

*The Golden Legend or Lives Of The Saints*  
Compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, 1275  
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Lacunae in {curly brackets} supplied from W. G. Ryan's translation

## **119// THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY**

We find in a book sent to St. John the Evangelist, or else the book, which is said to be apocryphal, is ascribed to him, in what manner the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary was made. The apostles were departed and gone in to divers countries of the world for cause of preaching, and the blessed Lady and Virgin was in a house by the Mount of Sion, and as long as she lived she visited all the places of her son with great devotion, that is to say the place of his baptism, of his fasting, of his passion, of his sepulture, of his resurrection, and of his ascension.

And after that Epiphanius saith, she lived four-and-twenty years after the ascension of her son, and he saith also: When our Lady had conceived Jesu Christ she was of the age of fourteen years, and she was delivered in her fifteenth year, and lived and abode with him three and thirty years. And after his death she lived four-and-twenty years, and by this account when she departed out of this world she was seventy-two years old; but it is more probable that which is read in another place, that she lived after the ascension of her son twelve years, and so then she was sixty years old.

### **THE ANGEL TELLS MARY SHE WILL GO TO HER SON IN HEAVEN**

And on a day, when all the apostles were spread through the world in preaching, the glorious Virgin was greatly esprised and embraced with desire to be with her son Jesu Christ, and her courage [heart] was eschaufed [warmed] and moved, and great abundance of tears ran withoutforth, because she had not equally the comforts of her son, which were withdrawn from her for the time.

And an angel came tofore her, with great light, and saluted her honourably as the mother of his Lord, saying: All hail! blessed Mary, receiving the blessing of him that sent his blessing to Jacob, lo! here a bough of palm of paradise, Lady, which I have brought to thee, which thou shalt command to be borne tofore thy bier. For thy soul shall be taken from thy body the third day next following, and thy son abideth thee, his honourable mother.

To whom she answered: If I have found grace tofore thine eyes, I pray thee that thou vouchsafe to show to me thy name, and yet I pray thee more heartily that my sons and my brethren the apostles may be assembled with me, so that tofore I die I may see them with my bodily eyes, and after, to be buried of them, and they being here, I may yield up my ghost to God. And also yet I pray and require that my spirit, issuing out of the body, see not the horrible ne wicked spirit ne fiend, and that no might of the devil come against me.

And then the angel said: Lady, wherefore desirest thou to know my name? which is great and marvellous. All the apostles shall assemble this day to thee and shall make to thee noble exequies at thy passing, and in the presence of them thou shalt give up thy spirit. For he that

brought the prophet by his hair from Judea to Babylon, may without doubt suddenly in an hour bring the apostles to thee. And wherefore doubttest thou to see the wicked spirit, sith thou hast broken utterly his head, and hast despoiled him from the empire of his power? Nevertheless thy will be done, that thou see not the fiend.

And this said, the angel mounted into heaven with great light, and the palm shone by right great clearness, and was like to a green rod whose leaves shone like to the morrow star.

### **ST. JOHN COMES TO HER FROM EPHEBUS**

And it happed as St. John the Evangelist preached in Ephesus, the heaven suddenly thundered, and a white cloud took him up and brought him tofore the gate of the blessed Virgin Mary. And he knocked at the door and entered and saluted the Virgin honourably. Whom the blessed Virgin beheld, and was greatly abashed for joy, and might not abstain her from weeping, and said to him: John, my son, remember thee of the word of thy master, by which he made me mother unto thee, and thee a son unto me. Lo! I am called of thy master and my God. I pay now the debt of condition human, and recommend my body unto thy busy cure. I have heard say that the Jews have made a council, and said: "Let us abide brethren unto the time that she that bare Jesus be dead, and then incontinent we shall take her body and shall cast it into the fire and burn it." Thou therefore take this palm, and bear it tofore the bier when ye shall bear my body to the sepulchre.

### **ALL THE APOSTLES ARE BROUGHT TO MARY**

Then said John: O would God that all my brethren the apostles were here, that we might make thine exequies convenably as it behoveth and is digne and worthy. And as he said that, all the apostles were ravished with clouds from the places where they preached, and were brought tofore the door of the blessed Virgin Mary.

And when they saw them assembled, they marvelled, and said: For what cause hath our Lord assembled us here?

Then St. John went out and said to them that our Lady should pass and depart out of this world, and added more thereto, saying: Brethren, beware and keep you from weeping when she shall depart, because that the people that shall see it be not troubled, and say: "Lo! there, how they dread the death which preach to others the resurrection."

And Denis, disciple of Paul, affirmeth this same in the book of divine names, that is to wit that all the apostles were assembled at the assumption and death of our Lady Mary and were together there, and that each of them made a sermon unto the praising and laud of Jesu Christ and the blessed Virgin his mother. He said thus, speaking to Timothy: Thus we and thou, as thou well knowest, and many of our holy brethren, did assemble at the vision of the mother that received God. And James, brother of God, was there. And Peter the apostle, most noble and sovereign of the theologians. And after that me seemed that all the Hierarchies lifted her up, after and according to her virtue without end. This saith St. Denis.

## **JESUS COMES FOR HIS MOTHER**

And when the blessed Virgin Mary saw all the apostles assembled, she blessed our Lord, and sat in the midst of them where the lamps, tapers, and lights burned. And about the third hour of the night Jesu Christ came with sweet melody and song, with the orders of the angels, the companies of patriarchs, the assembly of martyrs, the convents of confessors, the carols of virgins. And tofore the bed of our blessed Lady the companies of all these saints were set in order and made sweet song and melody. And what exequies were done of our blessed Lady, and there hallowed it is all said and enseigned in the foresaid book which is attributed to St. John.

For first, Jesu Christ began to say: Come my chosen and I shall set thee in my seat, for I have coveted the beauty of thee.

And our Lady answered: Sir, my heart is ready.

And all they that were come with Jesu Christ entuned sweetly saying: This is she that never touched the bed of marriage in delight, and she shall have fruit in refecton of holy souls.

Then she sang of herself, saying: All the generations shall say that I am blessed, for he that is mighty hath done great things to me, and the name of him is holy.

And the chanter of chanters entuned more excellently above all others, saying: Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, come, thou shalt be crowned.

And she said: I come, for in the beginning of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will, for my spirit hath joyed in thee, God my health.

## **JESUS CARRIES HER SOUL TO HEAVEN**

And thus in the morning the soul issued out of the body and fled up in the arms of her son. And she was as far estranged from the pain of the flesh as she was from corruption of her body. Then said our Lord to the apostles: Bear ye the body of this virgin, my mother, into the vale of Jehosaphat and lay ye her in a new sepulchre that ye shall find there, and abide me there three days till that I return to you.

And anon she was environed with flowers of roses, that was the company of martyrs, and with lilies of the valley, that was the company of angels, of confessors and virgins. And the apostles cried after her saying: Right wise virgin, whither goest thou? Lady, remember thee of us.

