

# *This Daughter of Jerusalem is Lovely and Beautiful As She Ascends to Heaven*

*Queen of the Heavenly Host, Defender of our souls, we thy servants offer to thee songs of victory and thanksgiving, for thou, O Mother of God, hast delivered us from dangers. But as thou has invincible power, free us from conflicts of all kinds that we may cry to thee: Rejoice unwedded Bride!*

*~Kontakion 1, Akathist to the Theotokos  
Penned by Romanus the Melodist, 6<sup>th</sup> century*

**O** *sanctissima, O pissima, dulcis virgo Maria! Mater amata, intermerata, ora, ora pronobis!* This month we come together to celebrate the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into the Kingdom of Heaven (**Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>**). This feast is one of great importance to all the Christian faithful, although few seem to understand why. Mary, the Mother of God, the “new Eve” is the first recipient of the promise of Christ; that all who are faithful in their fidelity to Christ will one day be raised from the dead and enter into the Kingdom, body and soul. The Blessed Mother, like us in every way except sin, was taken into glory because of her unwavering trust in God from the very beginning. After being visited by the Archangel Gabriel as a young woman, she raised and cared for the Son of God from infancy and then stood by him as he suffered his humiliating torture and death at the hands of sinful humanity. As a reward for the fidelity and suffering that she endured, God chose to bring her immediately into His Kingdom.

The dogma of the Assumption of Mary has been questioned at various times throughout the history of the Church. Why is it that this one person should receive the gift of eternal life in Heaven while the rest of us must wait until the end of time for this reward? Saint John Damascene answered this objection by saying, “It was necessary that she who had preserved her virginity inviolate in childbirth should also have her body kept free from all corruption after death. It was necessary that she who carried the Creator as a child on her breast

should dwell in the tabernacles of God. It was necessary that the bride espoused by the Father should make her home in the bridal chamber of heaven. It was necessary that she, who gazed on her crucified Son and been pierced in the heart by the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in giving him birth, should contemplate him seated with the Father.” Despite this, the dogma of the Assumption of Mary was not infallibly declared until November 1, 1950 by Pope Pius XII in his pronouncement *Munificentissimum Deus*. While not officially declared until then, the Assumption of our Blessed Lady has been a part of the veneration of Mary since the early Church.



It is because of her perfection and her fidelity that Mary was able to share in the resurrection of her son and give those of us who believe in Him the hope of experiencing the same reward. Mary has always had a special place in the Church among the saints of God because she was the first to worship him in her *fiat* at the Annunciation (“Be it done unto me, according to your word.”) and walked with him unwaveringly until he entered into His glory. It is only proper that she should be the first recipient of the rewards of eternal life. Those of us still fighting the good fight give her honor through faithful veneration in feasts, such as this, in the regular recitation of the rosary, and in various forms of prayer that have been passed down through the history of the Church. *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*