

Rev. Fr. Leonard Goffine's
The Church's Year

**THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

August 15



Why is this feast so called?

Because on this day the Blessed Virgin was taken up into heaven.

Why are plants and fruits blessed on this day?

The Church does this to manifest her joy at the glorious victory which Mary achieved over death, the world and the devil, and at her splendid triumph when she, adorned with virtues as with so many flowers, entered heaven; and that God may so sanctify and bless the plants and fruits, that their use may serve to our welfare.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church invites us to universal joy by singing: Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festal day in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for whose Assumption the angels rejoice, and give praise to the Son of God. My heart hath uttered a good word: I speak my works to the King. (Ps. XLIV.) Glory &c.

COLLECT Pardon, Lord, we beseech Thee, the transgressions of Thy servants: that we, who by our own deeds are unable to please Thee, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son our Lord. Through the same &c.

EPISTLE (*Ecclus.* XXIV. 11 — 20.) In all things I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord. Then the creator of all things commanded, and said to me; and he that made me rested in my tabernacle, and said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect. And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem. And I took root in an honorable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and my abode is in the full assembly of saints. I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress-tree on Mount Sion. I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades, and as a rose-plant in Jericho. As a fair olive-tree in the plains, and as a plane-tree by the water in the streets was I exalted. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aromatic balm: I yielded a sweet odor like the best myrrh.

EXPLANATION The Holy Ghost uses these words in praise of eternal wisdom, but the Church applies them to Mary also, to describe the glory and splendor of her assumption. Mary found her rest only in God, the Creator of all things, who created her, and preserved her from, original sin, and lived in her womb as in a tabernacle. On this day God seems to say to her: "Possess the abode destined for thee from all eternity, and the inheritance designed for thee as the first of the elect." Thus Mary is exalted as Queen of the saints and angels in the heavenly Sion; and now in this holy city, she enjoys an undisturbed peace with God, shares His happiness with Him, and is second only to Him in power and glory; there she shines in the most radiant garments, like the ever-blooming rose of Jericho, from there she lets flow upon the wretched children of Adam the oil of her mercy as from a fair olive-tree, shades them with her protection like a plane-tree, and refreshes them with the sweet fragrance of her virtue and grace.

GOSPEL (*Luke* x. 38—42.) AT THAT TIME, Jesus entered into a certain town: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house: and she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet heard his word. But Martha was busy about much serving: who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But, one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Why does the Church cause this gospel to be read today?

Because it can be well applied to Mary, who more worthily and tenderly even than Martha, received, nourished and served the Son of God, and more fervently and attentively than even Martha's sister, listened to His words, preserved them in her heart and sought to fulfil them. In both ways has she chosen the best of all parts, because in both she walked in perfection, and so gained the greatest of rewards which can never be taken from her.

What may we learn from these two sisters?

That like Martha, who is a type of active, stirring life, we should be energetic in performing the duties of our vocation, but not on that account forget to practice good works, to do all for the

love of God, seeking in all things His pleasure, and, since we can no longer administer to Christ in a material way, we should serve the poor, of whom He says that whatever we do to the least of them, He will consider and reward as if done to Himself. We are also like Mary who represents the contemplative life, to be fervent in prayer, in listening and meditating upon the word of God, upon the divine Majesty, its perfections and our frailty, thus to sanctify ourselves and to become more worthy of eternal happiness. This contemplative life Christ calls the better part, but does not, therefore, set aside the active life. We can easily unite both, but must never lose sight of the better part.

Why does Jesus reproach Martha?

Because she was uneasy and distracted by her over-carefulness and anxiety, and forgot to hear the divine word. — Thus do many Christians who find no time to work for the salvation of their soul, and even during divine service and the sermon are thinking of their domestic affairs, and so leave the church without having gained anything for their soul.

What is the one thing necessary?

To seek the glory of God and the salvation of our soul. He who attends to this; attends to all his duties, he is busy and active, but not uneasy and disturbed, and calmly directs his mind to God in all his labors, offers his every step to Him, and draws His grace upon himself.

PETITION. Would that I had better attended to the one thing necessary! Unhappy hours which I have squandered for the world, its vanities and pleasures! Where are you now? What shall I have from you in eternity but sorrow and desolation? Could I but call back my wasted life? But since that cannot be, give me Thy grace, I beseech Thee, O most beneficent God, to pass the remaining years of my life wholly in Thy service, and work above all and only for the affairs of my soul.

THOUGHTS OF ST. BERNARD ON THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

ON this day the glorified Virgin entered heaven and crowned by her presence the holy pleasures of its inhabitants. But what mind can conceive the glory with which the arrival of the Queen of the world was celebrated by the brilliant heavenly hosts, their advance to greet her, their chanting as they led her to the magnificent throne? Who can fancy the tender gaze, the loving countenance, the divine caresses with which she was received by her Son and placed over all created beings, honored as became such a mother, with the glory that became such a Son? What lips can describe the assumption of Mary? As upon earth she, before all others, received special grace, so in heaven she, before all others, receives special glory. If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to know the delights that God has prepared for those that love Him, who shall say what is prepared for her who bore Him and loved Him more than all! O blessed art thou, Mary! Most blessed wert thou, when thou didst receive the Saviour; most blessed art thou, when the Saviour receives thee!

ST. BERNARD'S PRAYER TO MARY

We accompany thee, on this day, with our most ardent wishes to thy Son, O glorious Virgin, Queen of heaven! and follow thee from afar, O happy Virgin! Give thy mildness to the world, give of the grace thou hast found with God. Obtain by thy blessed intercession, grace for the guilty, recovery for the sick, strength for the faint-hearted, aid for those in peril! Dispense to us thy servants, who on this glorious festival-day invoke thy sweetest name, O gentlest Queen, the grace of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord and God, to whom be glory forever. Amen.