And then the company of saints that were abiden there were awaked with the sound of the song of them that mounted, and came against her, and saw their king bear in his proper arms the soul of a woman, and saw that this soul was joined to him, and were abashed and began to cry, saying: Who is this that ascendeth from the desert, full of delices, joined to her friend ?

And they that accompanied her said: This is the right fair among the daughters of Jerusalem, and like as ye have seen her full of charity and dilection, so is she joyously received, and set in the seat of glory on the right side of her son. And the apostles saw the soul of her being so white that no mortal tongue might express it.

### **THE APOSTLES CARRY HER BIER**

And then three maidens that were there took off the clothes from the body for to wash it. The body anon shone by so great clearness that they might well feel it in touching and washing but they might not see it. And that light shone as long as they were about the washing of it. And then the apostles took the body honourably and laid it on the bier, and John said to Peter: Bear this palm tofore the bier, for our Lord hath ordained thee above us, and hath made thee pastor and prince of his sheep.

To whom Peter said: It appertaineth better to thee to bear it, for thou art chosen virgin of our Lord, and thou oughtest to bear this palm of light at the exequies of chastity and holiness, thou that drankest at the fountain of perdurable clearness. And I shall bear the holy body with the bier, and these other apostles our brethren shall go round about the body yielding thankings to God.

And then St. Paul said to him: I, that am least of the apostles and of you all, shall bear with thee. And then Peter and Paul lifted up the bier, and Peter began to sing and say: "Israel is issued out of Egypt," and the other apostles followed him in the same song. And our Lord covered the bier and the apostles with a cloud, so that they were not seen, but the voice of them was heard only. And the angels were with the apostles singing, and replenished all the land with marvellous sweetness.

### **THE HIGH PRIEST AND A MOB ATTACK THE BIER**

And then all the people was moved with that sweet melody, and issued hastily out of the city and enquired what it was, and then there were some that said to them that Mary such a woman is dead, and the disciples of her son Jesu bear her and make such melody as ye hear about her.

And then ran they to arms, and they warned each other saying: Come and let us slay all the disciples, and let us burn the body of her that bare this traitor. And when the prince of priests saw that, he was all abashed and full of anger, and said: Lo! here the tabernacle of him that troubled us and our lineage. Behold what glory he now receiveth.

And in saying so, he laid his hands on the bier willing to turn it, and overthrew it to the ground. Then suddenly both his hands waxed dry and cleaved to the bier, so that he hung by the hands on the bier, and was sore tormented and wept and brayed [bruised]. And the angels that were there in the clouds blinded all the other people that they saw nothing.

## **THE HIGH PRIEST COMES TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER**

And the prince of priests said: St. Peter, despise me not in this tribulation, and I pray thee to pray for me to our Lord. Thou oughtest to remember when the chamberer, that was usher, accused thee, and I excused thee.

And St. Peter said to him: We be now empeshed [hindered] in the service of our Lady, and may not now entend to heal thee, but and if thou believest in our Lord Jesu Christ, and in this that bare him, I ween and hope that thou soon shalt have health and be all whole.

And he answered: I believe our Lord Jesu Christ to be the Son of God, and that this is his right holy mother.

And anon his hands were loosed from the bier, but yet the dryness and the pain ceased not in him. And then St. Peter said to him: kiss the bier and say: I believe in God Jesu Christ that this woman bare in her belly, and remained virgin after the childing.

And when he had so said, he was anon all whole perfectly. And then said Peter to him: Take that palm of the hand of our brother John, and lay it on the people that be blind, and who that will believe shall receive his sight again. And they that will not believe shall never see.

## **MARY'S BODILY ASSUMPTION**

And then the apostles bare Mary unto the monument and sat by it, like as our Lord had commanded, and at the third day Jesu Christ came with a great multitude of angels and saluted them, and said: Peace be with you. And they answered: God, glory be to thee which only makest the great miracles and marvels. And our Lord said to the apostles: What is now your advice that I ought now to do to my mother of honour and of grace?

Sire, it seemeth to us thy servants that like as thou hast vanquished the death and reignest world without end, that thou raise also the body of thy mother and set it on thy right side in perdurability.

And he granted it. And then Michael the angel came and presented the soul of Mary to our Lord. And the Saviour spake and said: Arise up, haste thee, my culver or dove, tabernacle of glory, vessel of life, temple celestial, and like as thou never feltest conceiving by none atouchment, thou shalt not suffer in the sepulchre no corruption of body. And anon the soul came again to the body of Mary, and issued gloriously out of the tomb, and thus was received in the heavenly chamber, and a great company of angels with her.

## **THE DOUBTS OF ST. THOMAS**

And St. Thomas was not there, and when he came he would not believe this. And anon the girdle with which her body was girt came to him from the air, which he received, and thereby he understood that she was assumpt into heaven.

## THE OPINION OF ST. JEROME

And all this heretofore is said and called *apocryphum*. Whereof St. Jerome saith in a sermon to Paula and Eustochia her daughter:

That book is said to be *apocryphum*, save that some words which be worthy of faith and be approved of saints as touching nine things, that is to wit, that the comfort of the apostles was promised and given to the virgin, and that all the saints assembled there, and that she died without pain, and was buried in the vale of Jehosaphat. And there were made ready the obsequies and the devotion to Jesu Christ, and the coming of the celestial company, and the persecution of the Jews, and the shining of the miracles, and that she was assumpt into heaven, body and soul. But many other things be put there more at fantasy and simulation than at truth. As that, that Thomas was not there, and when he came he doubted, and other things semblable, which be better not to believe them than not to believe her clothes and vestments were left in her tomb, to the comfort of good Christian men.

## MIRACLES OF OUR LADY

### A Duke of Normandy Abuses Her Coat

And of one part of her vestments it is said there happed such a great miracle as followeth. When the Duke of Normandy had assieged the city of Chartres, the bishop of the city took the coat of our Lady and set it on the head of a spear like a banner and went out against the enemy surely, and the people followed him. And anon all the host of the enemies were turned into frenzy, and were blind and trembled, and all were abashed. And when they of the city saw this thing, above the divine demonstrance they went on eagerly and slew their enemies, the which thing displeased much the virgin St. Mary, as it was proved by that that her coat vanished away, and the duke, their enemy, found it in his lap.

### A Revelation of St. Elizabeth

It is read in the revelations of St. Elizabeth that, on a time as she was ravished in spirit, she saw in a place much far from folk a tomb or a sepulchre environed with much light, and was like the form of a woman withinforth, and there was about it a great multitude of angels, and a little while after she was taken out of the sepulchre and borne up on high with that multitude. And then came against her a man bearing in his right arm the sign of the cross, and had with him many angels without number, which received her much joyously and led her with great melody into heaven.

