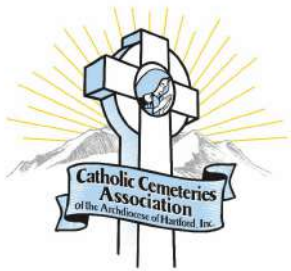


Catholic Cemeteries Association

of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Inc

700 Middletown Avenue
North Haven, CT 06473
Phone (203) 239-2557
Fax (203) 239-5035
www.ccacem.org



Mission of the Catholic Cemeteries Association of the Archdiocese of Hartford

▪ The Mission of the CCA is to provide for the burial needs of the families of the Archdiocese of Hartford that honors the deep religious significance of the Corporal Work of Mercy of burying the dead and with a firm commitment to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. We treat all families with the deep compassion and understanding that they have entrusted their loved ones to us for eternity.

CCA Newsletter
July/August 2023

Happy Summer!



From the Desk of the Executive Director...



Greetings!

July brings us Independence Day, a day in which we honor our independence from Great Britain and the establishment of this great country as a stand alone nation. Our independence was not easily won and it is not easily preserved. Lets never forget the brave and bold courage of our founding fathers in establishing our independence. Also let us never forget the brave service of men and women throughout our history as a nation who have fought to maintain our freedom. Say a thank you to a service member the next time you cross paths. It will make both of you feel proud. At the CCA we hope you will take some time during the Fourth of July celebrations to visit loved ones who rest

in our cemeteries. whether veterans or dearly beloved family and friends, say a prayer of thanks for their contribution to your lives and the glorious resurrection to come.

August 15th we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Our Lady holds a special place in the hearts of all CCA staff as our guiding light with the families we service. As a Holy Day of Obligation we treat this Feast Day as a

Sunday and go to Mass and use the time during the day to reflect on our spiritual well being. Our offices will be closed in honor of this feast day. We at the CCA wish all of you a joyful summer. See you in September!

Best regards,

John Pinone

Special Announcement for the Assumption of Mary!

August 15th, 2023



*In observance of the Feast Day of the
Assumption of Mary, our cemetery
offices will be closed on August 15th.*

Thank you!

Our Mother, Our Queen...Pray for us!

***NEW!!
We have
Semi-Private Estates at
Mt. St. Benedict,
All Saints, Holy Cross and
Calvary Cemeteries...***



***Catholic Cemeteries Association of the Archdiocese of Hartford
is pleased to announce the new Semi-Private Family Estates
located around the St Benedict statue in our historic Mt St
Benedict Cemetery. These exclusive shrub lined individual Semi-
Private Family Estate offers two or four grave lots with a
complementary granite memorial bench.***

A Semi-Private Family Estate provides the opportunity to choose

an exceptional resting place with special memorials. It allows your family to maintain a perpetual family bond among multiple generations.

To learn more please call (860) 242-0738 and

speak with a Family Service Advisor.

The better educated you are the better choices you can make!



Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery-Bloomfield



All Saints Cemetery-North Haven



Holy Cross Cemetery-Glastonbury



Calvary Cemetery-Waterbury

Call for your tour today!

Ask us about the
Catholic Funeral Plan®
*Preserving the Catholic Burial Traditions
of our families*



*A faith-based, pre-need plan for
you and your loved ones*

The Catholic Funeral Plan allows Catholics to make their funeral and cemetery arrangements in advance. The Plan guarantees that, upon your death, the arrangements you've selected will be executed as stated in your Plan, outline and in accordance with the Traditions of the Catholic Faith.

By enrolling in the Catholic Funeral Plan® (CFP), you will be developing a program outline for your funeral service that best suits you. You can choose a funeral home, and select specific arrangements at a cost that meets your budget. At the time of need, your funeral home will make and execute the arrangements.

that your wishes are carried out as you directed and within the guidelines of the Catholic Faith Tradition.

Dramatic changes are taking place today in the way we buy goods and services. Locally-owned banks, grocery stores and drugstores are giving way to regional or national chains. The funeral industry is no exception. Large, publicly held corporations and regional consolidators are beginning to dominate the industry, driving up prices and changing how funerals are delivered. One of the negative results for Catholic families has been a decrease in the observance of our Church's traditional liturgical rites for the

Burial at the parish.

