

Solemnity of the Assumption of Blessed Mother Mary

“Like our Blessed Mother Mary, properly channelizing the God-given Freedom towards excellence of life, blossoming of virtues and the Glory of God!”

The Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother Mary is celebrated in a variety of ways, all over the world. In some of the small towns of Rome, there is a very symbolic custom. It is called *L’Incinata* – the Bowing Procession. The people in the village carry a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary down the main street. This is symbolic of Mother Mary on Her way to heaven. From the opposite direction comes another procession, carrying the statue of Jesus. This is symbolic of Her Son Jesus coming to welcome Her. Under an arch that has been prepared with branches and thousands of flowers, the two processions meet. The statues are then made to bow to each other, three times. It is symbolic of Jesus welcoming His Beloved Mother at the gates of heaven. Then the combined procession continues, with the people carrying the statues side-by-side to the Church.... Symbolically indicating, Jesus taking along His Mother to Her throne in heaven! This ‘bowing procession’ so very beautifully and symbolically represents the wonderful event of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother Mary. It celebrates the Son-King sharing His Glory with His Mother.

Human kingdoms have followed the tradition of the son who is the King of the Land, crowning his mother, as the Queen of the Kingdom. The Old Testament bears witness to this fact: King Solomon on assuming charge of the throne, after King David, raised his mother Bathsheba to his side, to be the royal queen (1 Kings 2: 19). This was also a foretaste of what was to follow...Jesus, the King of Kings awarding

the throne of glory to His Mother, Mary and raising Her to be the Queen of Heaven and Earth!

The feast of the Day – the Assumption of Mother Mary – is one of the four Marian Dogmas that the Catholic Church pronounces. A dogma is a doctrine that is solemnly proposed by the Church as formally revealed in Scripture or Tradition. The four Marian Dogmas are:

1. Mary as the Mother of God
2. The Perpetual Virginity of Mary
3. The Immaculate Conception of Mary
4. The Assumption of Mary into heaven

The declaration of the Dogma of the Assumption of Mary is as follows: “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.” This Dogma of the Assumption was proclaimed on November 1, 1950, by Pope Pius XII in the Apostolic Constitution “*Munificentissimus Deus*.” The Dogmatic Proclamation of the Assumption was not defining something new in the Church, rather it was an official recognition of the centuries-old belief on Christians about the Assumption of their Heavenly Mother.

The celebration of the Feast of the Assumption teaches us one important aspect: The Assumption of Mother Mary is the sure hope for us, for a life of eternal glory! Our Blessed Lord came to this world to “die” and “win” salvation for human beings. This act of salvation had its total co-operation in the Person that God had chosen as His

Own in the Divine Plan – Mother Mary. From the moment, She said “yes” to the messenger of the Lord to become the Mother of God’s Child, She placed Herself in a position of “constantly being under the scanner to say a Yes” to God’s Will! Her Yes to God, meant a “No” to many things in Her personal life... her own individual desires... her own undisclosed dreams. She would become the epitome of the one who lived the teaching that Jesus would later expound during His ministry: “No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God” (Lk 9: 62).

Her echo of “Yes” reverberated and resonated all through Her life...in times of loneliness, in times of immense pain and in times of utter hopelessness. It was this daring faithfulness that made God to bestow on Her the privilege to share in Her Son’s Glory! This is wonderful story of the Assumption. This then is one of the great promise and assurance that God gives to each one of us through this Dogma of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother Mary. Does life grind us, with its daily toils and do we undergo immense pain and suffering... sometimes even unbearable and agonizing? Does life grill us, with many incidents of misunderstandings, exposition to calumnious talks...and total absence of positive encouragements and unconditional acceptance by people? Does life gnash us, with constant tensions and difficulties that never seem to leave us alone...and paralyze us with innumerable jolts of depression and despair? Then, the Assumption of our Blessed Mother comes to our rescue, with a hopeful answer to all such miserable questions! We need to be reminded that Mary had exclaimed, “Behold, I am the Handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38).

Mary was an ordinary human being. She too had Her ordinary and humble beginnings. She too went through common life’s struggles and strains. But through

these “ordinary” circumstances... God “raised” Her to the Heights, God “assumed” Her into Glory... simply because She “found favor with God” and lived a life worthy of that call in total submission, humble obedience and loyal faithfulness!

Dear Friends, this then is our call too. As Baptized Christians, we too have “found favour” with God. We dwell in “ordinary” circumstances of life – with hardships and pains. But if we also seek and live the Will of the Lord at all times, constantly submit to what He wants and dutifully bow to His mercy and grace, then the glory which Jesus has “won” for us at Resurrection, can be ours!

God’s plans are indeed wonderful...In the “Story of the Fall,” a mother (Eve) had been involved intimately with a man (Adam) and humanity fell into the sea of sin! In the “Story of the Rise,” a Mother (Mary) was involved intimately with a Man (Jesus) and humanity is promised to “assume” to the skies of glory! Are we ready to co-operate with God’s plans in our lives, just as Mother Mary did and thus receive the “Privilege of Assumption into Glory” just as Mother Mary received? Let us grow in our Love for the Lord and for the Blessed Woman who bore God in Her womb and was borne by God into heaven, and not left in the grave to turn back into dust! May our Blessed Mother intercede for us always in our pilgrim journey on earth.

Happy Solemnity of the Assumption of Blessed Mother Mary