And a little while after, Elizabeth demanded of an angel to whom she spake oft, of that vision that she saw. It is showed to thee, said the angel, in that vision, that the Virgin our Lady is assumpt into heaven as well in her body as in her soul.

It is said in the same revelations that it was showed to her that the fortieth day after the soul departed from her body she was so assumpt into heaven, and also that when our blessed Lady spake to her, she said: After the Ascension of our Lord a whole year, and as many days more as be from the Ascension unto her assumption, she overlived.

And also she said: All the apostles were at my departing, and buried my body honourably, and forty days after was raised.

And then St. Elizabeth demanded of her whether she should hide this thing, or that she should manifest it and show it.

And she said: It is not to be showed to fleshly ne unbelieving people, ne it is not to be hid to devout and Christian people.

### **THE MANNER OF HER ASSUMPTION**

It is to be noted that the glorious Virgin Mary was assumpt and lifted up into heaven entirely, joyously, and gloriously.

#### **Entirely: Body and Soul Taken Together**

She was received entirely, that is, wholly, as the church believeth debonairly [meekly], and that affirm many saints, and enforce them to prove it by many reasons.

And the reason of St. Bernard is such. He saith that God hath made the body of St. Peter and St. James so gloriously to be honoured that he hath enhanced them by marvellous honour, that to them is deputed place convenable for to be worshipped. and all the world goeth to seek and offer to them. Then if the body of his blessed mother were on the earth, and not haunted by devout visitation of Christian men, it should be marvel to hear that God would not have done as much worship to his mother, and honoured as much her body as the bodies of other saints upon the earth.

Jerome saith thus, that the Virgin Mary mounted into heaven the eighteenth calends of September [i.e., August 15]. That which he saith of the assumption of the body of Mary, the church will rather debonairly believe it, than rashly to explain it, and he proved it afterward that it is to be believed that they that arose with our Lord have accomplished their perdurable resurrection. Wherefore should not we say then that it is done in the Blessed Virgin Mary. And also many believe that St. John the Evangelist is glorified in his flesh with Jesu Christ; and then much more our Lady ought to be glorified in heaven, both body and soul, which saith: Worship thy father and mother, and he came not to break the law but to fulfil it, and therefore he honoureth his mother above all other.

St. Austin affirmeth not this only, but he proveth it by three reasons. And the first reason is the unity and assembly of the flesh of our Lord and of our Lady, and saith thus: Putrefaction and worms is the reproach of condition human, which Jesus never touched, and the flesh of Jesu

is out of this reproof, the nature of Mary is out thereof, for it is proved that Jesu Christ hath taken his flesh of her.

The second reason is the dignity of the body of her of whom himself saith: This is the siege of God, the chamber of our Lord of heaven, and the tabernacle of Christ. She is worthy to be where he is, so precious a treasure is more worthy to be kept in heaven than in earth.

The third reason is perfect entireness of her virginal flesh, and saith thus: Enjoy thou Mary of honourable gladness in body and in soul. In thy proper son, and by thy proper son, thou oughtest to have no harm of corruption; where thou haddest no corruption of virginity in childing so great a son, so thou whom he endued with so great glory shouldst be alway without corruption, and live entirely, which barest entire him that is perfect of all, and that she be with him whom she bare in her womb, and that she be at him whom she childed, gave suck and nourished. Mary, mother of Jesu Christ, administratrix and servant. And because I may none other thing feel, I dare none otherwise say ne presume. And hereof saith a noble versifier: *Transit ad æthera, virgo puerpera, virgula Jesse, Non sine corpore, sed sine tempore, tendit adesse.* "The virgin that childed mounted into heaven, the little rod of Jesse, not without body, but without time, she entendeth to be there, virgin pure and net."

#### Joyously: The Joy of Heaven upon Her Assumption

Secondly, she was assumpt and taken up gladly. And hereof saith Gerard, bishop and martyr, in his homily: The heavens received this day the Blessed Virgin, the angels were glad, the archangels enjoyed, the thrones sang, the dominations made melody, the principalities harmonised, the potestates harped, cherubim and seraphim sang laudings and praisings, and bringing her with thankings and lauds unto the siege of the divine and sovereign majesty.

#### Gloriously: The Queen of Heaven

Thirdly, she was lifted up in heaven so honourably that, Jesu Christ himself, with all the strength of the heavenly company, came against her. Of whom St. Jerome saith: Who is he that is sufficient to think how the glorious queen of the world went up this day, and how the multitude of the celestial legions came against her with great talent of devotion, and with what songs she was brought unto her seat, and how she was received of her son and embraced with peaceable cheer and clear face, and how she was enhanced above all other creatures?

And yet he saith: It is on this day that the chivalry of heaven came hastily for to meet with the mother of God, and environed her with great light, and brought her to her seat with praisings and songs spiritual. And then enjoyed them the celestial company of Jerusalem with so great gladness that no man may recount ne tell, and made joy and song, all enjoying in charity because that this feast is every year hallowed of us, and made continuous with all others. And it is to believe that the Saviour himself came and met with her hastily, and brought her with him, and set her in her seat with great joy. And how had he accomplished otherwise that which he commanded in the law, saying: Honour thy father and mother.



## Excellently: Sitting Next unto Christ

Fourthly, she was received excellently. St. Jerome saith: This is the day in which the Virgin Mary, not corrupt, went unto the highness of the throne, and she was there enhanced in the heavenly kingdom and honoured gloriously, sitting next unto Christ. And how she is enhanced in the heavenly glory, Gerard the bishop rehearseth in his homilies, saying: Our Lord Jesu Christ alone may praise this blessed Virgin his mother as he did, and magnify, so that she be continually praised of that majesty, and honoured and environed of the company of angels, enclosed with the turmes of archangels, possessed of the thrones and girt about of the dominations, environed with the service of the potestates, beclipped with the embracements of the principates, enjoyed with the honours of the virtues, obeyed with lauds and praisings of the cherubins, and possessed on all parts with not recountable songs of the seraphins. And the over great and ineffable Trinity enjoyeth in her perdurable gladness, and his grace redoundeth all in her and maketh all other to entend and await on her. The overshining order of the apostles honour her with ineffable laud. The honourable multitude of martyrs beseech her in all manner as one so great a lady. The fellowship of confessors innumerable continue their song to her, the right noble and white company of virgins make noble carolling of the glory of her. Hell, full of malice, howleth, and the cursed devils cry unto her and dread her.

## FURTHER MIRACLES OF THE VIRGIN

### The Devout Cleric

There was a clerk, devout unto the virgin Mary, which studied every day how he might comfort her against the pain of the five wounds of Jesu Christ, saying thus: Rejoice thee virgin and mother undefouled, which receives the joy of the angels, enjoy that thou conceivedst, enjoy thee that childedst the light of clearness, enjoy thee mother which never wert touched, all features and all creatures praise thee mother of light, be thou for us always praying to our Lord.