The Catholic Funeral Plan has been developed to safeguard the Church's sacred burial traditions against the forces of change and to guarantee Catholic families the right to be buried in accordance with these traditions at an affordable cost.

*What will the CFP
offer me and my
family?*

- An affordable way to preserve the Traditions of the Catholic Faith
- Assurance that your wishes will be executed according to the plan
- Inflation protection with any excess accumulated paid

The CFP will oversee
the process, ensuring

dead, in particular
the Mass of Christian

to your beneficiary

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203-239-2557

catholicfsa.com

*To learn more about the Catholic Funeral Plan
click on the button below...*

www.catholicfsa.com

New!
***Our Lady, Queen of the Universe
Cremation Garden***

Located at All Saints Cemetery-No. Haven

We have a few spaces still available...call today!



Queen of the Universe Cremation Garden

All Saints Cemetery
700 Middletown Avenue North Haven, CT 06473

The Queen of the Universe Cremation Garden is a tranquil area where your

loved ones are laid to rest under the prayerful presence of our Blessed Mother. This beautifully landscaped section is devoted to only 20 spaces surrounding the 12-foot Queen of the Universe statue. This peaceful resting place is a unique location for gathering, reflection and prayer. Currently each space is only \$3,900.00 and includes:

- † 18" x 24" Inscribed Granite Marker
- † Double Urn Vault
- † Perpetual Care
- † Second Rights

Please meet with one of our professional Family Service Advisors to take advantage of this exclusive location.


www.ccacem.org

(203) 239-2557

***Our Care Team of
Family Service Advisors (FSAs)...
serve families with care and compassion, educating and
guiding them through the process of making informed
decisions for Cemetery Advanced Planning, At-Need
Cemetery Planning, and Memorialization products and
services.***

***Our team of experts are available to assist you with all your
cemetery needs like: burials, cremation gardens, mausoleum
crypts, niches and much more.***

Lydia Cassarino

Lydia has proudly served as a  Family Service Advisor with the Catholic Cemeteries Association of the Archdiocese of Hartford for many years in many of our locations mainly Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery in Bloomfield and St. Mary Cemetery in New Britain.

She has always had the passion and compassion of helping others

and feels she has truly found her calling. Every family Lydia works with is treated as if they were her own. Whether a family who has experienced a loss or are pre-planning their cemetery needs, her dedication continues with families long after their initial appointment. Each family knows she is always a phone call away and this has brought comfort to countless families.

Lydia understands the importance of support, care, and concern for those going through a loss and always makes it a priority to reach out to those families and feels she has been blessed to build long lasting relationships.



Lydia also offers her families a background of over 20 years of memorial monument & marker designing. You can see her work throughout our cemeteries as her monuments tell a story of the loved ones they were designed for.

Often asked "How do you do what you do?" Lydia will have the same response..."I love what I do because I have been blessed and given the opportunity to help others with care and concern through difficult decisions at a difficult time while ensuring each family is given the best education and information to make the most permanent decisions one can make in life."

Congratulations Lydia for your many years of service to our families!

Lydia serves at:

Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery - Bloomfield

St. Mary Cemetery - New Britain

St. Mary Cemetery – East Hartford

Holy Cross Cemetery – Glastonbury

St. James Cemetery – Manchester

St. Bernard Cemetery – Enfield

lcassarino@ccacem.org

Cell 203-507-8328



Robert Cocchiaro

Rob Cocchiaro is our Grounds and Fleet Manager, celebrating 7 years of dedicated service to the association. Rob first served as a Regional General Foreman, servicing St. Lawrence, Mt. St. Peter and All Saints Cemeteries and later, promoted to the position of Grounds and Fleet Manager. While serving as the Grounds and fleet manager, Rob has designed and overseen beautiful new landscape features for both newly created burial sections, as well as, revitalizing older plantings. Rob also serves as the Associations, Arborist. Rob has identified and has overseen the care and planting of hundreds of trees. While overseeing the care of a wide variety of trees at All Saints Cemetery in North Haven, Rob had a vision. Why not showcase the trees we have and let the public know? It was at that point that he proposed his plan to create an accredited Arboretum. His idea was well received and Rob began the application process and created what is now the All Saints Arboretum, which is an accredited Arboretum listed on the national registry. Rob plans to continue creating Arboretums throughout other locations within our association, showcasing our beautiful trees and grounds. Additionally, Rob oversees our vehicle and equipment repairs and purchasing. Rob manages the day to day maintenance and repairs of a large fleet of backhoes, mowers and vehicles. Rob's passion for both landscaping and equipment is the perfect blend for his position.

In his free time, Rob enjoys spending time with his family, watching and coaching his children's sports.



All Saints Arboretum!

Catholic Cemeteries Association of the Archdiocese of Hartford is pleased to announce the All Saints Arboretum. The All Saints Arboretum has been awarded a Level 1 Accreditation by the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum. The Arboretum showcases a collection of 30 trees, and serves as a backdrop of beauty and peace to the sacred grounds of All Saints Cemetery, located in North Haven. Each tree in the collection can be identified by a placard containing information such as the common name and native range that the trees originated from. Future plans for the Arboretum will include a map for self-guided tree walks, as well as a guided tree tour. While you're visiting your loved ones at All Saints Cemetery, be sure to stop and enjoy the beauty that surrounds you.





Dignity of Life Seminars!



Hi, I'm Barbara Gode the Outreach Coordinator for the CCA. I would like to personally invite you to register for a FREE Educational Seminar on the importance of Pre-planning



This Archdiocesan approved program is successfully assisting parishioners with elder care and end-of-life planning. The goal of the session is to provide

- educational and resource information in the areas of burial, estate planning and information about the Catholic Funeral Plan. Let us help.

2023 Schedule:

**Wednesday, July 5th
St. Anthony Church Hall
Bristol, CT**

Time: 2:00 PM

Wednesday, July 12th

Holy Rosary Church

Ansonia, CT

Time: 2:00 PM

Wednesday, July 26th

Basilica of the Immaculate

Waterbury, CT

Time: 2:00 PM

Thursday, July 27th

Basilica of the Immaculate

Waterbury, CT

Time: 6:00 PM

Friday, August 18th

St. Augustine Church

Hartford, CT

Time: 2:00 PM

Thursday, August 24th

St. Teresa of Avila Church

Woodbury, CT

Time: 2:00 PM

Wednesday, September 6th

St. Peter's Hall

Torrington, CT

Time: 2:00 PM

Thursday, September 7th

St. Peter's Hall

Torrington, CT

Time: 6:00 PM

Wednesday, September 13th TENTATIVE

St. Frances Cabrini Church Hall

North Haven, CT

Time: 2:00 PM

Thursday, September 14th TENTATIVE

St. Francis Cabrini Church Hall

North Haven, CT

Time: 6:00 PM

**Thursday, September 21st
St Pauls Church
Glastonbury, CT
Time: 2:00 PM**

**Wednesday, September 27th
St. George Church Hall
Guilford, CT
Time: 2:00 PM**

**Thursday, September 28th
St. George Church Hall
Guilford, CT
Time: 6:00 PM**

**Wednesday, October 4th
St. Augustine Church
North Branford, CT
Time: 9:30 AM**

**Thursday, October 12th
St. Mary's Church Hall
New Britain, CT
Time: 2:00 PM**

**Wednesday, October 18th TENTATIVE
St. Margaret Church Hall
Madison, CT
Time: 2:00 PM**

**Thursday, October 19th TENTATIVE
St. Margaret Church Hall
Madison, CT
Time: 6:00 PM**

For more information about our Seminars and to register,

please visit

our website www.ccacem.org or call

our Outreach Coordinator,

Barbara Gode (203) 780-8418 or

email her at bgode@ccacem.org

**If you are interested in offering a seminar in your area,
please ask your pastor to reach out to us.**

To register for a seminar...

**Visit our
website**

Catch us on the Radio....

