



Priestly People

SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

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The Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary

The Glorious Mysteries help us to persevere during the sorrowful mysteries of our own life. And the Sorrowful Mysteries lead us to a greater appreciation of the glorious mysteries in our life and death. This seems to be a theme running through the whole history of salvation.

The Resurrection: “He is risen!”

Although they initially did not appear to think Christ would arise again, Mary Magdalene and the first followers of Christ felt immense joy when they saw Him in His risen Body.

Death helps us appreciate more the wonder and beauty of life.

Risen glory is seen more brilliantly against the backdrop of suffering, adversity, and death.

At a deeper level, both death and life share in the mystery of love. Suffering and death show Christ’s love for us and our love for Him.

Likewise, His Resurrection is the ultimate manifestation of God’s love in sharing his life with us for all eternity.

The sign of the cross is the sign of the Christian. In this sign you will conquer. But so also is the Resurrection the sign of the Christian. In the Acts of the Apostles Peter begins by reminding the Jewish people of the Christ whom their leaders had put to death – but he concludes with the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is the hallmark of the early Christian Community.

The pristine preaching of the Gospel always turned toward the Resurrection. The accounts of the early martyrs inevitably emphasized the martyrs’ faith in the Resurrection which they were soon to enjoy. This made their suffering seem temporary, passing, and easy to be endured.

The Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary are very helpful in acquiring and deepening a living faith in the Resurrection – a faith which will see us through many difficulties in life, even up to death itself.

The Ascension: Since you have been raised up to be with Christ, you must look for the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God’s right hand. Let your thoughts be on things above, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)

This mystery helps us realize that our true life is with Jesus in Heaven. More and more heaven should become the homeland of our desire and our thoughts, and the motivation of all that we do.

The Marxist adage about *religion being the opium of the people* is a false caricature of the meaning and purpose of religion.

It is, nevertheless, a challenge to us to not use the hope of heaven as a way of avoiding our responsibilities in this life. Of course, we must live in this world, make use of it, respect and cultivate it, and so continue God’s work of creation. Our way to heaven necessarily includes the proper use of the things of this life.

But St. Paul, however, tells us that we need not be afraid of longing for heaven ... as if this were just an escape from the reality of our present life. He himself longed to be dissolved to be with God for all eternity – but that did not stop his intense

missionary activity, his writing to the churches throughout the places he had visited, and his prayer, care, and concern for all to whom he brought the message of Christ.

Jesus came down from heaven and returned to heaven. He knows from firsthand experience what both heaven and earth are. He is the model for created things, and the perfect image of both created and uncreated reality. And from His infinite wisdom and personal experience he tells us: *seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all these other things will be given to you.*

Mary, the mother of God, is a prime example of this: she meditated on all these things in her heart, and yet she was quite concerned about practical human matters: Elizabeth’s pregnancy in her old age, making sure to bring a swaddling cloth on the journey to Bethlehem, the wedding feast of Cana...

The Rosary and all its Mysteries, let alone the Ascension of Christ into Heaven, is a prayer that can be said at many different times: in quiet moments in the Chapel, with the community, at night when we may find it difficult to sleep, but also when we are traveling, waiting in line at the bank, or sweeping the kitchen floor.

Descent of the Holy Spirit: All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4)

The Holy Spirit helps us to live in this world but not be part of the worldliness of this world. *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.* (Romans 8:5) Through the same Spirit worldliness is taken out of the world. creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay... and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit (Romans 8:21-23)

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was an amazing and powerful manifestation of His presence and guidance of the Apostles. Rather than a once-for-all event, however, it was the beginning of a continual and powerful action of the Holy Spirit in our Church and in our world. The story of the Spirit’s presence and activity in the early Church is phenomenal. The word “spirit” appears over 80 times in the Acts of the Apostles. A reading of the entire Acts of the Apostles in one sitting will bring out how profoundly the Holy Spirit was involved in the early Church.

Like the early Apostles and the Blessed Mother in the Cenacle we need to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the world today so that the words of Psalm will be fulfilled *when you send forth your spirit they are created; and you renew the face of the earth.* (Psalm 104:30)

The Assumption:

The question of whether Mary's body was assumed into heaven had been debated in the Church from early centuries. Some authors, like St. Epiphanius and some writings of doubtful origin during the Middle Ages maintained that it was not known for sure what happened to the body of Mary after her death. Many others, like St. Thomas Aquinas, pointed out that it was not fitting that the body that gave life to our Lord and Savior, the Son of God, should undergo corruption. Pope Pius XII decided this question by declaring, *ex cathedra* (from the Chair of Peter), that the Assumption of Mary, body, and soul, into heaven is an article of faith (November 1, 1950).

