

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BVM

This weekend the Church celebrates the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven.

Because this feast is a holy day of obligation, it takes the place of the readings and prayers for the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

This is a special opportunity because, let's face it, not everyone attends Mass on holy days of obligation.

Therefore, when we celebrate this feast on Sunday we can take the time to reflect upon the significance of our Lady's Assumption.

The dogma of Mary's Assumption was defined back in 1950 by Pope Pius XII.

However, from very early in her history, it was the faith of the Church that Mary was taken up into heaven body and soul "after the course of her earthly life was finished."

It is because of her singular role in salvation history as the Mother of the Redeemer that we believe Mary was the first to share completely in the fruits of the Redemption.

And since Mary's body gave birth to the Savior, the Church upholds that her body was preserved from the corruption of the grave.

The Assumption of Mary is first and foremost a celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death described by St. Paul in today's second reading.

The New Testament records neither the death nor the Assumption of Mary.

However the Church sees in the first reading from the Book of Revelation a symbolic reference to her ultimate destiny.

God has prepared a special place in heaven for the Mother of his Son.

It's important to remember that Mary's Assumption was not only a privilege for her, but is also a foreshadowing of the destiny of all who imitate her faithful discipleship.

Where Mary has been taken by her Son, we hope to follow, but for us it will happen in two stages.

First, we believe that the souls of those who die in God's grace and friendship, after they are perfectly purified, will experience what the Catechism describes as "the communion of life and love" with the Blessed Trinity, the Virgin Mary, the angels, and all the saints which we call "heaven."

Then, at the second coming of Christ, our earthly bodies will be raised and transformed as we are reunited with our souls.

Because of this belief the Church stresses that, after death, our bodies should be treated with honor, for one day they will walk as citizens of the new heavens and the new earth.

And so we give praise and thanks to God this day and every day for the victory of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the "great things" God has done in and through his servant Mary.

And we ask our Blessed Mother to pray for us that, filled with the hope of our eternal destiny we might, like her, place our lives each day at the service of God's plan