

THE ASSUMPTION (ABC)

The most Blessed Virgin Mary when the course of her earthly life was completed was taken up Body and Soul into the Glory of Heaven where she already shares the glory of Her Son's Resurrection

This Doctrine was always believed in by the Church and attested to by the Saints. It has a firm foundation in the Scriptures. But it was only proclaimed a dogma of Divine Truth by Pope Pius X11 on Nov 1st 1950 before a crowd of half a million which thronged St Peter's square.

No other Human being has been assumed body and soul into the glory of Heaven. In the Creed, which we recite every Sunday, we say 'we believe in the Resurrection of the body'. What has already happened to Mary will happen to us at the end of Time. If we rise glorious our souls will be reunited with our transformed bodies freed from all defects.

The Assumption doesn't mean that Mary is distant from us here on Earth. Even though the Angel Gabriel referred to Mary as being 'highly favoured' God didn't spare her from suffering which is part and parcel of our earthly pilgrimage. Standing at the foot of the Cross mysteriously unites her with the passion of her Son. The sombre words said to Mary by Simeon when Jesus was a baby came true on Calvary: 'a sword of sorrow will pierce your heart'.

Mary can identify with difficulties which families go through today. Her and Joseph's uncertainties associated with the conception of Jesus, being refused entry at the inn at Bethlehem, Herod's massacre of the innocents, the long and dangerous journey to Egypt, the pain of seeing Jesus cold-shouldered by the locals at Nazareth where he grew up, the growing envy and subsequent opposition to her son among the Jewish leaders and finally her presence at Calvary. All these

show that she can empathise with and help us going through similar problems.

But these difficulties didn't make Mary a subdued sort of person. She was no shrinking violet when it came to speaking her mind. Blessed Pope Paul VI recounted that Mary was far from being a timidly submissive woman or one whose piety was repellent to others. On the contrary she was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicated the humble and scattered the proud-hearted. In her '*magnificat*' prayer it states: 'He removes the haughty from their positions of privilege and raises up the lowly'. If we pray to her she will surely give us the same courage to witness to the gospel today as she did in her day.

As our Mother she is there to accompany us on our journey through life and lead us into a deeper union with her Son.

So, as we do with our own earthly mothers, let us call on our Heavenly Mother every day so that she will always keep us on the path which leads to Glory.