***Listen for us every Saturday at 11:00
WDRC the TALK OF CT***



Tune in at 1360 AM, 103.3 FM, 1470 AM (Meriden), and 610 AM (Torrington) to hear **Chris Radlicz, our Family Service Director**, at CCA and President of Catholic Family Services Association speak about the importance of Pre-Planning issues facing Catholic Families as well as a host of other timely subjects important to Catholics.

SAVE THE DATE!
Join us on
Saturday, September 23, 2023
for the
CT Catholic Men's Conference

West Hartford-

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ANNUAL

CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

2023 THEME:

**THE PRIESTHOOD:
GOD'S GIFT & OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

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EXHIBITORS

Kevin Wells

Matthew Leonard

Archbishop Blair
& Bishop Betancourt

*Principal celebrant and homilist
respectively at our closing Mass.*

Fr. Glenn Sudano, CFR

Fr. Larry Richards



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
8:30AM - 4PM VIGIL MASS
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LOCATION

**NORTHWEST CATHOLIC HIGH
SCHOOL IN WEST HARTFORD**



*The Catholic Cemeteries Association is
a Proud Sponsor of the CCMC*

Buy Tickets here...

Did you know ?

Signs of Grief in Children and How to Help Them Cope

Children grieve differently than adults

By Amy Morin, LCSW

Updated on January 09, 2023

Medically reviewed by Ann-Louise T. Lockhart, PsyD, ABPP

Top of Form

When a child grieves the loss of a loved one, you might not even realize that they're grieving. Kids process and display complex emotions differently than adults. However, that doesn't mean the grief is not happening and that your child isn't affected by their emotions. What's more, children aren't too young to grieve.

Ability to Understand Death

Grief in children is tricky because younger children may not understand the concept of death and its permanence. A child might believe that death is temporary, particularly because so many cartoons show a character being mortally wounded and then coming back to life.

Consequently, younger kids often miss a loved one in small spurts and may be sad for a few minutes every now and again. But because they have trouble [understanding that death](#) is permanent, they won't fully grasp what the loss will really mean to their life.

It's common for a younger child to say they understand that Grandpa isn't coming back, only to then ask if Grandpa will be attending their next birthday party.

Just like understanding of death varies by age, so do the signs of grief. It's important to recognize when your child is grieving so you can ensure they're dealing with emotions in a healthy way. In fact, one study found that interventions can help a child cope with a loss in a healthy way and help prevent the development of mental health issues or traumatic grief.¹

Signs a Child Is Grieving

When an adult grieves, it seems to be ever-present, even in moments of happiness. Children, however, often seem fine one moment, only to become very upset the next, because their brains can't seem to [cope with the sadness](#) for long periods of time.

In the early stages of grief, it's normal for children to experience a bit of denial that their loved one is gone.

They may continue to expect the person who has passed away to show up at any moment. This denial is normal for a while, but over time, the reality of the loss should begin to sink in, especially with older children. Whether your child has lost a pet, teacher, neighbor, or family member, here are some other things you might see after the loss.

Clinginess

Children may be [extra clingy](#) after a loss. They may cry about having to go to school or they might ask for help for tasks they previously mastered just to get your attention. Infants and toddlers can sense the distress in their caregivers, so they might respond by being irritable, crying more, and wanting to be held even if they aren't aware of the loss.

Developmental Regression

Toddlers and preschoolers may start [wetting the bed](#) or stop sleeping through the night. Meanwhile, a small child might revert to crawling, [baby talk](#), or want to drink from a bottle again.

Academic Issues

Older children and teenagers who have experienced loss often show grief by [falling behind in studies](#) or failing classes that they once aced. They also may have trouble concentrating on tasks or fail to complete assignments.

Sleeping Problems

Grief-stricken children might [want to sleep with parents](#) or others close to them, or they could have nightmares or dreams about the person who died. Meanwhile, older children may have a bit of insomnia or [may be afraid of death](#), which keeps them from sleeping.

Difficulty Concentrating

Sometimes children might not be able to focus on any particular activity or have trouble making decisions or [solving problems](#). They also struggle to focus and may appear distracted or lost in space.

