



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

They opened the sarcophagus to venerate the precious tabernacle of [Mary] who deserves all praise, but found only her grave-garments; for she had been taken away by Christ.... Jesus Christ himself, who bestowed glory on his immaculate Mother Mary,... will also bestow glory on those who glorify her,... celebrating her memorial every year.

Saint John of Thessalonica (d. 649)

of the body that all people experience after death.

Did Mary Actually Die?

But that brings up another point. What is death? We see it as the end of a person's life

when the body disintegrates into dust later to be resurrected at the Last Judgment. But death is also a passage from one state of life (on earth) to another state of existence (in eternity). The Church has not said whether Mary died or not. It says only that Mary made the transition from this temporal life into eternity with God. The fact that Jesus himself died on the cross would not exclude Mary's dying, and, in fact, is an argument for some that Mary experienced death herself in imitation of her son. We just don't know. The significant issue is that, like Jesus, her body did not suffer corruption.

What About Our Reunion With Loved Ones?

Are there practical implications of this doctrine for us? Very much so. Try to imagine the reunion between Mary and Jesus at that moment of transition when she was assumed into heaven. Then, too, picture her reunion with Joseph, her beloved husband, with her mother and father (traditionally named St. Ann

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The Assumption

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Things to talk about:

- Are you planning on attending Mass this week on the Feast of the Assumption?
- How does Mary model discipleship for you?
- What are some ways that you honor Mary for her faithfulness?

What Is the Doctrine of the Assumption?

This dogma (a teaching of the Church that requires belief on the part of all Catholics) states that Mary, body and soul, was taken by God into heaven as the course of her life on earth was completed. Pope Pius XII proclaimed this event to be a doctrine on November 1, 1950. Some wonder whether there is anything in the Bible about this event since they cannot recall the word "Assumption" being used. As a matter of fact, there is no such word "Assumption" in the Scriptures. And for some people, unless the exact word is in the Bible, it can't really be called God's revealed truth.

However, what we have in the Church, besides the Scriptures, is the Sacred and Spirit-inspired Tradition of the Church regarding some of its most basic teachings. The doctrine of Mary's Assumption is based on what is called a theological conclusion because of other indi-

rect references to it in the Scriptures. For example, at the Annunciation (celebrated March 25th, nine months before December 25th), the Angel Gabriel declared Mary to be "full of Grace" and "God's highly favored daughter" (Lk 1:28). Mary conceived Jesus, the Son of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit as a consequence of accepting God's plan for her. Further, when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, who herself was pregnant with John the Baptist, she addressed Mary with the words, "Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk 1:42). All these biblical statements led the Church to conclude that because of her role as Mother of the Messiah, Mary would be preserved from original sin and its consequences. Her freedom from sin was accomplished by reason of Jesus' foreseen redemptive death on the cross. As such it would not be possible for Mary, whose womb carried the Son of God, to suffer the corruption

and St. Joachim). That is the point. Heaven is not only a state of union with God, the greatest union of all, but also a reunion with all our loved ones. What a celebration that will be! When we have a deep longing within our hearts for our blessed family reunion, we experience the touch of God himself. It was with Mary, too, as she finished her journey on earth and anticipated a heavenly reunion with her Son, Jesus, and her husband, Joseph. Mary's Assumption tells us what you and I have to look forward to in our own wonderful reunions.

by Jim Van Vurst, O. F. M
from St Anthony's Messenger



Saint of the Day: St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe (1894-1941)

We celebrate the Feast of St Maximilian Mary Kolbe on Thursday, August 14.

“I don’t know what’s going to become of you!” How many parents have said that? Maximilian Mary Kolbe’s reaction was, “I prayed very hard to Our Lady to tell me what would happen to me. She appeared, holding in her hands two crowns, one white, one red. She asked if I would like to have them—one was for purity, the other for martyrdom. I said, ‘I choose both.’ She smiled and disappeared.” After that he was not the same.

He entered the minor seminary of the Conventual Franciscans in Lviv (then Poland, now Ukraine), near his birthplace, and at 16 became a novice. Though he later achieved doctorates in philosophy and theology, he was deeply interested in science, even drawing plans for rocket ships.

Ordained at 24, he saw religious indifference as the deadliest poison of the day. His mission was to combat it. He had already founded the Militia of the Immaculata, whose aim was to fight evil with the witness of the good life, prayer,

work and suffering. He dreamed of and then founded Knight of the Immaculata,, a religious magazine under Mary’s protection to preach the Good News to all nations. For the work of publication he established a “City of the Immaculata”—Niepokalanow—which housed 700 of his Franciscan brothers. He later founded one in Nagasaki, Japan. Both the Militia and the magazine ultimately reached the one-million mark in members and subscribers. His love of God was daily filtered through devotion to Mary.

In 1939 the Nazi panzers overran Poland with deadly speed. Niepokalanow was severely bombed. Kolbe and his friars were arrested, then released in less than three months, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In 1941 he was arrested again. The Nazis’ purpose was to liquidate the select ones, the leaders. The end came quickly, in Auschwitz three months later, after terrible beatings and humiliations.

A prisoner had escaped. The comman-

dant announced that 10 men would die. He relished walking along the ranks. “This one. That one.” As they were being marched away to the starvation bunkers, Number 16670 dared to step from the line. “I would like to take that man’s place. He has a wife and children.” “Who are you?” “A priest.” No name, no mention of fame. Silence. The commandant, dumbfounded, perhaps with a fleeting thought of history, kicked Sergeant Francis Gajowniczek out of line and ordered Father Kolbe to go with the nine. In the “block of death” they were ordered to strip naked and the slow starvation began in darkness. But there was no screaming—the prisoners sang. By the eve of the Assumption four were left alive. The jailer came to finish Kolbe off as he sat in a corner praying. He lifted his fleshless arm to receive the bite of the hypodermic needle. It was filled with carbolic acid. They burned his body with all the others. He was beatified in 1971 and canonized in 1982..

”From www.americancatholic.org/saintoftheday.html



Lady’s Herb Day

The Blessing of the Herbs is a medieval tradition on the Assumption, and it was called “Lady’s Herb Day.” The blessing comes from a German tradition in which the herb does not have the restrictive English meaning, but includes all cultivated and wild plants. Blessings were given to enhance their healing properties. Blessing of the fishing boats also occurred on this day. In England and Ireland, an ancient tradition is to perform ritual bathing on this day to preserve good health.

God, who through Moses, your servant, directed the children of Israel to carry their sheaves of new grain to the priests for a blessing, to pluck the finest fruits of the orchard, and to make merry before you, the Lord their God; hear our supplications, and shower blessings + in abundance upon us and upon these bundles of new grain, new herbs, and this assortment of produce which we gratefully present to you on this festival, blessing + them in your name. Grant that men, cattle, flocks, and beasts of burden find in them a remedy against sickness, pestilence, sores, injuries, spells, against the fangs of serpents or poisonous creatures. May these blessed objects be a protection against diabolical mockery, cunning, and deception wherever they are kept, carried, or otherwise used. Lastly, through the merits of the blessed Virgin Mary, whose Assumption we are celebrating, may we all, laden with the sheaves of good works, deserve to be taken up to heaven; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“What’s What” is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.