And as this clerk had lain long with an over great sickness, and came toward his end, he began to dread, and was troubled, and our blessed Lady appeared to him and said: Son, wherefore tremblest thou by so great fear, which hast so oft showed to me joy? Be thou joyful now thyself, and that thou mayest enjoy perdurably, come with me.

### The Immoral Monk

There was a monk much jolly and light of his living but devout to our Lady, which on a night went to do his folly accustomed, but when he passed before the altar of our Lady, he saluted the virgin, and so went forth out of the church. And as he should pass a river he fell into the water and drowned, and the devils took the soul.

Then came angels for to deliver it, and the devils said to them: Wherefore come ye hither? Ye have nothing in this soul.

And anon the Blessed Virgin came, and blamed them because they had taken the soul which was hers. And they said that they had found him finishing his life in evil works. And she

said: It is false that ye say, I know well that when he went into any place he saluted me first, and when he returned and came again also; and if ye say that I do you wrong, let us put it again in judgment of the sovereign king.

And when they strove tofore our Lord of this matter, it pleased him that the soul should return again to the body and repent him of his sins and trespasses.

And then the brethren saw that the matins were over long deferred, and sought the sexton, and went to the river and found him there drowned. And when they had drawn the body out of the water what they should do they wist not, and marvelled what he had done; and suddenly he came again to life, and told what he had done, and after finished his life in good works.

### The Knight Who Sold His Wife to the Devil

There was a knight which was mighty and rich, that dispended follily his goods, and came to so great a poverty that he which had been accustomed to give largely great things, had need to demand and ask the small. And he had a right chaste wife, and much devout to the blessed Virgin Mary. And a great solemnity approached, at which the knight was accustomed to give many gifts. And he had nothing to give, whereof he was greatly ashamed. And he went into place desert, full of heaviness, and of weeping, so long that the feast was passed, for to wail there his evil fortune and for to eschew shame.

And anon a knight, much horrible, came, sitting on an horse, which arreasured the knight and enquired of him the cause of his great heaviness. And he told him all by order that as was happed to him. And this foul knight said to him: If thou wilt a little obey to me, thou shalt abound in glory and in riches more than thou wert tofore.

And he promised to the devil that he would do so gladly if he accomplished that he promised. And then he said to him: Go home into thine house, and thou shalt find in such a place there, so much gold and so much silver. And thou shalt find there also precious stones, and do so much that such a day thou bring me hither thy wife. And the knight returned home into his house, and found all things like as the devil had promised. And anon he bought a palace and gave great gifts, and bought again his heritage, and took his men again to him.

And the day approached which he had promised to lead his wife to the fiend, and called her, saying: Let us go to horseback, for ye must come with me unto a place far hence. And she trembled and was afeard, and durst not gainsay the commandment of her husband. And she commended herself devoutly to the Blessed Virgin, and began to ride after her husband.

And when they had ridden a good while they saw in the way a church, and she descended from the horse and entered into the church. Her husband abode without. And as she commended herself devoutly to the Blessed Virgin Mary in great devotion and contemplation, she suddenly slept, and the glorious virgin did on semblable habit of [put on clothes similar to those of] this lady and departed from the altar and issued out and mounted upon the horse. And the lady abode sleeping in the church, and the knight weened that she had been his wife that was with him, and went always forth.

And when he was come to the place assigned, the devil came with a great reise [disturbance] to the place, and when he approached and came near, he quaked and trembled anon and durst go no nearer. Then said he to the knight: Thou most traitor of all men, wherefore hast thou deceived me, and hast rendered to me harm for such great good as I have given to thee? I said to thee that thou shouldst bring thy wife to me, and thou hast brought the mother of God. I would have thy wife, and thou hast brought to me Mary. For thy wife hath done to me many injuries, wherefore I would take on her vengeance. And thou hast brought to me this for to torment me, and for to send me to hell.

And when the knight heard this he was sore abashed, and might not hold him from weeping, ne durst not speak for dread and marvel. And then the Blessed Mary said: Thou felon spirit, by what folly dost thou will to grieve and annoy my devout servant? This shall not be left in thee unpunished. I bind thee in this sentence, that thou descend into hell, and that thou henceforth have no presumption to grieve none that call upon me.

And then he went away with great howling. And the man sprang down from his horse and kneeled down on his knees to her feet. And the Virgin our Lady blamed him, and commanded him to return again to his wife, which yet slept in the church, and bade him that he should cast away all the riches of the devil. And when he came again he found his wife yet sleeping, and awoke her, and told to her all that was befallen. And when they were come home they threw away all the riches of the devil, and dwelled alway in the louings [praises] of our Lady, and received afterward many riches that our Lady gave to them.

### The Man Whose Deeds Were Weighed Before the Lord

There was a man which was ravished in judgment tofore God, for he had much sinned, and the devil was there and said: Ye have nothing on this soul, but it ought to be mine, for I have thereof an instrument public [a warrant].

To whom our Lord said: Where is thine instrument?

I have, he said, an instrument that thou saidest with thy proper mouth and hast ordained it for to endure perpetually. For thou saidest in what hour that ye eat of it ye shall die, and this is of the lineage of them that took of the meat [food] forbidden. And by right of this instrument public he ought to be judged to me.

And then our Lord said: Let the man speak, but the man spake not.

{The demon spoke again: “He is mine also by right of prescription, because I owned him for thirty years and he obeyed me as a slave should.” But the man still remained silent. }

And the devil said yet again: The soul is mine, for if he hath done any good deeds, the wicked deeds pass the good without comparison.

And then our Lord would not anon give sentence against him, so that he gave him term of eight days, so that at the end of eight days he should appear again tofore him, and give account of all these things.

And as he went from the visage of our Lord, sorrowing and trembling, he met with a man which asked the cause of his heaviness. And he told to him all by order, and he said to him: “Doubt thee nothing, ne be not afeard, for I shall help thee manly from the first [i.e. the devil’s first claim on him, the ‘warrant’].” And he demanded of him his name, and he said: Verity. And after he found another which pronounced to help him for the second [i.e. the devil’s claim “by right of prescription”]. And when he had asked his name, he said his name was Righteousness.

At the eighth day he came to the doom tofore the judge, and the devil opposed to him the first case [the warrant], and Truth answered and said: We know well that there is double death, corporal and infernal, and this instrument that the devil allegeth against thee speaketh no word of the death of hell, but of the death of the body, and of that it is clear that all men be enclosed in that sentence, that is to wit that he dieth in his body, and that is not the death of hell. And as touching the death of the body, the sentence endureth always, but as to the death of the soul, it is repealed by the death of Jesu Christ.