Anxiety

Both children and teens may start to worry about everything, but particularly about other people in their life dying. They will need reassurance that they will be safe and looked after on a daily basis. This need is particularly evident among

preschoolers.

Feelings of Abandonment

Children might feel betrayed, rejected, or abandoned by the person who died, and perhaps by others as well.

Consequently, they may need to be reassured that you will be there for them.

Make sure you keep your promises, especially during this time period, so that these fears about [abandonment](#) will not persist.

Behavioral Reactions

Children of all ages may react to grief by displaying [behavioral problems](#) that didn't exist before. They may begin acting out in school or talking back at home. Likewise, teenagers may be drawn to riskier behavior, such as drinking or taking drugs.

Guilt

It's common for kids to blame themselves for a loved one's death. Children might think it's their fault because they once wished the person would "go away" or they might somehow think their actions caused the person's death.

Changes in Play

Young children may start talking about death in their [pretend play](#) more. Their stuffed animals, dolls, or action figures may die and come back to life. If you witness this behavior, you need to recognize that your child is grieving the loss.

When to Get Professional Help

Not all children who are grieving need grief counseling. But it's important to be on the lookout for signs that your child is having an especially difficult time processing the loss. Here are some

warning signs that might indicate your child could benefit from professional help.

- **Excessively imitating the deceased person:** It's normal for kids to say things like, "I want to eat chocolate chip cookies because that's what Grandpa liked best." But excessively imitating the deceased individual isn't normal, and it may mean your child is struggling to deal with their emotions.
- **Believing they are talking to the deceased person:** All children may say they saw the deceased individual or that they talked to the person once in a while. But when children insist they continue to see the person or have ongoing conversations with the individual, seek professional help.
- **Extended period of depression:** Sadness is normal, but a prolonged loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities could be a sign your child is struggling. Mental health issues like depression or anxiety can develop after a loss.
- **Symptoms that get worse with time:** Your child's symptoms, like clinginess or difficulty sleeping, should resolve gradually over time. If your child's symptoms are getting worse, it could be a sign they need professional help in dealing with their feelings.
- **Repeatedly expressing a desire to join the deceased person:** If your child says they want to be dead or that they wish they could die, don't take those statements lightly. Suicidal ideation is a big red flag, and it's important to talk to your child's doctor or a mental health professional.

If your child is having suicidal thoughts, contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at **988** for support and assistance from a trained counselor. If you or a loved one are in immediate danger, call 911.

Children who are having difficulty coping with a loss may benefit from grief counseling. Grief counseling may involve individual therapy, family therapy, or group treatment.

If you suspect your child is struggling to deal with a loss, talk to your child's pediatrician. The pediatrician may be able to assess your child's needs and refer you to an appropriate treatment provider.

How to Help a Child Cope

It's not easy for an adult to deal with their own grief and navigate helping a child with their grief. But it's important to help kids learn how to cope. Here are some strategies you can use to help your child deal with grief.

Be Honest

Using euphemisms, such as "we lost him" or "she's sleeping now," can confuse and scare a little one. It's important for children to understand that the person isn't just sleeping or lost, but rather their body stopped working and they are not coming back. Of course, gruesome details aren't necessary, but you should make a point to tell the truth.

Acknowledge the Loss

It's up to you to decide if it's appropriate for your child to attend the funeral. But, if your child is scared to go, don't force them to do so. You can find other ways to acknowledge your child's loss. Write a letter to the loved one, hold your own private celebration of life, light a candle, or create a scrapbook at home.

Be Patient

A child's grief cycles in and out, and to an adult, it can feel like they're dwelling on the loss after you thought they had moved on. It's crucial to be patient and respond similarly with comfort

and truth every time they return to a moment of grief.

Remember that a reminder, such as the anniversary of the death, could reawaken the grieving process.

Speak With Caregivers

Teachers, particularly, should be in the loop as to what's going on with the family. They need to know information about the death, whom to turn to if they're seeing signs of distress, and an appropriate way to support the child if they're having an emotional moment.

