



August 15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Vox Populi

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On Friday, August 15th, the Church will celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, honouring the dogma of the Blessed Virgin Mary was assumed into heaven, body and soul.

While it was only defined as a dogma in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, it is an ancient tradition of the Church, and has been celebrated as a Feast since the 7th century.

The New Testament is silent regarding the end of the Blessed Virgin's life, however various other writings from the early few centuries of the Church talk about her Assumption.

The *Euthymiac History*, a 6th century writing contains details of her Assumption. While the text does not survive, it is quoted by writers such as Saint John Damascene.

It details that three days after Mary's Dormition, one of the apostles arrived and asked to see inside her tomb. When it was opened, her body was no longer there, only her funeral shroud. Upon being told this, the imperial couple requested the garment, and after his return Juvenal had it sent to Constantinople, where it was placed in a church in Blachernae.

In the apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, which defined it as a dogma, Pope Pius XII pointed to the consistent views of several Holy Fathers, theologians and Doctors of the Church, who all held strong belief in the Assumption.

The Church leaves open the question whether she died or whether she was raised to eternal life without bodily death.

In his 2012 homily for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope Benedict XVI answered the question of how the Assumption of Mary helps us in our journey of faith.

"In the Assumption we see that in God there is room for man, God himself is the house with many rooms of which Jesus speaks; God is man's home, in God there is God's space," he said.

"And Mary, by uniting herself, united to God, does not distance herself from us. She does not go to an unknown galaxy, but whoever approaches God comes closer, for God is close to us all; and Mary, united to God, shares in the presence of God, is so close to us, to each one of us."

There are four Marian dogmas. In the order that they were declared as truth by the Church, they are: Mary as the Mother of God, Mary as a Perpetual Virgin ("ever-virgin"), Mary's Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption of Mary, body and soul, into heaven.