Then the devil saw that he was discharged of the first. Then he opposed and alleged the second [his claim by right of prescription], but Righteousness came and answered thus: Howbeit that he hath been thy servant many years, nevertheless reason gainsayeth it. For reason murmured always because he served so cruel a lord.

But at the third objection [the man’s good and bad deeds], he had none help, and our Lord said: Bring forth the balance, and let all the good and evil be weighed; and then Truth and Righteousness said to the sinner, Run with all thy thought unto the Lady of mercy which sitteth by the judge, and study to call her to thine help.

And when he had so done, the Blessed Virgin Mary came in to his help and laid her hand upon the balance whereas were but few good deeds. And the devil enforced him to draw on that other side, but the mother of mercy won and obtained and delivered the sinner. And then he came again to himself and amended his life.

### The Virgin Saves a Jewish Child

It happed in the city of Bourges, about the year of our Lord five hundred and twenty-seven, that when the Christian men were communed and houseled on an Easter day, a child of a Jew went to the altar with the other children, and received our Lord’s body with the others. And when he came home, his father demanded him whence he came, and he answered that he came from school, and that he had been houseled with them at mass. And then the father full of woodness took the child and threw him into a burning furnace that was there.

And anon the mother of God came in the form of an image, which the child had seen standing on the altar, and kept him from the fire without taking any harm. And the mother of the child, with her great crying, made to assemble many Christian men and Jews, the which saw the

child in the furnace without any harm or hurt, and drew him out, and demanded him how he escaped, and he answered and said: That reverend lady which stood upon the altar came and helped me, and put away all the fire from me.

Then the Christian men, understanding this to be the image of our Lady, took the father of the child and threw him into the furnace, which incontinent [forthwith] was burnt and consumed.

### **Monks Saved from Demons by the Virgin**

There were certain monks tofore day standing by a river, and talked and jangled there of fables and idle words. And they heard a great rowing and oars beating the water coming hastily. And the monks asked, Who be ye? And they said: We be devils that bear to hell the soul of Ebronien, provost of the house of the king of France, which was apostate in the monastery of St. Gall.

And when the monks heard that they doubted [were fearful] strongly, and cried high: St. Mary, pray for us!

And the devils said: Well have ye called Mary, for we would have disjoined you and have drowned you because of your dissolute and out of time jangling.

And then the monks returned to their convent, and the devils went in to hell.

### **The Woman Stalked by a Devil**

There was a woman that suffered many griefs and injuries of a devil which appeared visibly to her in the form of a man, and she sought many remedies, now holy water, now one thing, now another, but he ceased not. And then a holy man counselled her that, when he came to her that she should lift up her hands to heaven and cry: "St. Mary, help me!" And when she had so done, the devil fled all afraid as he had been smitten with a stone, and after stood and said: The cursed devil enter into his mouth that taught thee that, and anon vanished away and never came again.

### **HERE FOLLOWETH YET OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY**

The manner of the assumption of the right holy Virgin Mary, is showed in a sermon made and ordained of divers sayings of saints, the which is read solemnly in many churches, and therein is contained all that I can find in the world, in narrations of holy fathers, of the departing out of this life of the glorious virgin Mary, mother of God, that I have set here to the louing [praise] and praising of her.

### **Jesus' Message to His Mother**

St. Cosmo, which had to surname Vestitor, saith he hath learned of his foregoers which did that ought not to be forgotten, and saith that Jesu Christ ordained and disposed the life of his mother to be finished. He sent an angel accustomed, which showed to her tofore the demonstrance of her departing, that the death should not come suddenly and give to her tribulation. And she had

prayed him, her son, face to face, when he was here in earth, that she should not see any wicked spirit. He sent then to her the angel tofore with these words:

It is time to take my mother with me, and thus as thou hast replenished the earth with joy, so make heaven to enjoy. Thou shalt render the mansions of my father joyous. And thou shalt comfort the spirits of my saints. Be not thou wroth to leave the world corruptible with his covetises, but take the celestial palace. Mother, be not afraid to be taken from thy flesh, thou that art called to the life perdurable, to joy without failing, to the rest of peace, to sure conversation, to refecton not recordable, to light not quenchable, to day not evening, to glory not recountable, to myself, thy son, maker of all things, for I am life perdurable, love not corruptible, habitation not recordable, light without darkness, bounty not estimable. Give to the earth without trembling that which is his.

None shall ravish thee out of mine hands, for in my hands be all the ends of the world; deliver to me thy body, for I have put in thee my deity or godhead. The death shall never have joy on thee, for thou hast borne the very light; breaking ne destruction shall not environ thee, for thou hast deserved to be my vessel.

Come thou anon to him which is born of thee for to receive the guerdons of the womb of the mother, and the reward of thy milk for my meat. Come now fast, and haste thee to join thee to me, thine only son.

I know well thou shalt not be constrained for the love of another son rather than of me that showeth thee virgin and mother. I show thee a wall of steadfast faith, thou art an arch of salvation, a bridge to them that fleet, a staff to the feeble, a ladder to them that go up and mount to heaven, the most debonair advocate for sinners. I shall bring the apostles to thee, of whom thou shalt be buried right of their hands, for it appertaineth to my spiritual children of light, to whom I have given the Holy Ghost to bury thy body, and that they accomplish in thy person the service of thy marvellous departing out of the earth.

And after that the angel had recounted these things, he gave to our Lady a bough of palm, sent from the plant of paradise, in token of the victory against the corruption of death and clothes of immortality, and when he had said, he styed up [ascended] into heaven from whence he came from.

### The Neighbor Women Weep over Her Departure

Then the Blessed Virgin Mary assembled her neighbours and said to them: I let you wit certainly that I am at the end of my temporal life, and shall hastily depart; wherefore it behoveth that ye wake, for to every each that shall pass out of this world, come gladly good angels and wicked spirits.

And when they heard this they began to weep and say: Thou doubtst the sight of the spirits, which hast deserved to be mother of the maker of all things, and barest him that robbed hell, which hast deserved to have the seat above Cherubin and Seraphin, how shall we do then? And whither shall we flee?

And there were a great multitude of women weeping, and said that she should not leave them orphans. And the Blessed Virgin, our Lady, said in comforting them: Ye that be mothers of sons corruptible, may not well suffer to be a little while thence from your children, how then ought not I to desire to go to my son, which am mother and virgin, and he is only son of God the Father. And if ye or any of ye had but one son, ye would desire to see him and be comforted in the lineage of him, and I then, that am not corrupt, wherefore should not I be desirous to see him which is life of all creatures?

### St. John Arrives

And whilst they spake these things, the blessed St. John, the Evangelist, came and inquired how the matter went, and then when our Lady had told to him of her hasty departing, he fell down stretched to the earth, and said, with weeping tears: O Lord, what be we? Wherefore sendest thou to us so many tribulations? Why hast thou not erst taken away the soul from my body, and that I had been better visited of thy blessed mother, than I should come to her departing?