Take Care of Yourself

Your child will look to you to see how to deal with their feelings, so it's important to make sure you're taking care of yourself. [Talk about your feelings](#) openly, but be careful not to burden your child with too many adult issues. It may be helpful for you to speak with a grief counselor or to attend a grief support group to help you care for your emotions.

Read Books About Grief

Your child may benefit from reading stories about loss, death, and grief. Be prepared to answer questions about what happens to people when they die. And if you don't know the answer, it's OK to say you aren't sure.

[Helping a Child Deal With Uncomfortable Emotions](#)

Signs Down the Road

You might not see many signs of grief immediately following a loss, especially if a child is young. But that doesn't mean you won't see signs of grief years later.

Four-year-olds who lose their father won't understand the

finality of death at the time. But when they're 10 and there's a father-daughter dance or a father-son fishing trip, they might begin to show signs of grief as the reality of what they lost really sinks in.

Similarly, 7-year-olds might seem to resolve their grief rather quickly after they [lose a grandparent](#). But during their teenage years, they may show signs of grief as they begin to understand the things they missed out on by not having their grandparent in their life, or they may regret not spending more time with them when they were alive.

There's no timeline when it comes to grief, no matter how young or old a person is.

As a result, it's not productive to suggest that it's time for a child to "get over it." The grief may last a lifetime, but with support, grief can turn into healing for the whole family.

Source: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/signs-of-grief-in-children-and-how-to-help-them-cope-4174245>

By [Amy Morin, LCSW](#)

Amy Morin, LCSW, is the Editor-in-Chief of Verywell Mind. She's also a psychotherapist, an international bestselling author of books on mental strength and host of The Verywell Mind Podcast.

Additional Resource for Children:

THE COVE CENTER FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

1113 A SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410

Let us know if you found this article helpful

email me: bgode@ccacem.org

Words to ponder...



Mary is Church's Pattern Mary is First to Receive Glory

by Pope Saint John Paul II

Mary is Church's Pattern

Mary is First to Receive Glory

***Pope John Paul II's Angelus Message and Homily on
August 15, 1995, Feast of the Assumption.***

LARGER WORK

L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition, p. 1 and 3.

PUBLISHER & DATE

Vatican, August 23, 1995

MARY IS CHURCH'S PATTERN

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. Today the Church celebrates the Assumption of Mary most holy into heaven. The Lord has done "great things" (Lk 1:49), preserving from the corruption of death the woman who brought the world the Giver of life. The Second Vatican Council called upon her as "a sign of certain hope and comfort" (Lumen gentium, n. 68);

Thus Mary is resplendent as the "beginning and the pattern of the Church" (preface of the Assumption), already fulfilled in her person by virtue of Christ's paschal mystery, that saving destiny to which God calls every human creature from eternity. On their earthly pilgrimage, believers look to Mary, the "woman clothed with the sun" (Rev 12:1), as a bright star showing us the goal to strive for on our daily journey.

Her Assumption into heaven is not only the culmination of her particular vocation as the Mother and disciple of the Lord Jesus, but also an eloquent sign of God's fidelity to the universal plan of salvation aimed at the redemption of every man and of all men.

2. Femininity finds its full expression in Mary, Virgin and Mother, since the personal qualities that distinguish woman from man were able to be expressed in her in their full splendor. In looking at her, every woman can discern the authentic affirmation of her own dignity and value.

How could we not entrust to Mary, on today's liturgical solemnity, the women of the whole world, so that, conscious of their own vocation, they may generously make their indispensable contribution to every area of human advancement, especially to the defense of life? Through her intercession, may the forthcoming Conference in Beijing shed full light on the genuine values which every woman has to offer. Thanks to the constructive participation of all the delegations, a significant contribution will be made to the cause of woman and to her mission in the contemporary world.

3. The Solemnity of Mary's Assumption into heaven reminds us that Mary has returned to the Father's house in body and soul, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of peace towards which we are all journeying. This is the reason why the Church, which addresses the Mother of the Lord by the title of Queen of Heaven, also loves to invoke her with the fitting name of Queen of Peace. May she, Queen of the heavenly Jerusalem, abode of peace, constantly intercede with the Son for her children, pilgrims in history, so that the longed-for good of peace and harmony may spread to every corner of the earth.

