

Assumption A,B,C

Resources Needed: Bible and Vatican II Documents

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is Church teaching with absolutely no warrant in sacred scripture, but absolutely warranted because Mary is the Mother of God.

There are two reasons why Church teaching is defined:

1. Whenever there is a controversy that needs to be cleared up, or
2. Whenever the Pope and the Bishops think the faithful can be helped by putting particular emphasis on a belief that already exists.

The second reason is why Pope Pius XII exercised papal infallibility and defined the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 1, 1950. The Holy Father declared:

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."

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I was teaching students at St. Benedict about the Blessed Mother and I asked them, "Tell me about the Assumption." One

boy raised his hand and said, “The Assumption is we assume Mary is in heaven.” “Not quite, Michael. We know Mary’s in heaven.” The Assumption is how she got there. So let’s learn about the Assumption first by covering the basics, and I’d like to start with Revelation.

Revelation is God communicating with man. Revelation is God revealing himself to man. All Christians agree the most perfect form of revelation, the most perfect way God revealed himself to man is through his Son, Jesus. The Son of God became man, and from the years 30 – 33 AD, Jesus taught about God and about heaven. What separates Catholics from other Christian religions is Catholics believe that God continues to reveal himself to us after Jesus ascended into heaven in two ways: through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

1. Sacred Scripture is the Bible – we learn about God from the Bible, and
2. Sacred Tradition is the teaching of the Church – and we learn about God from the teaching of the Church.

Now other Christians believe that God only revealed Himself to them through sacred scripture alone. Believing the only way God communicated Himself to us was through the Bible means God has not communicated with us since around the year 90

AD, that God hasn't revealed himself to us in just about 2000 years, which is something I would find very disheartening. God not revealing himself to us in about 2000 years is not a far cry from agnosticism, which is indifference to God, since God is indifferent to us. God not revealing or communicating with us in about 2000 years sounds like God is indifferent.

In previous homilies, I explained how the Bible comes from the Catholic Church. It was the Pope and the Bishops - it was Church teaching, in effect, that decided which books would be included in the Bible. Since the Pope and the Bishops defined the Bible, the Bible is part of Church teaching. And therefore Church teaching is not limited to the Bible, and all of Church teaching, therefore, need not be found in the Bible.

However, Church teaching can never contradict the Bible because Church teaching can never contradict itself. Hence, the teaching of the Church on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is quite legitimate, because the teaching of the Assumption does not contradict the Bible because the Bible is silent regarding the Assumption. And silence is neither rejection nor affirmation. Silence is just – silence. But not only is the Bible silent about the Assumption, the Bible is also silent about lots of things: abortion, euthanasia, social concerns, world peace, sexuality, etc. So we

need Church teaching, because Bible is silent about many things.

The Bible mentioned two Old Testament figures who did not die, but went to be with God:

1. Enoch, the descendent of Noah, who “walked with God, and he was seen no more because God took him,” Genesis Chapter 5 (5:24), and
2. Elijah, who was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot, 2 Kings Chapter 2 (2:1-13).

The Bible says nothing about what happened to Mary, but don't you think the Bible would have made some mention of Mary never dying, especially since the Bible mentioned that obscure Enoch and Elijah never died? After all, it would have been truly “remark”able if Mary never had died.

The bottom line is some Catholic Popes (but not all) have long taught that Mary did die, but that Mary was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven. In short, Mary's body was not allowed to corrupt; it was not allowed to remain in a tomb because corruptibility is a consequence of original sin.

Fundamentalists would argue that death itself is also a consequence of original sin, which it is. But Mary died because Jesus died. And Jesus died, not as a result of original sin, but

because he chose to die for our redemption. Jesus could have willed our redemption, but Jesus chose to die to show his love for us. Mary suffered because Jesus suffered. Mary is glorified because Jesus is glorified.

Other Church fathers claimed Mary did not die, but rather it was more of a deep sleep or dormition, similar to what happened with Adam, when Eve was created from his side. Having just been to the Holy Land, in Jerusalem, the Church honoring Mary's Assumption is titled the Church of the Dormition.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is Church Teaching, infallibly defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950, who proclaimed that the Assumption was Mary's

"crowning glory to be preserved from the corruption of the tomb, and like her Son before her, to conquer death and to be raised body and soul to the glory of heaven, to shine refulgent as Queen at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of ages."

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