

**Editor's Note:** In honor of today's feast, we offer readers the following meditation from *Divine Intimacy*, a classic volume of Carmelite spirituality aligned to the liturgical year by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D. (1893-1953). May Our Lady's glorious Assumption, body and soul, into Heaven remind us always to "seek the things that are above" (Col. 3:1) and foster within us true devotion to her as the perfect means of attaining spiritual maturity in Christ.

## 379. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

By Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

(1) The Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we contemplate today assumed body and soul into heaven, reminds us very definitely that our permanent abode is not on earth but in heaven where she, with her divine Son, has preceded us in all the fullness of her human nature. This is the dominant thought in today's liturgy. "O Almighty and everlasting God, Who hast taken up body and soul into heavenly glory the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of Thy Son: grant, we beseech Thee, that, ever intent upon heavenly things, we may be worthy to be partakers of her glory" (*Collect*).

The Feast of the Assumption is a strong appeal to us to live "ever intent upon heavenly things," and not to allow ourselves to be carried away by the vicissitudes and seductions of the world. Not only was our soul created for heaven, but also our body, which, after the resurrection, will be welcomed into our heavenly home and admitted to a participation in the glory of the spirit. Today we contemplate in Mary, our Mother, this total glorification of our humanity. That which has been wholly realized in her, will be realized for us, as well as for all the saints, only at the end of time. This privilege was very fitting for her, the all-pure, the all-holy one, whose body was never touched by even the faintest shadow of sin, but was always the temple of the Holy Spirit, and became the immaculate tabernacle of the Son of God. It is a reminder to us to ennoble our whole life, not only that of the spirit, but also that of the senses, elevating it to the heights of the celestial life which awaits us. "O Mother of God and of men," exclaims Pius XII in his beautiful prayer for the Assumption, "we beg you to purify our senses, so that we may begin to enjoy God here on earth and Him alone, in the beauty of creatures."

(2) Mary's Assumption shows us the route we must follow in our spiritual ascent: detachment from the earth, flight toward God, and union with God.

Our Lady was assumed body and soul into heaven because she was Immaculate; she was all-pure—free not only from every shadow of sin, but even from the slightest attachment to the

things of earth, so that she “never had the form of any creature imprinted in her soul, nor was moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit” (St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* Book III, 2, 10).

The first requirement for attaining God is this total purity, the fruit of total detachment. The Blessed Virgin, who lived her earthly life in absolute detachment from every created thing, teaches us not to allow ourselves to be captivated by the fascination of creatures, but to live among them, occupying ourselves with them with much charity, but without ever letting our heart become attached to them, without ever seeking our satisfaction in them.

In her Assumption, Mary speaks to us of flight toward heaven, toward God. It is not enough to purify our heart from sin and all attachment to creatures, we must at the same time direct it toward God, tending toward Him with all our strength. The Church has us pray in today's Mass, “O Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was assumed into heaven, may our hearts, enkindled by the fire of Thy love, continually aspire toward Thee” (*Secret*). Our earthly life has value for eternal life insofar as it is a flight toward God, a continual seeking after Him, a continual adherence to His grace. When this flight fails, the supernatural value of our existence lessens.

Mary has been taken up to heaven because she is the Mother of God. This is the greatest of her privileges, the root of all the others and the reason for them; it speaks to us, in a very special way, of intimate union with God, as the fact of her Assumption speaks to us of the beatific union of heaven. Mary's Assumption thus confirms us in this great and beautiful truth: we are created and called to union with God. Mary herself stretches out her maternal hand to guide us to the attainment of this high ideal. If we keep our eyes fixed on her, we shall advance more easily; she will be our guide, our strength, and our consolation in every trial and difficulty.

*Text taken from [Divine Intimacy](#) (Baronius Press, 2015), pp. 1115-1116.*