May the Blessed Virgin protect all humanity; in particular, may she protect the victims of injustice, hatred and violence. May she obtain peace for the world and especially for the lands

tormented by war. May Mary truly be a sign of certain hope and comfort for all.

Mary assumed into heaven, pray for us!

MARY IS FIRST TO RECEIVE GLORY

1. "A woman clothed with the sun".

On today's feast of the Assumption, the Church applies to Mary these words from the Revelation of St. John. In a certain sense, they tell us the end of the story of the "woman clothed with the sun": they speak to us of Mary assumed into heaven. Therefore, the liturgy rightly links them to the early part of Mary's history: the mystery of the Visitation in the house of St. Elizabeth. We know that the Visitation took place shortly after the Annunciation, as we read in the Gospel of St. Luke: "In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah" (Lk 1:39). According to a tradition this city was Ain-Karim. Having entered the house of Zechariah, Mary greeted Elizabeth. Did she want to tell her about what had happened to her, how she had agreed to the Angel Gabriel's proposal thus becoming, by the work of the Holy Spirit, Mother of the Son of God? Elizabeth however anticipated her and, under the action of the Holy Spirit, continued the greeting of the angelic messenger in her own words. If Gabriel had said: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28), Elizabeth, as if taking over from him, added: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). Thus between the Annunciation and the Visitation the most common Marian prayer, the "Hail Mary", came to be formed.

Dear brothers and sisters, today, the feast of the Assumption, the Church returns in thought to Nazareth, the site of the Annunciation; she travels in spirit to the threshold of Zechariahs' home in Ain-Karim and greets the Mother of God with the words: "Hail Mary!", and together with Elizabeth, she proclaims: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Lk 1:45). Mary believed with the faith of the Annunciation, with the faith of the Visitation, with the faith of the night of Bethlehem and of Christmas. Today she believes rather, now in the glory of heaven, she contemplates face to face the mystery of which

her existence on earth was filled.

2. On the threshold of Zechariah's home, the Marian hymn of the Magnificat also came into being. The Church repeats it in today's liturgy, because Mary certainly and with even greater reason must have proclaimed it on her Assumption into heaven: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed, for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Lk 1:46-49).

Mary praises God and is praised by him. This praise has spread widely throughout the world. In fact, how many Marian shrines there are in every region of the earth dedicated to the mystery of the Assumption! It really would be difficult to list them all.

"Mary is taken up to heaven, and the angels of God shout for joy", proclaims today's liturgy in the Gospel acclamation. But men in every part of the world are also shouting for joy. And there are many nations that consider the Mother of God their Mother and Queen. The mystery of the Assumption is in fact linked to that of her coronation as Queen of heaven and earth. "The princess is decked with gold-woven robes"--as the Responsorial Psalm of today's liturgy proclaims (Ps 44 [45]:13)--to be raised up to the right hand of her Son: "On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir" (refrain of the Responsorial Psalm).

3. The Assumption of Mary is a special sharing in Christ's Resurrection. In today's liturgy St. Paul emphasizes this truth, announcing the joy for the victor over death achieved by Christ through his Resurrection. "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:25-26). Victory over death, which became evident on the day of Christ's Resurrection, today concerns his Mother in a very special way. If death has no power over him--that is over the Son--neither has it any more power over his Mother, that is, over her who gave him earthly life.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul as it were makes a

profound comment on the mystery of the Assumption. He writes thus: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor 15:20-23). Mary is the first among "those who belong to Christ". In the mystery of the Assumption, Mary is the first to receive the glory; the Assumption represents as it were the culmination of the Easter mystery.

