

“The queen stands at your right hand arrayed in gold.”

These words that we prayed to God in the responsorial psalm show us what we celebrate today. This Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin honors our belief about Mary that has been cherished by Christians since the first century: “When the course of her earthly life was finished, the Immaculate Virgin Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death.” (CCC 966) Even in the Psalms, written 3,000 years ago, the beautiful prophesy of the queen arrayed in gold began to illumine our Blessed Mother.

Mary received the exceedingly rare gift that was shared by only 3 other people: the Old Testament figures Enoch and Elijah, and Jesus Himself. The Blessed Virgin Mary, that pure and sinless vessel of God’s salvation, was spared from the corruption of death and decay. She was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven. This gift was her reward for a life of humility, a life of obedience, a life of perfect fidelity. Since she never knew sin, not even once, she was spared the curse of sin. Since her soul never experienced the corruption of breaking God’s law, her body was spared the corruption of the grave. The Perfect Virgin retained her perfection, even in death, and so was clothed with the sun and crowned with twelve stars.

In this worthy gift given to the Mother of God, we are privileged to see our own destiny. Just like Mary, the grave is not the end for us, not even for our bodies. We, who die in Christ, will be raised up on the last day. Our bodies will experience the resurrection as Jesus did;

our bodies will be joined to our souls for all eternity in the perfect happiness of heaven. This is what we mean when we say in the Creed: "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead." The gift that was given to Mary immediately at the end of her earthly life, will come also to us in the resurrection of the body, even if a little later.

And so, if this gift given to Mary is meant for us too, how do we prepare ourselves to receive this gift of the resurrection of the body? We prepare ourselves by following the example that Mary gave for us. She is the most perfect disciple, the most perfect follower of Christ. She never strayed from His plan, she never chose her own way. Instead, her heart was always open to God's desires for her. Her choices were always perfectly conformed to God's will. She loved God with all of her heart. And she cared for those in need. In the beautiful story of the Visitation, Mary traveled to Elizabeth, even though she herself was pregnant. She cared for her cousin in her need, instead of looking to be cared for. In her humility, Mary loved her neighbor as herself. Blessed Mary's reward for her perfect discipleship was her assumption body and soul into heaven; she was arrayed in gold; she was made queen of heaven and earth.

Today, let us give thanks for this great model of faith, our Mother Mary, who always leads us to Christ. May we have the grace to follow her example so that we too may rejoice, body and soul, in the eternal kingdom of heaven.