

not have a lasting city but we seek one that is to come, the same which the blessed Mary entered today.

St Bernard of Clairvaux, 1090–1153

Related topics

For further study:

Mary, Mother of God; the Assumption of Mary; Mary, symbol of the church

Closing Prayer

God, whose mercy is from age to age,
we praise you for the working of your grace
in Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word.

As she has been welcomed into your heavenly dwelling,
so let our hearts be set heavenward,
and our lives be open to the power of your Spirit,
so that with Mary we may glorify your name for ever.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is one with you and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

Celebrating the Christian Year · 15 August²

CPL • LBC Year B Assumption of BVM.odt • 2023-02-03

² *Celebrating the Christian year : prayers and resources for Sundays, holy days and festivals, years A, B and C / compiled by Alan Griffiths. – 3 vols. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 2004-5.*

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year B

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

15 August

Principal Service readings

Isaiah 61.10-11	God has clothed me with the garments of salvation
or Revelation 11.19–12.6,10A	woman gave birth to a son, snatched from the dragon
Psalms 45.10-17	The king's daughter is all glorious within
Galatians 4.4-7	God's spirit cries within us, 'Abba! Father!'
Luke 1.46-55	Mary's song of praise – the Magnificat

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

The Magnificat

[Mary said:]

⁴⁶My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
⁴⁸for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.

Luke 1.46-55 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

Since the beginning of Christianity Christians have honoured the dead, especially those who died as martyrs – everyone gathered around their tombs on the anniversary of their death in commemoration. Later, these commemorations were moved into the church.

Mary's role in scripture seemed to end with Pentecost. There is no mention of her in scripture after that. However, in 431 at the third ecumenical council in Ephesus, the council declared that Christ was both God and man, refuting the teaching of Nestorius. Mary was declared to be the 'Mother of God' – *Theotokos*. Afterwards, Pope Sixtus III (432–440) built a basilica in her honour – St Mary Major.

In apocryphal writings of the fourth century texts telling of Jesus' appearance to Mary after his ascension, tell that she would soon be assumed into heaven herself. By the end of the fifth century there was a feast, the Dormition of Mary, that was celebrated at Gethsemane where Mary's tomb was venerated. By the end of the sixth century the feast was made obligatory in the east. The 15 August date was established around the year 650. The term *dormition* was used until 770 when the word *assumption* appeared.

There are several feasts of Mary that bring out the main truths about the simple handmaid of the Lord. The feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven honours the fullness of blessedness that was her destiny, the glorification of her body and soul that completely conformed her to the risen Christ.

The Magnificat alludes to the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2.1-10), but Luke enriches the language by allusions to other sources, such as the psalms. He shows that the law and the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus. Mary has a liberating role in God's plan. Mary is understood to be great

¹ New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

because of the child she will bear and is praised because of her relationship to Christ.

Quotations

1

St Augustine says: "Before conceiving the Lord in her body she had already conceived him in her soul". She had made room for the Lord in her soul and thus really became the true Temple where God made himself incarnate, where he became present on this earth. Thus, being God's dwelling place on earth, in her the eternal dwelling place has already been prepared, it has already been prepared for ever. And this constitutes the whole content of the Dogma of the Assumption of Mary, body and soul, into heavenly glory, expressed here in these words. Mary is "blessed" because – totally, in body and soul and for ever – she became the Lord's dwelling place. If this is true, Mary does not merely invite our admiration and veneration, but she guides us, shows us the way of life, shows us how we can become blessed, how to find the path of happiness.

Pope Benedict XVI. 1927–2022

2

It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity 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 God's Mother should possess what belongs to her Son and that she should be honoured by every creature as the Mother and the Handmaid of God.

St John of Damascus, 675–749

3

And with regard to ourselves, how deservedly do we keep the Feast of the Assumption with all solemnity. What reasons for rejoicing, what motives for exultation have we on this most beautiful day! The presence of Mary illumines the entire world so that even the holy city above has now a more dazzling splendour from the light of this virginal Lamp. With good reason, thanksgiving and the voice of praise, resound today throughout the courts of Heaven... let us not complain, for here we do