run?"* A great crowd of women wept, begging her not to leave them like orphans.

The Blessed Virgin comforted them: *"If mothers of ordinary children can't bear to be away from them for even a little while, how much more should I desire to go to my son? I am both mother and virgin, and he is the only Son of God the Father. If any of you had an only son, you'd want to see him and be comforted by his family line. So why shouldn't I, uncorrupted as I am, long to see the life of all creatures?"*

While they were talking, Saint John the Evangelist arrived. When he asked what was happening and heard about her impending departure, he fell face-first to the ground and wept:

"O Lord, what are we? Why send us so many trials? Why didn't you take my soul away sooner so I could have been visited by your blessed mother rather than arriving just as she leaves?"

The Blessed Virgin gently led him into her room, showed him the palm and the garments the angel had brought, and then laid down on her bed to wait for her passing.

Suddenly, a loud crash of thunder echoed, and a whirlwind brought a cloud whiter than snow. The apostles were carried down on it right to the gate of our Blessed Lady, falling like raindrops one after another. As they stood there marveling, John came out and explained what the angel had told her. They all wept, but John comforted them.

Wiping their eyes, they went in to see the Blessed Virgin, greeted her with great honor, and bowed down. She said to them, *"My dear children, may God my son keep you all."*

After they told her about their journeys, she explained her whole situation. The apostles replied:

"Right honorable Lady and Virgin, looking at you gives us as much comfort as being with our Lord and Master. Our only hope is that you will intercede for us with God."

She called out to Paul by name: *"God save you, expositor of my comfort, even though you didn't see Jesus in the flesh."* Paul answered, *"I am comforted just to see you in the flesh. Up until now, I've preached to people that you bore Jesus; now I will preach that you are being carried up to heaven to be with him."*

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The Virgin then showed them the items the angel had brought and reminded them to keep the 220 tapers lit until she passed. She dressed in the garments of immortality, said her goodbyes, and laid her body on the bed.

Peter stood at her head, John at her feet, and the other apostles gathered around the bed, praising the virgin mother of God. Peter started a hymn:

“Rejoice, bride of God, in the heavenly chambers! You candlestick of unending light, through you the eternal brilliance is revealed!”

Witness Accounts and the Assumption

The esteemed Archbishop of Constantinople confirms that all the apostles gathered for the passing of the sweet mother of God, writing:

“Blessed Lady, mother of God, though you face the inevitable death of human nature, you will not truly sleep, nor will the eye that watches over you ever slumber. Your departure is not without witnesses. The heavens declare the glory of those who sang over you on earth. The clouds cry out honor to you and to the one who serves you. The angels preach of the life revealed in you through the assembled apostles in Jerusalem.”

Saint Dionysius the Areopagite says the same: *“We, along with many of our brothers, gathered to see the body of the one who bore God, and James the brother of the Lord and Peter, the great prince of theologians, were present.”* After this vision, the high priests sang praises, each reflecting on her incredible grace.

Continuing the story, Saint Cosmas writes:

“After this, a great thunder shook the house, accompanied by such an overwhelming fragrance of sweetness that everyone there—except for the apostles and three virgins holding the lights—fell fast asleep.

Then our Lord arrived with a massive host of angels and took the soul of his mother. Her soul shone with such blinding light that none of the apostles could look directly at it. Our Lord told Saint Peter: ‘Bury the body of my mother with great reverence and guard it carefully for three days. Then I will return and take her to heaven without corruption, clothing her in my own glory. What I took from her, and what she took from me, will be joined together in harmony.’”

Saint Cosmas notes that while these mysteries are hard for human curiosity to grasp, everything concerning the glorious mother of God is beyond nature and meant to be revered rather than overly analyzed.

When her soul left her body, the body itself whispered:

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“Lord, I thank you that I was counted worthy of your grace. Remember me, for I am a fragile thing, and I guarded what you entrusted to me.”

