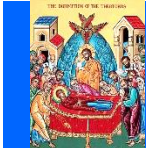
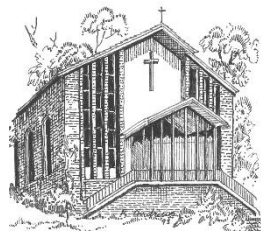


Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul



14/15 AUGUST 2021

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

CURRENTLY IN LOCKDOWN UNTIL 28 AUGUST

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

In his moving musical composition *Like Winter Waiting*, John Foley SJ has Joseph sing about Mary, "Who is this woman?" For many people (and, of course, maybe for Joseph too) the question is really, "Who is this woman to me?" These two questions are very different in character.

Consider the first one: who is this woman? The traditional answer to this question is that Mary is the Mother of Jesus – God.

This answer can be hard to understand. All Christians agree that God is without beginning. It seems that a God without beginning can't be born. And so, it seems that God can't have a mother either.

But Jesus is fully human and fully divine. As human, God can be born. And so, after all, God can have and did have a human mother.

The woman who was that mother is Mary.

And that is why if it is taken as the question Joseph sings in John Foley's music, "Who is this woman?" the answer to the question is this: Mary is the Mother of God.

But the more pressing question remains: "who is this woman to me?"

The answer to this question depends on the life and love of each person who answers it, doesn't it?

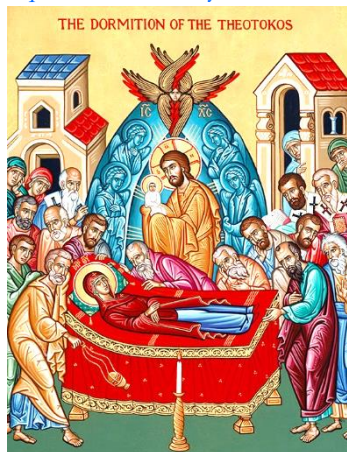
Think about it this way. For every person who reads an article, let's say about astronomy, thinks of the author as a (great) astronomer. But the answer to the question, "who is this astronomer to me?" depends on the person answering the question. To me, he is a dear friend. But that is because the history of my life includes, for example, care for him and commitment to him.

And this is how it is for each person and Mary too. What Mary is to you depends on you, on your own care for her and commitment to her.

But, you might think, how much care and commitment should I have for Mary?

Isn't that a backwards way to think about relationship with any person, though, Mary included? Maybe this is a better way. Elizabeth said to Mary, "who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43) Maybe what we should ask is, "what are we that the mother of our Lord should come to us?" What Mary is to me—or to you—depends on how you answer Elizabeth's question.

Mary, Mother of God



✠✠ Early tradition tells us that Mary went with John to Ephesus and died there. It is not surprising that just as Christians looked to her as the perfect disciple, free from the taint of sin from the first moment of her conception, and the perfect mother; just as they saw her as the one who was perfectly obedient to God's will in everything; so they saw her as the one who showed us how to die, as she had lived, in God's embrace. They knew that God took her to himself, the way God will take us all. To say her 'body' was assumed is to say that everything that comprised her real humanity, mysteriously transformed of course, was caught up in the eternal life enjoyed by her risen Son. Death could not separate her from him.

In 1950, after the carnage of the Second World War in which 'Christian' Europe, for the second time in a few years, had been tearing itself to pieces, Pope Pius XII felt the need to stress that Christian life is very much about the body. We can't pray 'in the spirit' and then treat the body with such disregard. It is every part of us that is taken up into life – transformed, of course, in a way that is beyond our imagining. Everything that makes us human is sacred. Having consulted the bishops throughout the world, the pope defined as an article of faith (and so infallibly) that Mary, the first and holiest of disciples, 'was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory'. This was not intended to separate her from us. On the contrary, it was to remind us that that is our destiny too.



Karl Rahner makes the important point: 'The definition of the Blessed Virgin's assumption does not tell us that this was a privilege which was reserved for her alone' (Theological Investigations, volume 17, page 122). In the same article he writes: 'No one is in danger of defending a heresy if he maintains the view that the single and total perfecting of man in 'body' and 'soul' takes place immediately after death; that the resurrection of the flesh and the general judgment take place 'parallel' to the temporal history of the world; and that both coincide with the sum of the particular judgments of men and women' (page 115).

As with purgatory, so with heaven, we have to eliminate the idea of time, for time is the measure of things in the world we know. It is not a measure of eternity.

When we imagine our resurrection as happening 'at the end of time', we need to remember that imagining in terms of space and time is part of the hardwiring of our brains. Beyond death, the notion of time is meaningless. Our prayer and our hope is that Jesus will come to us at the end of our time on earth, at our death, as he came to his mother, and draw us into God's embrace, with the whole of our human reality transformed fully by love.

This feast of Mary, taken up fully into the life of God, reminds us once more that God's reign celebrated in equality is the heart of the Eucharist. When we celebrate the liturgy, we are celebrating the dignity and freedom of every person, chosen and loved by God. With Mary, our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour!

