The Early Church Fathers on The Assumption

The doctrine of the Assumption was one that developed over time. It was not something new but rather the logical result of what was already known. Genesis 3:15 makes it clear that Mary could not have sinned. In Genesis 2:17 God warns Adam that if he sins he will be doomed to death. We know that God's warning was ignored. Consequently, we see in Genesis 3:19 God making good on His promise. He says to Adam: "By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken. For you are dirt, and to dirt you shall return." Therefore, since corruption in the grave is the result of sin and Mary never sinned, it was only logical that she would be assumed body and soul into heaven.

Pseudo – Melito

If therefore it might come to pass by the power of your grace, it has appeared right to us your servants that, as you, having overcome death, do reign in glory, so you should raise up the body of your Mother and take her with you, rejoicing, into heaven. Then said the Savior [Jesus]: "Be it done according to your will" (*The Passing of the Virgin* 16:2-17 **[A.D. 300]**).

Obsequies of the Holy Virgin

Our Lord made a sign to Michael, and Michael began to speak with the voice of a mighty angel. And angels descended on these clouds; and the number of angels on each cloud was a thousand angels, uttering praises before Jesus. And the Lord said to Michael: 'Let them bring the body of Mary into the clouds.' And when the body of Mary had been brought into the clouds, Our Lord said to the Apostles that they should draw near to the clouds. And when they came to the clouds they were singing with the voice of angels. And Our Lord told the clouds to go to the gate of paradise. And when they had entered paradise, the body of Mary went to the tree of life; and they brought her soul and made it enter her body. And straightway the Lord dismissed the angels to their places (**Fourth Century**).

Epiphanius

Like the bodies of the saints, however, she [the Blessed Virgin Mary] has been held in honor for her character and understanding. And if I should say anything more in her praise, she is like Elijah, who was virgin from his mother's womb, always remained so, and was taken up, but has not seen death (*Panarion* 79 **[A.D. 376]**).

Timothy of Jerusalem

Therefore the Virgin is immortal to this day, seeing that he who had dwelt in her transported her to the regions of her assumption (*Homily on Simeon and Anna* **[A.D. 400]**).

John the Theologian

The Lord said to his Mother, "Let your heart rejoice and be glad. For every favor and every gift has been given to you from my Father in heaven and from me and from the Holy Spirit. Every soul that calls upon your name shall not be ashamed, but shall find mercy and comfort and support and confidence, both in the world that now is and in that which is to come, in the presence of my Father in the heavens". . . And from that time forth all knew that the spotless and precious body had been transferred to paradise (*The Dormition of Mary* **[A.D. 400]**).

Assumption of Mary

and for three days the voices of invisible angels were heard glorifying Christ our God, who had been born of her. And when the third day was ended, the voices were no longer heard; and from that time forth all knew that her spotless and precious body had been transferred to paradise (**A.D. 400**).

Gregory of Tours

[T]he Apostles took up her body on a bier and placed it in a tomb; and they guarded it, expecting the Lord to come. And behold, again the Lord stood by them; and the holy body having been received, He commanded that it be

taken in a cloud into paradise: where now, rejoined to the soul, [Mary] rejoices with the Lord's chosen ones. . . (*Eight Books of Miracles* 1:4 **[A.D. 575]**).

Theoteknos of Livias

It was fitting ... that the most holy-body of Mary, God-bearing body, receptacle of God, divinized, incorruptible, illuminated by divine grace and full glory ... should be entrusted to the earth for a little while and raised up to heaven in glory, with her soul pleasing to God (*Homily on the Assumption* **[ca. A.D. 600]**).

Modestus of Jerusalem

As the most glorious Mother of Christ, our Savior and God and the giver of life and immortality, has been endowed with life by him, she has received an eternal incorruptibility of the body together with him who has raised her up from the tomb and has taken her up to himself in a way known only to him (*Encomium in dormitionnem Sanctissimae Dominae nostrae Deiparae semperque Virginis Mariae* **[ante A.D. 634]**).

Germanus of Constantinople

You are she who, as it is written, appears in beauty, and your virginal body is all holy, all chaste, entirely the dwelling place of God, so that it is henceforth completely exempt from dissolution into dust. Though still human, it is changed into the heavenly life of incorruptibility, truly living and glorious, undamaged and sharing in perfect life (Sermon I **[A.D. 683]**).

John Damascene

It was fitting that the she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death. It was fitting that she, who had carried the Creator as a child at her breast, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. It was fitting that the spouse, whom the Father had taken to himself, should live in the divine mansions. It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped when giving birth to him, should look upon him as he sits with the Father, It was fitting that God's Mother should possess what belongs to her Son, and that she should be honored by every creature as the Mother and as the handmaid of God (*Dormition of Mary* **[A.D. 697]**).

Gregorian Sacramentary

Venerable to us, O Lord, is the festivity of this day on which the holy Mother of God suffered temporal death, but still could not be kept down by the bonds of death, who has begotten Thy Son our Lord incarnate from herself (*Gregorian Sacramentary*, Veneranda **[ante A.D. 795]**).