When the others woke up and saw the lifeless body, they wept heavily. The apostles picked up the body of the Blessed Virgin and carried it toward the tomb, while Saint Peter began the psalm, *In exitu Israel de Egypto* (“When Israel went out of Egypt”).

Angelic choirs filled Jerusalem with such joyful praise that the high priests got angry and sent a large crowd with swords and clubs to stop it. One furious man rushed at the bier to knock the body of the blessed mother of God to the ground. But the moment he maliciously tried to grab the corpse, his hands were instantly sliced off at the wrists by divine justice, leaving them dangling from the bier while he screamed in agony.

He begged for mercy and promised to change his ways. Saint Peter told him: *“You can only be pardoned if you kiss the bier of the Blessed Virgin and confess that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was formed in her womb.”*

When he did this, his hands snapped back onto his wrists and were completely healed! Peter handed him a leaf from the palm branch and said, *“Go into the city, lay this on the sick, and those who believe will be healed.”*

When the apostles reached the Valley of Josaphat, they found a tomb prepared just like the Lord’s. They laid her body inside with immense reverence—not daring to touch her, since she was the holy vessel of God—leaving only the burial napkin inside the tomb.

True to the Lord’s promise, on the third day, a brilliant cloud surrounded the tomb, accompanied by sweet angelic music and a wonderful fragrance. When Jesus appeared, everyone was awestruck as he took the body of the Blessed Virgin up with him in great glory. The apostles kissed the empty tomb and returned to the house of Saint John, praising God for guarding such a noble virgin.

One of the apostles had missed the event. When he heard about the miracles, he begged the others to open the tomb so he could see the truth for himself. At first, they refused, wanting to avoid giving skeptics any excuse to claim the body had been stolen. But when he persisted, they finally opened the tomb. Inside, they found **only the vestments and the napkin**—the body was gone.

Further Historical Testimonies

The Falling Asleep of the Holy Mother of God

Saint Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, notes that in the *History Euthimiata* (Book 3, Chapter 40)—and John Damascene agrees—the Empress Helena built many churches in Constantinople. During the reign of the Emperor Marcian, she built a magnificent church in Baltherna dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

She summoned Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem, and the bishops of Palestine (who were in the royal city for the Council of Chalcedon) and told them: *“We have heard that the body of our holy Lady is in a tomb in the Valley of Josaphat. We want it brought here to protect this city with due honor.”*

Juvenal replied that, according to ancient records, the body had been taken up into glory and was no longer in the monument—only the garments and napkin remained. Those garments were sent to Constantinople and kept there with great honor.

(And let no one think I made this up out of my own head; I am simply passing on what I learned through study and the traditions handed down by those who came before us.)

John Damascene’s Homily on the Assumption

John Damascene, writing as a Greek, shares many marvelous things about the Assumption in his sermons:

“Today the magnificent ark that carried her Maker within her was brought into the temple not made by hands. Today the innocent, simple dove flew from the ark—meaning from the body where God found rest. Today the virgin who conceived without earthly passion is called true heaven, dwelling in celestial tabernacles.

Even though her holy soul separated from her body and her body was placed in a tomb, it did not rot or decay. The body that gave birth while maintaining her virginity was transported to a higher, holier life, untouched by the corruption of death. Just as the sun is sometimes obscured for a moment but never loses its light, you, O Virgin, are the eternal fountain of light. Though you experienced a brief moment of bodily death, your sleep is not truly death, but a peaceful passing—or rather, an arrival.

When you left your body for heaven, Jesus Christ, the angels, archangels, and all the heavenly hosts came out to meet you. The powers of darkness tremble at your glorious arrival. You didn’t just go to heaven like Elijah, nor did you stop at the third heaven like Paul; you went straight to the royal throne of your Son.

While the death of other saints brings them blessing, death has no power over you in that way. Your blessedness doesn’t come from dying; your conception without seed and

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your divine dwelling made you blessed from the beginning. Death didn't make you holy—you ennobled death, turning its sorrow into joy."