Christ rose again defeating death, the result of original sin, and with his victory he embraces all those who accept his Resurrection with faith. First of all, his Mother, freed from the inheritance of original sin by her Son's redemptive death on the cross. Today Christ embraces Mary, immaculate from her conception, receiving her into heaven in her glorified body, as if to hasten for her the day of his glorious return to earth, the day of the universal resurrection, awaited by humanity. The Assumption into heaven is like a great anticipation of the ultimate fulfillment of everything in God, in conformity with what the Apostle writes: "Then comes the end, when he [Christ] delivers the kingdom to God the Father ... that God may be everything to everyone" (1 Cor 15:24, 28). Is not God everything in her, the Immaculate Mother of the Redeemer? I greet you, daughter of God the Father! I greet you, Mother of the Son of God! I greet you, mystical Spouse of the Holy Spirit! I greet you, Temple of the Holy Trinity!

4. "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple.... 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" (Rev 11:19; 12:1). This vision in the Book of Revelation is considered, in a certain sense, as the last word in Mariology. However, the Assumption, which is magnificently expressed here, at the same time has its own ecclesiological meaning. It contemplates Mary not only as the Queen of all creation, but as the Mother of the Church. And as Mother of the Church, Mary assumed and crowned in heaven does not cease to be "involved" in the history of the Church, history of the struggle

between good and evil. St. John wrote: "And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon" (Rev 12:3). This dragon is known by Sacred Scripture as the enemy of woman from the very first chapters of the Book of Genesis (cf. Gen 3:14). In the Book of Revelation the same dragon faces the woman who is about to give birth, ready to devour the child as soon as it is born (cf. Rev 12:4). We think spontaneously of the night of Bethlehem and of the threat to the life of the newborn Jesus as a result of the wicked edict of Herod who sent and "killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under" (Mt 2:16). From the writings of the Second Vatican Council, the Mother of God's image emerges in a special way, deeply connected with the mystery of Christ and the Church. Mary, Mother of the Son of God, is at the same time Mother of all men who have become in the Son adopted children of the heavenly Father. It is precisely here that we see the constant struggle of the Church. Like a mother, and in likeness to Mary, the Church begets children to divine life, and her children, sons and daughters of the only-begotten Son of God, are constantly threatened by the hatred of the "red dragon": Satan. While demonstrating the realism of this struggle which continues throughout history, the author of Revelation also stressed the perspective of the final victory by the Woman, by Mary who is our Advocate, who is the powerful ally of all the nations of the earth. The author of Revelation speaks of this victory: "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come'" (12:10).

The Solemnity of the Assumption puts before our eyes the reigning of our God and Christ's power over all creation.

5. Dear brothers and sisters, I would now like to address a cordial thought to all of you present here, parishioners of my Castel Gandolfo, parishioners of this parish where I become a fellow parishioner during the holidays. I affectionately greet Cardinal Angelo Sodano, my closest collaborator, titular Bishop of the Suburbicarian Church of Albano. I greet the Bishop of this diocesan community, dear Bishop Dante Bernini, who at this time is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination, his golden jubilee. I am pleased to extend my

sincere wishes to him, while thanking him for his zealous and generous episcopal service. Next I greet the parish priest, thanking him for his words to me at the beginning of this celebration. I also greet the Salesian superiors and priests, and the faithful of the parish of Castel Gandolfo, so dear to me. Together let us praise the Mother of Christ and of the Church, together with all those who venerate her in every corner of the earth. How I wish that everywhere and in every language joy would be expressed for the Assumption of Mary! How I wish that this mystery would shed the brightest light on the Church and on humanity! May every man and every woman realize that they are called to share in the heavenly glory of their true Mother and Queen.

Every man and woman is called to share in this glory, as St. Irenaeus said: "Gloria Dei vivens homo; vita autem hominis visio Dei". These words express our personal vocation in the world and in the Church. Praised be Jesus Christ!

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Featured Cemetery of the Month... ***Mt. Olivet Cemetery-*** ***Watertown***



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Mt. Olivet Cemetery

Rosary Walk continues throughout

the Summer...





*Visit our website to get day-to-day
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All Saints Cemetery
700 Middletown Ave., North Haven*

Learn why we walk rain or shine!

*For more information, call the
Outreach Coordinator, Barbara at
(203) 780-8418*

***There will be NO Rosary Walk on
Tuesday, July 4th due to the Holiday.***

God bless America!

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