

Solemnity of the Assumption

The Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary is sometimes called the Dormition of Mary, or the falling asleep of Mary. In normal conditions, this day, is a Holy Day of Obligation. Every year, the Church celebrates the Mother of God being taken up into heaven body and soul at the end of her life. The Solemnity was declared and defined on November 1, 1950 when Pope Pius XII infallibly declared the doctrine of the Assumption as a dogma. He stated: "By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

How does the knowledge of Mary in heaven help us in our daily lives?

(1) We can look at the Assumption as our ultimate goal. God has made room for us in his house. In the Father's house there are many rooms (Jn 14:2). This is beautifully expressed in the famous passage from St. Augustine's *Confessions* in which Saint Augustine states "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." In God is our home, in God is our rest. Mary, a creature like us, by uniting herself so closely to God in life, receives a heavenly reward in death. Mary gives us an example to follow. After death, we are not destined to wander to an unknown realm, dimension, or galaxy, but whoever dies in Christ comes closer to Him. Mary who was united to Him so profoundly in life, now shares in the presence of God for all eternity.

(2) We can also look at the Assumption as a reminder about how to live a good Christian life. As God has room for us in heaven so too we should have room for God our homes. In our lives there is room for God. Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant; she is the God-bearer. Through the power of Holy Spirit, Mary became the dwelling place where the Word became Flesh to dwell among humankind. As Christians there is space for God in us and the presence which he brings gives light to world around us. As Christians we are also God-bearers, going forth and sharing the Good News to the world with all its problems and gloom. Pope Benedict XVI says that "this presence is realised in the faith: in the faith we open the doors of our existence so that God may enter us, so that God can be the power that gives life and a path to our existence. In us there is room, let us open ourselves like Mary opened herself, saying: 'Let your will be done, I am the servant of the Lord'. By opening ourselves to God, we lose nothing. On the contrary, our life becomes rich and great."

Today the whole Church celebrates! Today we are reminded that God is expecting us, that God waits for us and when our earthly journey is complete we are not left alone in a void, but are welcomed in place, in a home. God awaits us, and now, today we also know Mary our Mother waits for us: this is our great joy from this Solemnity.