

# Trinity XI

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[ 0 : 00 ] Today, August the 15th, is a special day in the church's life. It's a day that we celebrate the Feast of St. Mary the Blessed Virgin.

Our Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters celebrate what is called the Dormition of Mary. The Dormition is the belief that Mary died, and soon after her death, Christians from all over the globe immediately came to pay homage to the Mother of God.

Mary was then raised immediately to new life, where she dwells with her son, offering her prayers for all of us who are still on our earthly pilgrimage towards heaven.

The Feast of the Dormition dates back to the 6th century in the Eastern Church. The Roman Catholic Church in the West celebrates the Assumption of Mary, believing that Mary never died, but was taken up into heaven like Enoch or Elijah.

And they claim that's why there's no tomb of Mary to venerate. One never hears of relics of the Blessed Virgin Mary being discovered. The Assumption became a pious belief around the 7th century in Western Christian tradition, and was made dogma by the Roman Catholic Church in 1950.

[ 1 : 34 ] So what is the Anglican view of Mary? Well, that depends who you talk to, really. But Anglicans do not speculate on whether or not Mary was assumed into heaven, or if the Mother of God simply died and then was immediately resurrected to her final glorified state.

Why? Because Scripture does not provide us with such details. The Anglicans err on the side of charity, seeing that one can believe in the Dormition or in the Assumption as a pious opinion. But such teachings can never be required as dogma. That's why I do not teach that in catechesis. It can never be required as dogma binding the faithful because much of this belief is shrouded in the unknown.

But, if all we do is argue about whether or not Mary was raised immediately after she died, or if she was assumed into heaven, never experiencing death, I think we miss the whole point of Mary. We miss the beauty and the simplicity that flows from a life of this dear saint, this extraordinary woman, Mary.

[ 3 : 03 ] The primary focus of this day should be about Mary's love to her son, and the life that she devoted herself in service to her God.

Our Gospel reading from Luke chapter 1 is the well-known Magnificat, which we say in daily evening prayer found in our prayer books. We heard in our Gospel text that Mary magnifies, she extols the Lord.

Did you catch that? Mary extols, she magnifies the Lord. Why?

Well, because the mother of our Lord does not boast on herself or on her own accomplishments. And listen carefully. Mary is not wanting to draw attention to herself. She is constantly putting the focus upon her son.

[ 4 : 12 ] That's why in ancient iconography, Mary is never depicted by herself, but she's always depicted with Jesus.

Mary does not brag about being a self-made woman, a self-made individual. She exalts in the Lord. That's where her hope, that's where her faith lies.

Because the Lord regarded her lowly position. Mary saw herself as a servant of Almighty God. She says in the Magnificat that the Lord has done great things for me.

Why? Because he's holy and he's merciful. The Lord exalts the lowly and he puts down the mighty from their thrones.

The Lord has spoken through our father Abraham and preserves his holy covenant, which finds its climax, its fulfillment in Jesus the Christ.

[ 5 : 22 ] The very one that Mary carried and bore. He is the mediator of a new covenant. And she dutifully submitted herself to God in this vocation, in this calling.

Mary is the example of human faithfulness and fidelity to our God. Mary is the ark of the new covenant. And in her was the word made flesh.

And the hope and salvation for the entire world. And quite frankly, folks, that's why all generations will, shall, call Mary blessed.

That's why the third ecumenical council of Ephesus in AD 31 directs all Christians to refer to her as the blessed Theotokos, the mother and bearer of God.

St. Mary teaches us humility. And she teaches us grace. She teaches us how to love.

[ 6 : 36 ] And she shows us by example of how to love. She teaches us a life of grace.

She teaches us a life of grace. She teaches us a life of glory to self. She teaches us a life of devotion to God and the meaning of true worship.

she teaches us a life of serving god rather than being a self-serving individual she teaches us that the most important thing in life is not measured by power or by personal success no life is about being an instrument of god's grace in order to become his servant so that he alone receives all the praise and the honor and the glory forever and ever from the heart of blessed mary from all saints the song ascends and the church the strain re-echoes unto earth's remotest ends in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy ghost you you you you