



The Assumption of Mary

Kilian John Healy

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The last dogma defined by the Church is the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heavenly glory. This dogma is the gateway to answer one of the greatest problems that has ever faced the human race. What is the meaning of life? Is death the end of everything?

Mary's Assumption tells us that eternal life with God is the final evolution of every man and woman who dies in the friendship of God. At the end of time all will be taken up and transformed, the body and the soul, the corporeal and the spiritual. For all that God created is sacred and loved. Where Mary is, all the elect will be. Whoever contemplates this mystery learns much about God, Christ, Mary, the Church and oneself.

The Virgin Mary is one who walked in the darkness of faith and never despaired, one who obeyed and never deserted, one who loved and was never unfaithful. She is an example of the perfect disciple. Mary was Jesus' first and the most perfect disciple of Christ.

The Virgin Mary, taken up into heaven after her earthly life, remains for us the symbol of all that we should be, and of all that we will be, if only we are faithful to Christ. She is the woman in the life of Christ and the woman in the life of all who follow him.

On earth Mary was the mother of Jesus and his wholehearted companion, his comfort and joy. Now in heaven close to Jesus, she watches over us with a mother's care and intercedes for us. She is our life, our sweetness and our hope. She is our shining example. Where she is, we shall be. God knows we need the woman clothed in glory.

The purpose of this book is to contemplate the Virgin Mary in her heavenly glory. The book's reflections go beyond the mystery of the Assumption in itself to contemplate the Mother of God in glory in relation to Christ and the Church. For Mary in glory is close to Christ and the people of God. We hope to penetrate more deeply this twofold mystery.

To facilitate this task, the book is divided the study into two parts: The Assumption in the Mystery of Christ, and the Assumption in the Mystery of the Church.

The first part follows the model of Chapter eight of the *Constitution on the Church* of the Second Vatican Council. There as here, Mary is considered first in the mystery of Christ and then in the mystery of the Church.

The first part is actually a commentary on the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* that defined the dogma of the Assumption. It is here we perceive that the Assumption is not an isolated privilege granted to Mary, but one that is intimately joined with the person and mission of Christ. Her triumphal entrance into glory is part of Christ's victory over sin and death.

The second part goes beyond the Constitution and ponders the Immaculate Virgin in heaven in relation to the mystery of the Church. The first consideration is Mary in heaven as the model, image and beginning of the pilgrim Church. This is followed by her relation to the suffering and heavenly Church. The final chapter ponders the texts of the liturgical feast of the Assumption. It is in the liturgy of the feast that we experience

God's love for the human family; Mary's inseparable union with Christ her Son and Savior, and the joy that we are called to experience once our pilgrimage of faith is over. For, taken up to heaven we join Mary in the communion of saints in union with Christ our Lord.

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