And then the Blessed Virgin led him weeping into her chamber, and showed to him the palm and the vestments which the angel had brought, and after, laid her down in her bed for to be there till her passing.

### The Other Apostles Arrive

And anon after came a great noise of thunder, and a whirlwind brought a cloud whiter than snow, in which the apostles were brought tofore the gate of our Blessed Lady, like as it had rained, so fell they down one after another. And as they marvelled of this thing, John came to them and told to them what the angel had showed to our Lady. And then they all wept and St. John comforted them, and then they dried their eyes and entered in to the Blessed Virgin, and saluted her honourably and adored, and she said to them: My dear children, God, my son, keep you all.

And when they had told to her of their coming, she said to them all their estate, and the apostles said: Right honourable Lady and Virgin, we, in beholding thee, be greatly comforted, like as we should be in our Lord and master, and we have only comfort in ourselves because we hope that thou shalt be mediatrix for us unto God.

And then she saluted Paul by name: God save thee, expositor of my comfort, howbeit that thou hast not seen Jesu Christ in his flesh.

Nevertheless I am comforted, said St. Paul, that I may see thee in the flesh. And unto this day I have preached to the people that thou hast borne Jesu Christ. And now I shall preach that thou art borne up to heaven to him.

And after, the Virgin showed to him that which the angel had brought, and warned them that the lights should not be put out till that she were departed, and there were two hundred and twenty tapers.

## The Apostles Sing a Farewell Hymn

And then she clad her with the cloth of mortality and saluted them all, and ordained her body to abide in her bed unto her issue and departing. And Peter stood at the head, and John at the feet, and the other apostles were about the bed, and gave laud to the virgin mother of God. And then Peter began the song and said: Enjoy thou spouse of God in the chambers celestial, thou candlestick of light without darkness, by thee is showed the everlasting light and clearness.

The blessed archbishop of Constantinople {St. Germain} witnesseth that all the apostles were assembled at the passing of the blessed Virgin Mary, the right sweet mother of God, saying thus: Blessed Lady, mother of God, thou that hast received of the nature human the death which may not be eschewed, yet shalt thou not sleep, ne the eye shall not slumber that keepeth thee. Thy departing hence ne thy dormition shall not be without witness. The heavens recount the glory of them that sang over thee in earth, and of them shall the truth be showed. The clouds cry to thee honour, and to him that ministereth to thee. The angels shall preach the service of life done in thee by the apostles which were assembled with thee in Jerusalem.

And St. Denis, Areopagite, witnesseth the same, saying: We, as I know well, and they and many of our brethren, were assembled for to see the body of her that bare God. And James, the brother of God, and Peter, the right noble and sovereign of theologians, were present. And after, it pleased them that, after this vision, all the sovereign priests sang louings after that each of them had conceived in his thought of the bounty of her.

## Christ Takes His Mother's Soul to Heaven

And St. Cosmo, in following the narration, saith: And after this a great thunder knocked at the house with so great an odour of sweetness, that with the sweet spirit the house was replenished, in such wise that all they that were there save the apostles, and three virgins which held the lights, slept. Then our Lord came with a great multitude of angels and took the soul of his mother, and the soul of her shone by so great light that none of the apostles might behold it. And our Lord said to St. Peter: Bury the corpse of my mother with great reverence, and keep it there three days diligently, and I shall then come again, and transport her unto heaven without corruption, and shall clothe her of the semblable clearness of myself; that which I have taken of her, and that which she hath taken of me, shall be assembled together and accord.

That same St. Cosmo rehearseth a dreadful and marvellous mystery of dissension natural and of curious inquisition. For all things that be said of the glorious virgin, mother of God, be marvellous above nature and be more to doubt than to enquire. For when the soul was issued out of the body, the body said these words: Sire, I thank thee that I am worthy of thy grace; remember thee of me, for I ne am but a thing faint, and have kept that which thou deliveredst me.

And then the other awoke and saw the body of the virgin without soul, and then began strongly to weep and were heavy and sorrowful. And then the apostles took up the body of the Blessed Virgin and bare it to the monument, and St. Peter began the psalm *In exitu Israel de Egypto*.



### The Anger of the Jerusalem Priesthood

And then the companies of angels gave louings and praisings to the virgin in such wise that all Jerusalem was moved for that great joy, so that the sovereign priests sent great multitude of people with glaives [spears] and staves [staffs], and one of them, in a great fury, came to the bier and would have thrown it down with the body of the blessed mother of God. And because that he enforced him so maliciously to touch and draw down the corpse, he lost his hands by his deserving, for both his hands were cut off by the wrists and hung on the bier, and he was tormented by horrible sorrow, and he required pardon and promised amends.

And St. Peter said to him: “Thou mayst in no wise have pardon if thou kiss not the bier of the Blessed Virgin, and that thou confess also Jesu Christ the Son of God to be formed in her.” And then, when he had so done his hands were joined again to his wrists, and was all whole. Then St. Peter took a leaf of the palm and gave it to him and said: Go in to the city and lay it on them that be sick, and they that will believe shall receive health.

### The Lord Takes Her to Heaven Bodily on the Third Day

And then when the apostles came to the Vale of Jehosaphat, they found a sepulchre like unto the sepulchre of our Lord, and laid therein the body with great reverence, but they durst not touch it, which was the right holy vessel of God, but the sudary [winding-sheet] in which she was wrapped, and laid it in the sepulchre. And as the apostles were about the sepulchre after the commandment of our Lord, at the third day, a cloud much bright environed the sepulchre, and the voice of angels was heard sound sweetly and a marvellous odour was felt sweet smelling. And when our Lord was come and seen descended there. all were marvellously abashed, and he bare the body with him of the Blessed Virgin with much great glory. And then the apostles kissed the sepulchre and returned into the house of St. John Evangelist in praising him as keeper and guard of so noble a virgin.

### The Apostle Who Doubted

And notwithstanding, one of the apostles failed [was absent] at this great solemnity, and when he heard so great miracles, he marvelled and required with great desire that her sepulchre might be opened for to know the truth of all these things. And the apostles denied it to him. All said that it ought enough to suffice the witness of so great persons, to the end that lest peradventure the misbelieved men should say that the body were stolen away or drawn by theft. And he then, which was angry, said: Why defend ye to me that which am semblable to you in your common treasures? And at the last they opened the sepulchre and found not the body, but they found only but the vestments, and the sudary.

### HOW ST. HELENA LEARNED THE TRUTH OF THE ASSUMPTION

St. Germain, Archbishop of Constantinople, saith that he found written in the *History Euthimiata* in the third book of the fortieth chapter, and the same witnesseth the great Damascene, that as the noble empress Helen in mind of holy church had made many churches in Constantinople, among all other she edified [built] in the time of Marcian the emperor at Balthernas a marvellous church

in the honour of the Virgin Mary, and called Juvenal archbishop of Jerusalem and all the other bishops of Palestine which dwelled then in the city royal for the cene which had been holden in Chalcedon, and she said to them: We have heard say that the body of the right holy virgin our Lady is in such a place, in such a tomb in the Vale of Jehosaphat; we will then that for the guard of this city, that the body of that Blessed Virgin be transported hither with due honour and reverence.

