

The Woman: Take-Home 11

Session 11: The Woman Clothed with the Sun

What We Found

The sealed book opened, and the study's oldest threads resolved at once. The Ark, hidden since Jeremiah 'until God gathers his people together again' (2 Maccabees 2:7), is seen again in only one place in Scripture: 'God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple' (Revelation 11:19). The chapter break that follows is medieval; John's text runs straight on: '...and a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun.' John announces the Ark, then describes what he sees: a woman.

Revelation 12 gathers the whole study: the dragon is 'that ancient serpent' of Genesis 3 by name (12:9); the woman's child rules the nations (12:5); and the serpent wars on 'the rest of her offspring... those who bear testimony to Jesus' (12:17), heaven's confirmation of 'Behold, your mother.' The woman is Israel, and the Church, and the mother of the Messiah: the layers belong together, because Mary is the Daughter of Zion in person.

The Assumption names what the vision shows: 'the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory' (Munificentissimus Deus, 1950). She who was preserved from sin was not left to sin's wages; the Ark of the new covenant was brought into the sanctuary; the first and best disciple is the first sheaf after the first fruits (1 Corinthians 15:20–23). And in her the Church sees its own future: she is 'the image and beginning' of what we shall be (CCC 972).

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

"It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death."

Second Homily on the Dormition, n. 14, as quoted in Munificentissimus Deus

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

"In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life... and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death."

Troparion of the Dormition, as cited in CCC 966

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: VEN. POPE PIUS XII

"...the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

Munificentissimus Deus (1950)

Live It This Week

- Pray one Glorious Mystery decade daily (Assumption or Coronation), ending: 'Where she is, I am called.'
- Read Revelation 12 once more alone and list every connection to this study; bring the list to the final session.

- Visit a cemetery this week if you can, and pray for the dead with the Assumption in view: these bodies are seeds (1 Corinthians 15:35-44).

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars"

Revelation 12:1 (RSV2CE)

Before next session: Read Luke 1:46–55 one more time, slowly. Our last session gathers everything and sends us out; bring a friend who has been asking questions.

Catechism references: CCC 966; 972