

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 the catholic Faith by Pope Pius X11 on Nov 1st 1950 before a crowd of half a million which thronged St Peter's square, Rome.

No other Human being has been assumed body and soul into the glory of Heaven. That is our destiny as well at the end of time. In the Creed, which we recite every Sunday, we attest to this when we say the words: 'we believe in the Resurrection of the body'.

But 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 shield her from human suffering. If anything it was heightened by virtue of being the mother of our suffering saviour. Standing at the foot of the Cross mystically unites Mary 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 because of similar ones she had to face such as the doubts concerning the conception of Jesus, being rebuffed at the inn at Bethlehem, Herod's massacre of the innocents which must have been a time of heightened tension, the long and dangerous journey to Egypt, the pain of seeing Jesus cold-shouldered by his neighbours at Nazareth among whom he grew up, the growing envy of the Jewish leaders and finally his trial and crucifixion. All these things and much more must have

been testing times for Mary but they mean that she can empathise with us and help us carry similar crosses. Like her Son, the humility of Mary meant that she always put the Will of God, howsoever difficult, before her own. She didn't pick and choose. She wasn't a fair-weather Christian.

But humility didn't mean that Mary was easily cowed. 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 usurps the haughty from their positions of privilege and raises up the lowly'.

In our prayers to her she will surely give us the same courage, despite opposition, to stand up for the truth of the gospel today as she did in her lifetime.

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 often on our Heavenly Mother so that she will keep us on the path which leads to Eternal Glory.