As we meditate on the Assumption of Mary into heaven, we can come to appreciate more the value of the human body in the plan of God, not only in this life, but in eternity. Our human body as we experience it is both a source of help to our spirit and an occasion for difficulty for it. It is a help because all that we know, all the feelings we experience, the beauty and goodness of nature, etc. come to us through our body, its senses, and its nervous system (except in extraordinary cases of infused knowledge – but the more usual way for grace to work is to use our natural experience in the sense of grace perfects nature.) But our body is also a source of difficulty: tiredness, sickness, temptations, irritations, emotions that are difficult at times to manage, and many limitations.

Reflection on this Mystery can help us now. ***Meditating on the Assumption, as well as the Ascension, will lead us to a greater respect and reverence for life in ourselves and in each other.*** It will help us overcome the discouragement that naturally tends to come with the infirmities that our bodies are presently subject to. Finally of all it will draw us to a more human, tender, and genuine love for Christ, for our Blessed Mother, and for each other. The beginnings of the meaning of love are to be found in early experiences that are quite involved with bodily matters. What has been sown in us reaches maturity in the spirit but remains rooted in sense experience. In heaven Jesus and Mary (and in time we hope all of us) have human bodies and continue to function in a completely human, albeit glorified and transformed, way.

The Coronation:

While the Assumption of Mary has been declared a dogma of faith, there are still other titles of Mary which may or may not be a definitive part of our faith, which may or may not someday be declared dogmas of faith. Some of these special roles and titles of Mary may need further theological clarification by the Magisterium before they can be declared dogmas of faith. Some of the titles that have received recent attention are “Co-redemptrix”, “Mediatrice”, and “Advocate”, which suggest among other realities that all graces come to us from Christ through Mary. The Glorious Mystery of the

Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth comes close to being a summation of these special roles of Mary in the Church and in Heaven.

One of the concerns about declaring certain titles of the Blessed Mother to be *de fide* (*of the faith*) is that in some way the role of Christ as our only Redeemer, our unique Priest and intercessor, and the source of all grace, might be lessened.

In saying Mary is the mother of God we have already said almost everything there is to be said about her. What title could even come close to the dignity and power of the expression *Mother of God*? God really and truly has a mother! Because she is the mother of His human nature, she is the mother of God! Although she is not the mother who begot the Divinity of Christ, whatever belongs to the humanity of Jesus belongs to the Divine Person of the Son of God.

It could be said that from the fact of Mary's being the mother of God flows, by Divine plan, her being the Queen of heaven and earth. This is perhaps more easily grasped by our friends and supporters in the British Isles, where the idea of the *Queen Mother* has much significance. Being the Queen of heaven and earth... and all other roles and titles of Mary... are in a sense derived from her being the mother of God.

It seems quite fitting that the mother of God would also be the Queen of heaven and earth. But this is only true because it is plan of God. And so, when and if Church declares that various titles of Mary are part of our faith, it is simply making more explicit the content of our Faith regarding the role of Mary in relation to the salvation brought to us by her Son. At the heart of the mystery of Mary's role in Redemption is her giving birth, through faith and obedience as well as through maternity, to the human life of Christ - a life that is the source and origin of salvation.

But such titles – both while she was here on earth and now in heaven - are to bear no danger – not the slightest hint - of Mary's taking to herself the honor which belongs only to God. Her soul always rejoices in what God does because He is God and has looked on her lowliness. Mary remains fixed for all eternity in a profound conviction that she is the humble serving maid of the Lord – even when she is his mother, when she is Queen who reigns only by love and heartfelt concern for her Son and for all of us. She uses, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, all God has given her to bring about the Kingdom of God in us and in the universe.

Will we see Mary as Queen of heaven and earth when we join her in eternity? Resoundingly so. Full of grace and glory. But more than that our hearts and our spirits will be pierced by her gentle, all embracing and tender and maternal love for Jesus and each of us. In the Glorious Mystery of the Coronation of Mary we can already begin to grasp in a small way the beatitude of eternity in Jesus as reflected in a super-eminent way in Mary.



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