

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The Solemnity of the Assumption
August 15, 2014

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There is no story plot line quite like palace intrigue after the death of the king. And the Bible has its own potboiler version! You remember after the death of King David his youngest son Solomon was enthroned as king. But King David's eldest surviving son, Adonijah, was always a great schemer and had an attractive personality to enlist supporters to his cause. He went to his father's favorite queen, Bathsheba, (who just so happened to be the new young King Solomon's mother), confident in his request. Adonijah wanted to marry Abishag, the beautiful Shunamite nurse who had tended to King David in his last days. Adonijah said, "Pray ask King Solomon; he will not refuse you." We read in the 2nd chapter of 1 Kings Bathsheba did indeed go to her son King Solomon with Adonijah's request. The king rose to meet his mother and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for his mother and she sat on his right side. Then King Solomon said, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you." So far so good.

Alas, it did not go well for Adonijah and his power move! King Solomon, like any oriental potentate (or western monarch for that matter) was out to settle old scores. The request was indeed refused, and actually cost Adonijah his life. Solomon decided to consider Abishag part of his father's harem and Adonijah's request as treason. You can read about how King Solomon cleaned house in 1 Kings. Who ever said the Holy Scriptures are not exciting?

But Holy Church appropriates such unseemly Old Testament moments as fore showings of what was to come in the fullness of time. "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you." Today we celebrate and observe the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which teaches us many things. Among those truths is that the Assumption is the feast of Blessed Mary's intercession. She is and always will be *our most powerful intercessor*.

If Christians are bidden to pray for other souls, *and we are*. And if Our Lady is a Christian, *and she is*, it follows she is our most powerful intercessor. That is because Blessed Mary is still the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of God. Christ our Lord never became Son of God. *He always was*. But He became Son of God Incarnate and was made man. That had a beginning. *But not an end*. Christ took

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human nature from the Blessed Virgin Mary, and kept it. And her motherhood, like all motherhood, is eternal. *She is His mother still.*

Our Lady's relation to the Son of God is for ever greater, closer, and higher, than that of any other of the glorious saints. They are Christ's friends. She is His friend *and His mother*. So her prayers are most powerful with her Son.

This is something Holy Church has universally believed. Before the early Christians learned to pray to God the Holy Ghost, they learned to ask for the Virgin Mary's prayers. They became accustomed to saying, "May Holy Mary pray for us" *before* they began to say, "Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire."

King Solomon's reverence for his mother Bathsheba was a prediction of things to come. But his reverence pales in significance. Our Blessed Lady is far greater than Bathsheba because "something greater than Solomon is here." (*Matthew 12:42*) Solomon refused Bathsheba's foolish intercession for the scheming Adonijah. But the Blessed Mother is always and completely in harmony with her Son's Heart. She said at Cana wedding feast, "Do whatever He tells you." And so the King Who is Lord of Heaven and earth says, "Ask on, My mother; for I will not refuse you."

Blessed Mary, bodily assumed into Heaven, is forever close to her Divine Son. And she is our most powerful intercessor. That is why Catholics constantly ask "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death."