

- As we come to this magnificent feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is just that we turn our minds to the thought of death and what follows.
- As Catholics we do this not in a morbid or macabre way, or with a servile fear of God's judgment, but rather with great hope in our Lord's mercy and goodness.
- While man is naturally inclined to avoid death, we Christians know that death is not something to be feared but welcomed, provided that the time is right. For death opens to us eternal life.
- Death releases us from the pains and bondages of this world so that we might finally see and possess that for which our hearts long most and that for which our souls were created: God Himself – in all His radiant beauty and glory!
- It was St. Peter Damian who, 1000 years ago, stated that at the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Purgatory was emptied and all the souls detained there accompanied Our Lady as she was assumed body and soul into Heaven.
- He was given this knowledge by a deceased soul who appeared to him, who also told him that a significant number of souls are released from Purgatory every year on this feast day, as Our Lady – who is the Mother of Mercy, the Mother of Hope, the Refuge of Sinners and Comforter of the Afflicted – intercedes to win their release.
- As Our Lady was triumphant on this day over death, she has been given a particular dominion over the souls of those who've died.
- Moreover, all the great saints of the Church affirm the belief that deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is a sign of predestination.
- They also affirm that praying Our Lady's Rosary is especially efficacious in providing succor to those in Purgatory, while wearing the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and living a faithful life will greatly reduce our own time in Purgatory.
- In other words, when a person truly is devoted to Mary during his or her life, Our Lady procures for them every grace necessary for final perseverance.
- She protects us from the attacks and temptations of the evil one, and she inspires us with a horror of sin and a desire to repent when we do sin. When we turn to her for help, Mary helps us grow in virtue and holiness so as to lessen our own purgation after death.
- Because of her perfect union with our Lord and Savior, because of her sinless and perfectly virtuous life, because she was always and in every way perfectly united to our Lord's will, Our Lady has such marvelous intercessory powers – especially over sinners and over the souls of the faithful departed.
- And on this feast, which is believed by some saints to be the day of the year on which the greatest number of souls are released from Purgatory, we give thanks to Our Lady and pledge anew our own devotion to her.
- For many of us today, we will show our devotion by making or renewing our consecration to her after 33 days of prayerful preparation.
- But even if we are not making or renewing our Marian consecration today, let us pay special homage to her who reflects the radiant splendor of heaven, and who is the highest honor of our race.
- Let us pray, too, in a particular way today for all the souls in Purgatory, that Our Lady may hasten their purification and release for the greater glory of God.

- May our thoughtful devotion to Our Lady and our dedication to praying for the souls of the faithful departed, increase our virtue – especially our charity – and help prepare us for that moment when we will see our Lord face-to-face.
- Our Lady assumed into Heaven, pray for us!