And Juvenal answered to her, like as he had found in ancient histories, that the body was borne into glory, and was not in the monument, for there was nothing left but the vestments and the sudary only. And those vestments Juvenal sent then into Constantinople, and were there laid honourably. And let no man ween [think] that I have made this of my proper head and engine [imagination], but I have set it here which I have by doctrine and study learned of the lesson of them, which by tradition and learning of their foregoers have received it. And hitherto endure the words of the said sermon.

### **YET OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY.**

Verily John Damascene, which for the time was a Greek, saith many marvellous things of the assumption of the right holy and glorious Virgin Mary. For he saith in his sermons that:

This day the right holy and sumptuous ark which bare within her her maker was brought and set in the temple which was not made of hands. On this day the right holy culver or dove, innocent and simple, fled from the ark, that is to say from the body in which God received and found rest. On this day the virgin that conceived, not knowing the passions earthly, but induced by the entendements celestial shall not fail, but shall be called very heaven, soul dwelling in the celestial tabernacles.

And howbeit that the right holy soul be separate from her blessed body, and that her body was laid in sepulchre, nevertheless it is not dead, ne shall not be corrupt by rotting, that is to wit, the body of whom, childing, the virginity remained without any hurting or dissolution, and is transported to better and more holy life without corruption of death for to remain in the tabernacles perdurable. And like as the sun shining clear other while, is hid and appeareth failing a short time, yet she hath nothing lost of her light, but in herself is the fountain of light perdurable. And thou art the fountain of light without wasting, the treasure of life, howbeit that by short interval or space of time thou shalt be brought to corporal death, nevertheless thou givest to us, abundantly, clearness of light without default, and thy holy dormition or sleeping is not called death, but a passing or departing, or more properly a coming, for thou departing from the body camest to heaven, and Jesu Christ, angels and archangels, and all the heavenly company came to meet thee.

The foul and damned spirits doubt much thy noble and excellent coming, and thou, blessed and glorious virgin thou wentest not to heaven as did Elijah, and thou mountedst not as Paul did unto the third heaven only, but thou camest and touchedst the siege royal of thy son.

The death of other saints may well be said death, for that death maketh them blessed, but he hath no place in thee. For thy death ne thy transmigration or thy

perfection, or thy departing, maketh thee not ne giveth thee surety to be blessed, for thou art beginning, middle and end of all weals and goods, which exceed thought human. Thy surety, thy very perfection, and thy conception without seed, and thy divine habitation have made thee blessed; whereof thou saidest thyself that, thou art not made blessed by thy death, but of thy conception in all generations. And death hath not made thee blessed, but thou hast ennobled the death in taking away the heaviness and sorrow thereof, converting it into joy. For God said: Lest peradventure the first form of man, that is to wit Adam, put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and live perdurably, how then shall not she live in heaven perdurably that bare this life which is perdurable and without end?

Sometime God putteth out of Paradise the first parents which slept in the death of sin, buried from the beginning of inobedience and gluttony, and now she that hath borne life to all human lineage, and was obedient to God the Father, and put away from her all ordure of sin, how shall not she be in heaven? Wherefore should not she enjoy the gates of heaven?

Eve stretched her ear to the serpent, of whom she took the venom mortal, and because she did it for delight, she was subdued to bearing and bringing forth children in sorrow and pain, and was condemned with Adam. But this Blessed Virgin that inclined her ear to the word of God, whom the Holy Ghost replenished, which bare in her womb the mercy of the Father; which conceived without knowledge of man, and childed without pain and sorrow, how durst death swallow her? How might anything have corruption that bare life?

And yet saith the said Damascene in his sermons:

Verily the apostles were departed through the world in all countries and entended to preaching to men, and to draw them out of the deep darkness by one holy word, and brought them to the table celestial and to the solemn espousals of God. And then the divine commandment, which is a net or cloud, brought them from all the parts of the world into Jerusalem, in assembling them between his wings. And then Adam and Eve our first parents cried: Come to us, right holy and wholesome celyer [secret abode], which fulledest our desire.

And the company of saints which was there, said again: Remain with us our comfort and leave us not orphelins, thou art the comfort of our travails, refreshing of our sweatings, that if thou live it is to us a glorious thing to live with thee, and if thou die, it is glorious to us to die with thee. How should we be in this life, and shall be destitute of the presence of thy life.

And, as I suppose, such things and semblable said the apostles with great plenty of them of the church, with great wailings and sighs in complaining them from the departing. And she, returning towards her son, said: Sire, I pray thee to be very comforter to my sons whom it pleased thee to call brethren, which be heavy and sorrowful of my departing. And with that I shall bless them with my hand, give to them thy blessing upon my blessing.

And then she stretched out her hand, and blessed all the college of good Christian men, and then said after: Lord, I commend my spirit into thy hands, receive my soul, thy love, which thou hast kept without blame of sin to thyself.

And I commend my body to the earth for to keep it whole, or where it shall please thee to enhabit it, transport me to thee, so where thou art the infantment or fruit of my womb that I be dwelling with thee.

All these words heard the apostles. Then said our Lord: Arise up, my beloved, and come to me. O thou most fair among women, my love, thou art fair, and no spot of filth is in thee.

And when the right Blessed Virgin heard that, she commended her spirit into the hands of her son. Then the apostles were bedewed with tears, and kissed the tabernacle. And by the blessing and holiness of the holy body, whosoever touched the bier devoutly were healed of whatsoever sickness they had. Devils were chased from demoniacs, the air and the heaven were purified by the assumption of the soul, and the earth by the deposition of the body. And the water was sanctified by the washing of the body. For the body was washed with right holy water and clean. And the holy body was not made clean by the water, but the water was hallowed of her.

And after, the holy body was wounden and wrapped in a clean sudary, and was laid upon the bed, and lamps burnt full bright about her. Ointments gave a great and fragrant odour, the louings and praisings of angels resounded. And the apostles and other that were there sang divine songs. And the ark of our Lord was borne in to Mount of Sion, unto the Vale of Jehosaphat, upon the heads of the apostles. And the angels went tofore some, and some followed the body, and other conveyed her. And she was accompanied of all the plenty of the church.

And some of the Jews who heard it, in their evil malice descended down from the Mount of Sion, and one of them, which was a member of the devil, ran follily unto the holy body, and assailed it for to have cast it to the earth, drawing it with both his hands, and both his hands cleaved to the bier, and were departed from the body, like as two staves had been sawed off, and so he was like a trunk till that faith changed his thought. And he wailing so ruefully repented him, and they that bare the bier tarried, and made that Jew worship and touch the holy body, and then came his hands again into their first estate.

