



ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault
(Fontgombault, August 15th, 2026)

Assumpta est Maria.

Mary was taken up to heaven.
(Verse of the Alleluia)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
My dearly beloved Sons,

THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY is both the culmination of an earthly life that has just ended, and the beginning of a life in God. On this day, our joy joins with that of the angels. We so often drag ourselves through life, experiencing family or professional difficulties, facing illness and old age. Meditating on a path that culminates in glory is reassuring, especially if the person in question is close to us. This is true of Mary.

But our ambition cannot stop there. Assuredly, we can rejoice in the Assumption of Mary into heaven. Assuredly, it is a dogma of faith, a truth we must believe. But above all, we must aspire to remain close to Mary for eternity, so that our joy may no longer be measured by the earth, but rather by heaven.

The Church has already embraced our expectation. She arranges all things so that it may be so, from the first days of our lives by granting children the sacrament of baptism, and later the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the food

for our souls on their journey to the heavenly homeland, and the sacrament of penance which restores our ailing souls.

Several texts in this morning's mass clearly evoke the prospect of salvation.

The collect implores God that, always striving for heavenly things, we may deserve to share in the glory of Mary.

The secret asks for the intercession of Mary, so that our burning hearts may yearn to draw nearer to God.

Finally, the postcommunion asks that after receiving the sacraments of salvation, through the merits and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary taken up into heaven, we may be led to the glory of the resurrection.

Is it surprising? If we celebrate Our Lady today, if we have heard her pronounce the *Magnificat*, her thanksgiving hymn for so many blessings received from God, we can ask ourselves what a mother such as Mary could still desire.

The saints do not boast of their holiness, nor do they dwell on it. They attribute it to God, the author of all gifts.

What the saints desire is the greatest glory of God in the creation. Therefore, Mary, Queen of Saints, now hopes for nothing less than that all her children should be with her in heaven. We can thus be certain of her intercession with her Son. Day after day, she wants to lead us on a safe path.

a. 1 Tm 16:4.

"God wants all men to be saved."^a As He wants to enlist every man for this work, in a very special way, He enlists Mary, the all-holy, the all-pure, our Mother.

God wants all men to be saved, but it behoves us to maintain within ourselves a true yearning for heaven, and to do everything in our power to attain it. To do everything in our power is to seize every opportunity, every crumb of life, as a stepping stone towards eternity. We have many friends in heaven. We should even say that we have only friends in heaven. Indeed, those who on earth could have been our enemies, if they have attained God's glory, embrace God's will. They can desire nothing for any person but blessedness. Let us appropriate this will of God and make it our own already on this earth, and then many conflicts that drain our strength will find their resolution, or at least will be put into

perspective in the face of the prospect of the dwelling place God has prepared for us with Him.

Mary appears as a sign, a great sign, showing us the path on which she herself walked. Remember: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple and the terrible prediction of old Simeon, a few events during the hidden life, and then more during Jesus' public life, and finally, the Passion and the presence of Mary with the apostles in the early days of the Church.

The Gospel doesn't say much about Mary's life. Mary herself remained hidden so as to live entirely for God. Isn't that why God looked at her as His humble handmaid?

Even before giving birth to her Son, Mary already uttered her *Magnificat*. Should we assume that these words apply only to her? Wouldn't the promises made to our heavenly Mother also apply to her children?

Mary was beatified by Jesus Himself as the woman who believed. On this day, as we celebrate Mary's entry into heaven, mightn't it be an opportunity for us to search our consciences, regarding how we live our faith? A dead faith made up of memories? a faith that flickers according to circumstances, awakened when the need for heavenly help arises? a living faith?

It was by this faith that Mary lived. She could therefore affirm:

— Yes, God is my Saviour. Holy is His name.

— Yes, God has looked with favour on His humble handmaid; all generations will call me blessed.

And behold, the vision widens and embraces the whole earth:

— His mercy extends from generation to generation, to those who fear Him. He has helped his servant Israel—that is, every soul that truly seeks God—and He has remembered His love.

— He lifts up the humble, He fills the hungry with good things, those who expect everything from Him; on the contrary He sends away the rich, that is to say those who are self-sufficient, with empty hands.

Now that our members of Parliament have passed a law authorising assisted suicide and euthanasia, it is important to bear witness to the fact that God looks at every person, provided they are willing to be looked at. God inclines Himself towards them. He spreads over their lives the veil of His mercy.

The *Magnificat* is not Mary's canticle only; it should become our own canticle, a thanksgiving that at all times arises from our hearts to the Author of all gifts. Mary teaches us to sing this canticle, and only with her can we sing it properly.

Every morning during the chapter of Prime, just before praying for the benefactors of the monastery called back to God, the monks recite this verse: "Precious in the eyes of God is the death of His saints." Let us ask for the grace of a death precious in the eyes of God, a death that ends up in His arms.

Amen, Alleluia.

