



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

11 August 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Hyperdulia 'hī-pər-'dū-lē-ə\

Literally, "a greater service"; it refers to the special reverence Catholics show to the Blessed Virgin Mary. God alone is worshipped and adored (latria), while the saints are honored (dulia). As the Mother of God, Mary is uniquely honored with a higher reverence, or **hyperdulia**, than the rest of the saints.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-Hyperdulia>

CONTEXT

I met the girl I was to marry after finding a note from her . . . protesting against my inaccuracy in writing . . . of the "worship" Roman Catholics gave to the Virgin Mary, when I should have used the term **hyperdulia**.
—Graham Greene

Dulia is like a high but finite number; **hyperdulia** is like the highest number out of a finite number of finite numbers; latria is like infinity."
—Peter Kreeft, Practical Theology

WHY IT MATTERS

Two affiliations loom large for Catholics that distinguish us from any other brand of Christian: our relationship with Mary and with the pope. Getting Mary right is therefore vital. She's not a fourth wheel in the Trinity, and she's not just another saint in the celestial realm. Mary is Mother of God and Mother of the Church. As Christ-bearer, she models for us what true discipleship is. Let's give Mary her due!

From the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*: The Church in spirit and truth adores the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, venerates with special love Mary the most holy Mother of God, and honors with religious devotion the memory of the martyrs and the other saints."

RELATED WORDS

Adoration | Veneration | Honor | Devotion | Praise

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Why do Catholics believe in Mary's Assumption into heaven?

The Assumption was formally declared as dogma in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, but as early as the third century the tradition of Mary's "transitus" recounted her bodily reception into heaven. The theological argument for the Assumption is one of "fittingness." Mary is the Ark of God's new covenant in Christ. She was preserved from sin for this end (her Immaculate Conception) and should not undergo the corruption of death. Her body, given over to God's purposes in the divine plan of salvation, became a vessel too sacred to be discarded or forgotten.

Perhaps a more humanly compelling argument arose in the wake of the 20th century's two brutal world wars. Pius XII surveyed the ghastly indignities suffered by humanity and saw an opportunity to teach emphatically that God cares what happens to our mortal flesh. Mary's exaltation brings "clearly to the notice of all persons" our common destiny as vessels of divine life precious in God's sight.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* https://www.vocationnetwork.org/en/blog/questions_catholics_ask/2010/08/why_do_catholics_believe_in_the_assumption_of_mary

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (AUGUST 15)

What's so special about Mary?

The most important thing to remember about Mary is her discipleship. She is the first and most revered of Jesus' followers because of her embrace of the role she was asked to play in salvation history and her unflinching support of Christ's mission. What Mary endured, we can endure; what Mary achieved, we can achieve. She is the "guide, strength, and consolation of our mortal life," said Pope Pius XII in a prayer in honor of the Assumption.

READINGS: Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56 (622 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/081524-Day.cfm>). "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord."

FAITH IN ACTION

Begin your spiritual journey as Mary did by proclaiming God's greatness.