Damascene also describes how the apostles were miraculously gathered from all over the world by a divine cloud to Jerusalem. Adam and Eve cried out to her: *"Come to us, O holy and wholesome relief who fulfills our desire!"* And the company of saints pleaded: *"Stay with us, our comfort, and don't leave us as orphans!"*

Turning to her Son, Mary prayed: *"Lord, I pray you to be a comfort to my sons—whom you were pleased to call your brethren—who are grieving my departure. Bless them with your blessing upon mine."*

She stretched out her hand, blessed all Christian people, and said: *"Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit; receive my soul, which you have kept free from sin. And I leave my body to the earth to keep safe until it pleases you to transport it to be with you."*

Hearing this, Jesus said: *"Arise, my beloved, and come to me. You are most fair among women, and no spot of filth is in you."*

As she commended her spirit into his hands, the apostles wept and kissed the bier. Anyone who touched her bier was miraculously healed of sicknesses, demons were cast out, and the air, earth, and water were purified and sanctified by her passing.

Once again, when a malicious Jewish man tried to flip the bier over, his hands were instantly chopped off at the wrists by an invisible force. When he repented and touched the bier in faith, his hands were restored completely whole.

Finally, her body was laid in the tomb in the Valley of Josaphat, but her soul did not stay in the realm of the dead, nor did her flesh see corruption. Because she bore the Creator of the world, she had to be raised to be with her Son, keeping her virginity intact both in life and in death.

Saint Augustine on the Assumption

Saint Augustine also writes authentically about the holy Assumption, noting that Scripture records very little about Mary after Jesus commended her to John on the cross, aside from Luke mentioning that she stayed with the disciples in prayer.

Reasoning about her death and assumption, Augustine notes:

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“We don’t doubt that she experienced temporal death. But if we say her body decayed into worms and dust, we have to weigh whether that fits someone of such holiness and closeness to God. We know it was said to Adam, ‘You are dust, and to dust you shall return.’ But the flesh of Jesus Christ escaped that corruption—and because Jesus took his human nature directly from Mary, her flesh shares in that exception.

God told Eve she would bring forth children in pain and sorrow. Mary, however, gave birth without pain (even though a sword of sorrow pierced her soul). If she was spared the curse of painful childbirth, she should also be spared the corruption of the grave.

If Jesus wanted to keep his mother’s body whole and preserve her virginity, why couldn’t he also keep her from rotting and stinking? It befits our Lord—who came not to break the law but to fulfill it, and who honored his mother above all—to grant her a special, singular salvation at death. Rot and worms are the reproach of ordinary human existence, but Jesus lifted Mary’s nature above that reproach when he took his flesh from her and carried it above the stars.

If Jesus promised that his disciples will be where he is, how much more true is that for his mother? Where else is she worthy to be but right in the presence of her son? Therefore, I firmly believe that Mary’s soul is honored by her Son through an exceptional prerogative, and that she possesses a glorified body in heaven alongside him.

God told his ministers, ‘Where I am, there shall my minister be also.’ If that applies to all who served Christ, how much more does it apply to Mary? She carried him in her belly, nursed him, laid him in a manger, fled with him to Egypt, protected him all his life, and stood by him right up to the cross. She never doubted his divinity, knowing she had conceived by divine inspiration. When the wine ran out at Cana, she simply told him, ‘They have no wine,’ knowing he could do anything.

If Mary served Jesus in faith and action like no other, how could she not be where he is? If the death of all saints is precious, how much more precious is the death of Mary, who is welcomed into eternal joy more honorably than anyone else?

If God protected the three young men’s clothes from burning in the fiery furnace, if he kept Jonah alive inside a whale, and if he kept Daniel safe from hungry lions, surely he would keep his mother’s body from corruption!

Our Lord allows Mary to rejoice in her own Son, body and soul, because she never suffered moral failure or the stain of corruption. She who gave life to all is now living completely in glory.

And if I have spoken as I ought, may Jesus Christ approve it. If I have fallen short, I ask him and you to forgive me.”

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