

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



For Your Reflection

The Assumption of Mary

The belief in Mary's Assumption – that Mary was assumed directly into heaven without suffering a natural death of physical corruption - was an ancient belief in the Church, dating back to the Apostles themselves. What was clear from the beginning was that there were no relics of Mary to be venerated, and that an empty tomb stood on the edge of Jerusalem near the site of her death. That location also soon became a place of pilgrimage. (The Benedictine Abbey of the Dormition of Mary stands on the spot.)

At the Council of Chalcedony in 451, when bishops throughout the Mediterranean world gathered in Constantinople, Emperor Marcian asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem to bring the relics of Mary to Constantinople to be enshrined in the capitol. The Patriarch explained to the Emperor that there were no relics of Mary in Jerusalem, that "Mary had died in the presence of the Apostles; but her tomb, when opened later...was found empty and so the apostles concluded that the body was taken up into heaven."

In the eighth century, St. John Damascene was known for giving sermons at the holy places in Jerusalem. At the Tomb of Mary, he expressed the belief of the Church on the meaning of the Feast: "Although the body was duly buried, it did not remain in the state of death, neither was it dissolved by decay...You were transferred to your heavenly home, O Lady, Queen and Mother of God in truth."

All the feast days of Mary mark the great mysteries of her life and her part in the work of redemption. The central mystery of her life and person is her divine motherhood, celebrated both at Christmas and a week later (Jan. 1) on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8) marks the preparation for that motherhood, so that she had the fullness of grace from the first moment of her existence, completely untouched by sin. Her whole being throbbled with divine life from the beginning, readying her for the exalted role of mother of the Savior.

The Assumption completes God's work in her since it was not fitting that the flesh that had given life to God himself should ever undergo corruption. The Assumption is God's crowning of His work as Mary ends her earthly life and enters eternity. The Feast turns our eyes in that direction, where we will follow when our earthly life is over.

The feast days of the Church are not just the commemoration of historical events since they do not look only to the past. They look to the present and to the future and give us an insight into our own relationship with God. The Assumption looks to eternity and gives us hope that we, too, will follow Our Lady when our life is ended.

The prayer for the Feast reads: "All-powerful and ever-living God: You raised the sinless Virgin Mary, mother of your Son, body and soul, to the glory of heaven. May we see heaven as our final goal and come to share her glory."

In the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* in 1950, Pope Pius XII proclaimed the Assumption of Mary a dogma of the Catholic Church in these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, having

This Week at St. AJ

Saturday, August 14

9:00AM Mass *Pro-Life Liturgy and Vigil*
3:00PM Wedding Avazier / Strittmatter – Fr. McGuinn
No 4:00PM Confessions for Summer – By Request or Appointment
No 5:30PM Vigil Mass for Summer – Resumes Saturday, Sept. 4

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – August 15

10:00AM Mass *The Candeloro & Zagrosky Families*
Catholic Forum meets today after 10:00 Mass in Newman Center.
11:30AM Mass *Holy Souls in Purgatory*
5:00PM Mass *Intentions of the Seminole and Gatto Families*
No 10:00PM Mass for Summer – Resumes Sunday, September 5

Monday, August 16

No 7:30 AM Mass for Summer – Resumes Tuesday, September 7
12:05PM Mass *In Memory of Gail Carney*
1:00PM Mass Celebrated at Drexel Chapel Monday - Thursday

Tuesday, August 17

12:05PM Mass *In Memory of Charles and Raymond*

Wednesday, August 18

12:05PM Mass *In Memory of Mrs. Daniel W. Dietrich III*
12:30PM to 2:00PM Church open by request – ask at Newman

Thursday, August 19

12:05PM Mass *In Memory of Juan Chico*
1:00PM Mass *Special Intention*

Friday, August 20

12:05PM Mass *In Memory of Patrick Temple-West*
No 1:00PM Mass at Drexel on Fridays during Summer term

Saturday, August 21

9:00AM Mass *Holy Souls in Purgatory*
No 4:00PM Confessions for Summer – By Request or Appointment
No 5:30PM Vigil Mass for Summer – Resumes Saturday, Sept. 4

The Assumption of Mary - continued

completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heaven." Thus, an ancient belief became Catholic doctrine and the Assumption was declared a truth revealed by God.

More about the Feast of the Assumption

As stated, the belief that Our Lady was taken up to heaven, bodily, is one of the oldest Christian beliefs. Over the centuries, a variety of customs developed to celebrate this day. In some countries, people brought flowers, herbs and vegetables to church to be blessed. In Italy, a statue of Mary was carried in procession to the church. In many countries, August 15th is still a public holiday, celebrated with picnics and parties. Some celebrate this day as Our Lady's heavenly birthday. Spiritually speaking, the Assumption is our assurance that we, too, through Jesus' Paschal mystery, will join Mary in Heaven. The primary attitude is one of Gratitude.

The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

Arranging For an Announced Mass

There are many opportunities for anyone interested in obtaining announced Masses during the fall season. Please call 215-386-9732 and leave your name and number. We will call you to arrange for Masses to remember beloved friends and family, deceased or living, or for any particular intentions, in gratitude for favors granted, or for any particular intention, such as for loved ones' health, or for a successful academic year or job hunt.