And then was the body borne unto the Vale of Jehosaphat, and there it was embraced and kissed, and songs sung of holy louings and praisings, and there were wept many tears, and then the holy body was laid in the tomb honourably, but her soul was not left in hell, nor her flesh felt never corruption. And {it was proper} that she {that} was the well which never was digged, the field not eared [ploughed], the vine not cut, the olive-bearing fruit, . . . shall not be holden in the bosom of the earth. For it appertaineth [it is proper] that the mother be enhanced with the son, and that she mount to him, like as he descended in to her, and that she that hath kept her virginity in her childing ought to see no corruption. And she that bare the creator of all the world in her belly ought to dwell in divine tabernacles. And that she whom the Father had taken to espouse, were kept in the chambers celestial. And those things that long to the son, ought to be possessed of the mother.

And all this saith John Damascene.

## YET OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY, AFTER ST. AUSTIN.

St. Austin showeth authentically in a sermon of the right holy Assumption of our Blessed Lady, saying:

We that have begun to speak of the body of the virgin perdurable, and of the Assumption of her blessed soul, we say thus: first, that we find nothing of her written sith that our Lord hanging on the cross commended her to his disciple, save that Luke recordeth in his writings, saying that all they were by one courage [heart] persevering with the Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord Jesu Christ. What is then to say of her death, and of her Assumption? Whereof the scripture remembereth nothing, it is then as meseemeth to be enquired, what thing which is according to truth, without which authority is nothing.

We remember the condition human: we doubt not to say that surely she went to temporal death. And if we say that she is resolved into common putrefaction in worms and into ashes or dust; it behoveth us to weigh and think such thing as appertaineth to so great holiness, and to the seignory of such a chamber of God. We know well that it was said to the first father: “Thou art powder, and into powder thou shalt return.” But the flesh of Jesu Christ escaped from this condition, for his flesh suffered never corruption. Then is except from this general sentence the nature taken of the virgin.

And God said to the woman Eve: “I shall multiply thy diseases and thou shalt bring forth children with pain and sorrow.” But Mary suffered never such diseases, of whom the sword of sorrow pierced the soul. But Mary childed without sorrow. And then if she were quit, and had no part of sorrow in childing, then ought she not to have part of diseases, ne of corruption. But she is except of some other generalities, because that the dignity gave to her such seignory.

And though we say that she suffered death, yet is she not retained with the bonds of death. If our Lord would keep his mother entire and whole, and the chastity of her virginity, wherefore may he not keep without corruption, of stench, of rottenness? It appertaineth then to the debonairty [meekness] of our Lord, to keep the honour of his mother which was not come to break the law, but to accomplish it, and in his life had worshipped her tofore all others by the grace of her conceiving. And therefore we ought well to believe that he honoureth her at her death with singular salvation, and of special grace.

And rottenness and worms be but reproach of human condition. And when Jesu Christ is out of that reproach, the nature of Mary is excepted, the which is the nature that he took of her. For the flesh of Jesu Christ is the flesh of Mary, the which he bare above the stars in worshipping man above nature, and in worshipping more his mother. Yet if he be son of the very mother, then it is a convenable [suitable] thing that she be mother of the same son. Not as to the unity of the person, but to the unity of bodily nature. If grace without property of especial and temporal nature may make unity, how much more then may the grace of corporal and especial nativity make unity of grace?

Like as the disciples in Jesu Christ of whom he saith himself that, they be one, as we be. And after he saith: Father, I will that where I am they be with me. And

then if he will have with him them that be joined so with him in the faith, and that they be judges with him, what shall then be judged of his mother? Where is she worthy to be but in the presence of her son? Therefore I understand and believe that the soul of Mary be honoured of her son by a right excellent prerogative, possessing her body glorified in Jesu Christ, whom she conceived.

And why should not she possess her body glorified by which she conceived? For so great a hallowing is more worthy to be in heaven than in earth. The seat of God, the chamber of our Lord, and the worthy tabernacle of Jesu Christ, ought and appertaineth better to be there as he is, than elsewhere, and so right precious treasure is more worthy to be in heaven than in earth. And by right, no resolution of rottenness may not follow so great entireness of thing not corruptible. And because I feel not that the right holy body be not delivered into meat of worms, I doubt to say it.

And because that the gift of grace incomparable surmounteth greatly this estimation that I feel that, the consideration of many scriptures admonish me to say truth. God saith sometime to his ministers: Whereas I am there shall be my minister. If this sentence be general to all them that have ministered Jesu Christ by faith and by work, how is there any more special than Mary? For without doubt she was administratrix in all work. For she bare him in her belly, she childed him, she nourished him and laid him in the crib, she went with him into Egypt, and kept him all her life unto the death of the cross, and departed not from him, but followed him. His divinity might not be to her incredible, for she knew well that she had not conceived of the seed of man but by divine inspiration. Then she having faith in the puissance of her son, as of the virtue of God not changeable, said, when the wine failed: "Son, they have no wine." She wist that he might do all things. And he accomplished anon that miracle. And then seest thou that Mary was administratrix of Jesu Christ by faith and work.

Then if she be not whereas Jesu Christ will that his ministers be, where shall she be then? And if she be there, is it not by grace pareil and like? And if it be not equal, where is the equal measure of God that rendereth to every each after his desert? If by the desert of Mary is given to living men much grace, shall then the grace be lessed to her being dead? Nay, nay, for if the death of all saints be precious, certes, I judge the death of Mary to be right precious, which is received to the joys perdurable by the debonairty of her son Jesu Christ, more honourably than the others, whom he had honoured by grace tofore his other saints. And I say that she ought not to be put, ne is not set to the common humanity after the death, that is to wit of worms, of rottenness, and of powder, she that bare in her belly the Saviour of all men.

If the divine volunty [the Divine Will] vouchsafed to keep the vestments of the children from hurting among the flames of fire, why should not he then keep in his mother that which he kept in a strange vesture? It pleased him to keep Jonas in the belly of the whale without corruption. Should not he then keep his mother not corrupt? He kept Daniel alive in the pit of lions from their distempered hunger. Ought he not to keep Mary for so many gifts of merits and dignities? And we know well that all these dignities that we have said have not kept nature, for we doubt not but grace hath kept more the entireness of Mary than nature. And then

our Lord maketh Mary to enjoy in her proper son, both in soul and in body, as she that never had tatche [stain] ne spot of corruption in bringing forth so great a son. For she is always without corruption that was full of so much grace. She is living entirely, she that childed the life of all. And then, if I have said as I ought to say, Jesu Christ approve it, thou and thine; and if I have not said as I ought to say, I pray thee to pardon me, thou and thine.

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The [iconography of the Assumption](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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