



August, the month of the Assumption. The meditation for this eighth first Saturday of the Jubilee will therefore focus on this wonderful mystery. Let us begin by contemplating Our Lady in the last moments of her life. Since Pentecost, she has been experiencing an immense thirst to be reunited with her Son. But as usual, she will live this final separation in the inner peace of her last "Fiat." She will use this time to strengthen the Apostles and the nascent Church entrusted to her, while preparing her soul.

And now her last hour has come. Her peace and joy continue to grow. She knows that she will finally see her Son again with the Father. The apostles are around her and they pray, not without some fear of seeing the one who is their Mother and the pillar of the Church depart. After experiencing the departure of their Master and Lord, they were enlivened by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But Mary's departure will leave them orphaned. From now on, the Church on earth will be entrusted to them. Their mission awaits them. The Blessed Virgin looked at them with inexpressible tenderness and made them understand that, from Heaven, she would watch over them and over the Church. A great Benedictine preacher, Dom Guéranger, described the scene as follows:



"There is no solemnity that breathes at once triumph and peace as this one does, that responds better to the enthusiasm of the people and the serenity of souls consumed with love. Certainly, the triumph was no less on the day when the Lord, rising from the tomb by His own power, defeated hell; but in our souls, so suddenly drawn from the abyss of sorrow on the day after Golgotha, the suddenness of the victory mingled with a kind of stupor (Mark 16:5) with the joy of this greatest of days. In Mary's death, there is no impression that is not entirely peaceful; there is no cause for this death other than love."

In this peace, after one last look at the Apostles, Mother Mary raised her eyes to Heaven, peacefully surrendered her soul to God, and in a great silence disappeared from everyone's sight. From then on, the rest of the Assumption took place in Heaven. The Son welcomed His Mother. Their mission on earth accomplished, they were finally reunited for eternity. Oh, how our sweet Jesus must have waited for this moment! And how He must have prepared for it! *"To lead you to Heaven, O Mother of God, it is the King of Heaven Himself with all His court, it is your divine Son who came to fetch you with the army of angels,"* says St. Rupert. St. Anselm (Doctor of the Church, 1033-1109), explains that the Redeemer wanted to ascend to Heaven before His Mother not only to prepare a throne worthy of Her in His royal palace, but also to make Her entrance into Heaven more triumphant and glorious, receiving Her Himself with all the angels and the blessed of Paradise. Here is his description of the Assumption:

He Himself, accompanied by myriads or rather innumerable choirs of angels, rushes forward to meet this august Virgin who is rising from the earth; He lifts her up to the highest heavens and seats her on a throne of honor, from where she will reign eternally with Him over all creatures. Since that moment, has there ever been a more solemn reception, a more sublime exaltation? This day of triumph and supreme happiness for you, our sweet Queen, is a cause of rejoicing and continual admiration for all ages; for today, not only are you filled with incomparable glory, but Heaven itself, with all that it contains, is adorned with a new glory by your presence, which increases its splendor beyond all thought and expression.

Have we noticed that, on three occasions, Mary's Heart was separated from and then reunited with the Heart of Jesus? The first time was in the temple. This is the joyful mystery. Then came the sorrowful mysteries and the separation caused by Jesus' death on the Cross, which pierced Mary's Heart. Next came the glorious mysteries. The risen Christ is reunited with his Mother. Finally, the third and last separation, the Ascension, followed by the eternal union that is realized on this feast of the Assumption.

These "separations/unions" of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which punctuate the three series of Mysteries of the Rosary, are a lesson for our spiritual life. Indeed, on earth our progress towards God is made through a succession of moments of "desolation," a kind of separation where we feel an emptiness or even an apparent absence of God, followed by moments of "consolation," a true reunion with Him, where we feel His presence and love strongly in our souls. The great saints are no exception. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus underwent a terrible trial of desolation for an entire year. This is the famous "night" of Saint Thérèse.

Why are these variations also called "spiritual respiration"? Because God wants to raise our souls as high as possible on earth so that when we die we will be closest to Him and thus deserve a more perfect place with Him for eternity. For this, it is necessary that our faith be as great as possible here on earth, that is, that we know how to believe in Him without seeing Him with our eyes, but also without seeing Him with our human feelings. These are the words of Christ to Saint Thomas. *"Blessed are those who believe without seeing."* But to support us on this difficult path, He grants us periods of rest when we can see Him with our hearts and regain strength in this tangible inner happiness. Let us allow ourselves to be guided by Him without worrying when He hides Himself from us.

Let us remember that Christ went through this and suffered the greatest of all desolations: that of the Garden of Olives. What an example for us! And at the moment of His death, that other supreme desolation: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* A cry of distress but also of absolute faith in perfect obedience. The Blessed Virgin also walked this demanding path on Holy Saturday. Despite the unbearable reality of her Son's death, despite her terrible desolation, she continued to believe, alone. That Holy Saturday, Mary's true "Garden of Olives," was followed by the immense consolation of the Resurrection.

Yes, Christ and the Blessed Virgin show us how true spiritual life is not based on a search for emotional well-being, which is nothing more than an illusion of faith, but on the contrary on this magnificent inner struggle to believe without seeing and to accept His will without necessarily understanding it. Therein lies the true love of God, where the soul gives itself to Him without seeking a sentimental "return" and finds in reality a much deeper and more solid inner peace. It is in this wonderful peace of total faith that Our Lady, despite this final separation from her Son, ascended into Heaven on this feast of the Assumption.

So, whatever happens, whatever the circumstances, when we feel less or no longer feel God's presence in our prayers or in the events of our lives, let us not be anxious. **It is at such times that God lifts us up the most.** And if doubt assails us, which is normal, let us repeat the words of Saint Teresa of Avila: *"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, everything passes, God does not change, patience obtains everything; he who has God lacks nothing: God alone suffices."*

Let us now turn to the fruit of the mystery: the grace of a good death. If we pray at each *Hail Mary* for the hour of our death, if the grace promised by the Blessed Virgin with the first five Saturdays of the month concerns her help at our death, it is because this moment is crucial for our salvation. We would be wrong not to prepare for it. This hour will indeed be the final battle, where Satan will try everything one last time to drag our souls to hell. At that hour, we will probably not have much strength left to fight, and if we have not prepared for this hour with Mary throughout our lives, how will we be able to withstand the assaults of hell?

"O Mary, you left the earth and arrived in heaven, where you reign over all the choirs of angels, as the Church sings! We know that we, miserable sinners, were not worthy to have you with us in this valley of darkness; but we also know that in the midst of your greatness you have not forgotten us, however poor and miserable we may be. Your elevation has only served to increase your compassion for us, children of Adam. From the height of your heavenly throne, cast your merciful eyes upon us, O Mary, have pity on us, look upon us, help us, see the storms and battles to which we are exposed as long as we remain on earth! Obtain for us, through the holiness of your death, perseverance in God's grace, so that when we leave this life, we may be united with the blessed spirits and sing your praises as you deserve. Amen. Saint Alphonsus Liguori