Today's feast in the Eastern Catholic Churches is called the Dormition or Falling Asleep of *Theotokos* – the God-bearer. Mary died as all people die. Having truly died, she was raised by her Son as the "Mother of Life" and already participates in the eternal life of paradise, which is prepared and promised to all who "hear the word of God and keep it."

On 1 November 1950, Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary to be a dogma of faith: "We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma that the immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly ✠✠

life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory.” The pope proclaimed this dogma only after a broad consultation of bishops, theologians and laity. What the pope solemnly declared was already a common belief in the Catholic Church.

We find homilies on the Assumption going back to the 6th century. In following centuries, the Eastern Churches held steadily to the doctrine, but some authors in the West were hesitant. However, by the 13th century there was universal agreement. The feast was celebrated under various names (Commemoration, Dormition, Passing, Assumption) from at least the 5th or 6th century.



Scripture does not give an account of Mary’s Assumption into heaven. Nevertheless, Revelation 12 speaks of a woman who is caught up in the battle between good and evil. Many see this woman as God’s people. Since Mary best embodies the people of both Old and New Testament, her Assumption can be seen as an exemplification of the woman’s victory. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 15:20 Paul speaks of Christ’s resurrection as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Since Mary is closely associated with all the mysteries of Jesus’ life, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit has led the Church to belief in Mary’s share in his glorification. So close was she to Jesus on earth, she must be with him body and soul in heaven.

In the light of the Assumption of Mary, it is easy to pray her Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) with new meaning. In her glory she proclaims the greatness of the Lord and finds joy in God her saviour. God has done marvels to her, and she leads others to recognize God’s holiness. She is the lowly handmaid who deeply revered her God and has been raised to the heights. From her position of strength, she will help the lowly and the poor find justice on earth, and she will challenge the rich and powerful to distrust wealth and power as a source of happiness.

“The mother of Jesus, as already glorified in body and soul in heaven, is the image and the beginning of the Church which will receive fulfilment in the age that is to come; so here on earth until the day of the Lord arrives, she shines forth as a sign of sure hope and comfort for the pilgrim people of God.” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 68)

On 1 May 1946, Pope Pius XII, asked all bishops in the world whether they thought this belief in the assumption of Mary into heaven should be defined as a proposition of faith, and whether they with their clergy and people desired the definition. Almost all the bishops replied in the affirmative.

We have no real knowledge of the day, year, and manner of Our Lady’s death. The dates which have been assigned to her death vary between three and fifteen years after Christ’s Ascension. Both Jerusalem and Ephesus claim to be the place where she died. (By tradition, Mary lived at Ephesus after the death of Jesus.)

“The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son’s resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians: ‘In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition (falling asleep) you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death.’” [Catholic Catechism 966]

With whatever we’re facing in life, may we, like Mary, fall into God’s tender embrace.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Friday 20 Aug Saint Bernard, abbot, doctor

Saturday 21 Aug Saint Pius X, pope

Stay-at-home orders help to stop the spread of this pandemic. Our church is currently closed – until at least 28 August. Please be safe ... but ... KEEP IN TOUCH.

PARISH SECRETARY – Resignation and Position Vacant

Magda Pires, Parish Secretary, began employment in August 2015. After six years, Magda has submitted her resignation as she is moving into a new job in accounting. Magda's last day will be **Tuesday, 31 August**.

Owing to Magda's resignation, there is a part-time position available commencing **24 August, three days per week, Tuesdays, Wednesday and Fridays, 9:00am to 3:00pm**. Some negotiation of times and days is possible. The position requires proven skills in computerised bookkeeping procedures, database entry, Microsoft Office (*Word, Excel and PowerPoint*), website administration and general secretarial duties. Applications, including a detailed *curriculum vitae*, are to be sent by email to the Parish Office [thirroul@dow.org.au] by **5:00pm, Monday, 16 August**.

The Parish is indebted to Magda for her friendliness, faithfulness and expertise in service of our parishioners, visitors and parish over the past six years. There will be a time to bid farewell to Magda.

EDWARD DE BONO QUIZ TIME – FOUR QUESTIONS

Answers from last week: Yesterday, today, tomorrow; 2nd room (tigers would be dead).

ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK VINNIES WINTER APPEAL – SEE EMAIL HOW TO DONATE

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

The Assumption of the Virgin Mary
1st Reading Revelation 11:19, 12:1-6,10
2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26
Gospel Luke 1:39-56

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B
1st Reading Joshua 24:1-2,15-18
2nd Reading Ephesians 5:21-32
Gospel John 6:60-69

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

**Church closed because of lockdown
now closed until further notice**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul
Monday 17:30
Tuesday 17:30
Wednesday 09:00
Thursday 09:00
Friday 09:30

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

 4268 1910  4268 1976

 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish Office

Hours

Magda Pires – Parish Secretary

Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00am–3:30pm Friday 9:30am–2:30pm



www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

Parish School of St Michael  4267 2560