

Related topics

For further study:

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

Closing Prayer

Faithful to your promise, O God,
you have lifted up the lowly,
clothing with heavenly splendour
the woman who bore Christ, our life and resurrection.

Grant that the Church, prefigured in Mary,
may bear Christ to the world
and come to share his triumph.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Opening prayers · Assumption, Mass during the day²

CPL • LBC Year C Assumption of BVM.odt • 2022-08-02

² *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

15 August

Principal Service readings

Revelation 11.19; 12.1-6, 10

Psalm 45.10, 11, 12, 16

1 Corinthians 15.20-26

Luke 1.39-56

The visitation of Mary to Elizabeth

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

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

⁴⁶And Mary said,

'My 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.’

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

Luke 1.49-56 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

15 August is the Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother Mary into Heaven, both body and soul. (The word ‘assumption’ is derived from the Latin word *assumptiō* meaning ‘taking up’). St. John of Damascus, in reference to Mary in the 8th century, said, “Your pure and spotless body was not left in the earth, but the abode of the Queen, of God’s true Mother, was fixed in the heavenly kingdom alone.”

Pope Pius XII defined it in 1950 in his apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* as follows:

We proclaim and define it to be a dogma revealed by God that the immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven.

Munificentissimus Deus / Pope Pius XII. 1950

Munificentissimus Deus leaves open the question of whether Mary died or was raised to eternal life without bodily death.

The doctrine is founded in the conception of Mary as Mother of God. The Council of Ephesus decreed in 431 that Mary is *Theotokos* (‘God-bearer’) because her son Jesus is both God and man: one Divine Person with two natures (divine and human). This name was translated in the West as ‘Mater Dei’ or Mother of God.

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.

Many scholars accept that the assumption traditions can be traced to the second century. The New Testament is silent about the end of her life. The early Christians produced no accounts of her death, and in the late 4th century Epiphanius of Salamis wrote that he could find no authorized tradition about how her life ended, but he notes differences of opinion about it, including the belief that she was like Elijah, and taken like him into heaven.

In 2004 the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), released a non-authoritative declaration meant for study and evaluation, the “Seattle Statement”; this “agreed statement” concludes:

the teaching about Mary in the two definitions of the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception, understood within the biblical pattern of the economy of hope and grace, can be said to be consonant with the teaching of the Scriptures and the ancient common traditions.

Mary, grace and hope in Christ / ARCIC. 2004

Quotations

1

This is a celebration that offers to the Church and to all humanity an exemplar and a consoling message, teaching us the fulfilment of our highest hopes: their own future glorification is happily in store for all those whom Christ has made his own brothers and sisters by taking on their “flesh and blood” (Hebrews 2.14, see Galatians 4.4).

Apostolic exhortation *Marialis cultus* / Pope Paul VI. 2 February 1974

2

Luke provides a theology of God’s plan of salvation through Jesus. The two mothers-to-be are gathered in praise of God for the work God is doing in and through them. In their gathering, the theological reality that John is the precursor of Jesus and that Jesus is the Saviour who is superior to John is proclaimed.

Word and worship workbook for Year C : for ministry in initiation, preaching, religious education and formation / Mary Birmingham.1998