



Homily from Fr Robert Henshaw AA

The Assumption 98

On the night of the Last Supper Our Lord made this remarkable promise to his disciples, “I am going now to prepare a place for you and I shall return to take you with me so that where I am you may be too”. What that means is that not even death will separate him from those who belong to him, who are his flock. They will be with him wherever he is.

We believe that this promise applies first of all to his own mother since she wasn't only his mother but she was his first and most faithful disciple. Not death could break this band of faith and love between Mother and Son.

When the Dogma of the Assumption of Our Lord was declared the Pope at the time said, “It seems impossible that she who conceived Christ, bore him, held him in her arms, should after this life be separated from him in either body or soul. So the Church believes that at the end of her earthly life Mass was taken up body and soul by her Son into heaven, and there she shares his glory.

The Assumption doesn't mean literally that Mary's body went up into the skies—but that she entered a new phase or state of her existence. Being in heaven doesn't mean literally being in a place. Being in heaven is like the expression ‘being in love’. It's a state. To be in heaven means to be in God's embrace, to see him face to face and enjoy his presence directly. It means total fulfilment and consummation of our deepest longings and the absence of all the pains, sorrows, and frustration that we know in this life. Heaven then is a state of perfect joy, fulfilment, and never-ending love. We believe that this is our destiny too in the sense that God created us for this—to know, love him, and enjoy him in eternal.

This is our hope—that on the last day we will be raised for the dead, the body that we had, that was weak and corruptible, will be clothed in immortality. It will be like Christ's Risen Body, full of beauty, life and glory. We will share with Mary and all the Saints the life of glory.

Putting it another way, Mary is inseparable from her Son but she is also the Mother of the Church. Her home-coming won't be complete until all her children have joined her. So today's feast is a great sign of encouragement for us.

Mary has arrived but we are still on the way. If we persevere in the journey, if we are faithful to the end, then we may look forward to sharing the glory that Christ has promised to those who follow him.