

Faith in Five – Adults
The Assumption of Mary
August 12, 2022



1. The Assumption of Mary is one of the four Marian dogmas of the Catholic Church (The word 'assumption', from the Latin word *assumptiō* meaning "taking up"). Pope Pius XII defined it in 1950 in his apostolic constitution [*Munificentissimus Deus*](#) as follows: 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. (Image Source: Google)
2. The declaration was built upon the [*1854 dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary*](#): , which declared that Mary was conceived free from original sin. Both have their foundation in the concept of Mary as the Mother of God. Like the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the dogma of the Assumption is not explicit in the Bible. It is thus a matter of faith divinely revealed by God and that has been infallibly proposed by the Magisterium of the Church. It is dogma defined “*ex cathedra*” (from the chair of Peter) by the pope, rather than determined by an ecumenical council. The Church considers the dogma of Mary’s Assumption to be in accord with the divine truths contained in Scripture.
3. [*As Bishop Dubost \(from France\) writes in his book called Marie \(Ed. Mame, Paris 2002\)*](#): "The feast of the Assumption originated in Jerusalem, but it is hard to know when. The origin of the feast may come from the consecration of a church dedicated to Mary, by Bishop Juvenal, in Kathisma (a stopping place where Mary may have rested between Nazareth and Bethlehem). However, it most likely came from the consecration of another church in Gethsemane, near Jerusalem, in the 6th century...the feast was extended to the whole Empire by the Emperor Mauricius (582-602) under the name of "The Dormition of the Virgin Mary." It has always been celebrated on August 15.

"The significance of these early feasts cannot be overlooked, as they are testimony to the truths that the Church knew to be true. Christians would not initiate feasts throughout the Church that were ideas on the fringes of Catholic thought" ([Source](#)).
4. The doctrine of the Assumption of Mary has been believed in the Church for 2,000 years. It was passed down in the oral tradition of the Church and developed over the centuries
 - a. There are two tombs of Mary, one in Jerusalem and one in Ephesus (where she spent her last years) yet there is no body or relics in either tomb.
 - b. There have been stories about the Assumption from the 6th century and recently discovered fragments of stories about the Assumption of Mary have been dated as early as the third century. Pope St. John Paul II noted: "The first trace of belief

in the Virgin's Assumption can be found in the apocryphal accounts entitled [*Transitus Mariae*](#), whose origin dates to the second and third centuries”.

5. There is record of Protestant Reformers who acknowledged Mary's Assumption, even though it was not expressed in Sacred Scripture. It was part of Martin Luther's homily in 1522; H. Bullinger (1590) expressing that Elias (Elijah), taken to heaven bodily, believed that “the pure immaculate chamber of the God-bearer, the Virgin Mary, is a temple of the Holy Spirit, [and] that...her holy body was borne by angels into heaven”. Martin Butzer (1545) stated, “Indeed, no Christian doubts that the most worthy Mother of the Lord lives with her beloved Son in heavenly joy. (Marienlexikon, vol 3, 200)”. ([Source](#))

6. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (966) says of the Assumption:

“Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death”.

- Mary did not suffer from original sin but was conceived full of grace. According to this doctrine, known as the Immaculate Conception, God's supernatural life dwelt in Mary from the very beginning of her existence. His tender love and care for her would extend beyond her life.

- Mary was taken to heaven when the course of her earthly life was finished. The Church does not declare whether Mary died and then was assumed into heaven or whether she was assumed before she died. It leaves open both possibilities. Her death was not a punishment of original sin. Jesus ascended to heaven under His own power (John 2:19-21); Mary did not – she was assumed.

7. As Catholics do not ascribe to biblical Sola Scriptura (only Scripture), there are biblical themes that point to the doctrine of Mary's Assumption in Luke's Gospel (1:28-42) and in Revelation (11:19; 12:1,5).

Mary continues her work in union with Jesus beyond her Assumption. She communicates her love through apparitions and miracles, along with graces through intercessory prayer for us. She is a blessed example of faithful service and obedience to God.

Almighty and eternal God, who hast taken up into the glory of Heaven, with body and soul, the immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of thy son: grant us, we pray, that we may always strive after heavenly things and thus merit to share in her glory. Amen.

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