

A) INTRODUCTION: OUR LADY'S MANY TITLES

- St Mary's parish, here in Bath, is dedicated to Our Lady under the title of Help of Christians
- That is just one of countless titles given to Our Lady
- Some are associated with particular places (for instance Our Lady of Lourdes)
- while others attribute some particular quality to her (such as the Immaculate Conception).
- Together they are a sign of the highest regard we as Catholics pay to Mary
- We honour her, because God himself has honoured her
- And today (this week-end) we remember one particular honour, or grace, or gift that he bestowed on her
- Today's Feast of the Assumption celebrates the fact that Mary was taken up, assumed, body as well as soul, into the happiness of heaven
- How can we understand that?
- By thinking of it from different points of view

B) FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW

- It was God's plan that his Son should enter into the world of human beings and be born just like them
- And the Father wanted to prepare a fitting dwelling-place for his Son
- God the Son, who is all-holy, sinless and innocent, was to take a human body
- So the girl chosen to be his mother was preserved from the very first moment of her existence from all sin.
- This is what we mean by the "Immaculate Conception".
- If she was preserved from sin, it was right that she should be preserved from all the consequences of sin, including bodily corruption.

C) FROM OUR LADY'S POINT OF VIEW

- From the very beginning Mary associated herself fully with the saving work of her Son.
- When the Angel Gabriel invited her to be the Mother of the Saviour, she said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let your plans be fulfilled in me."
- This utterly generous attitude and gift of herself remained unchanged throughout her life.
- It was put to the test especially at the Crucifixion of her Son. She stood beside him and associated herself completely with the offering of himself.
- Though she was not put to death, she is still honoured as the Queen of Martyrs.
- So if she was so completely identified with the death of Jesus, it was right that she should be associated completely with his resurrection.
- So the Assumption of Mary, body and soul, into heaven is her sharing in the resurrection and ascension of her Son.

D) FROM OUR OWN POINT OF VIEW

- it is easy for us to think that the Assumption of Our Lady is nothing to do with us, that we can only admire or envy her.
- But it is important for us for several reasons.
- First, her Assumption is a great sign of hope for us.
- Mary is a human being just like us;
- she needed to be redeemed just like us;
- and she was redeemed, just as we were, through her Son's death and resurrection, though his merits were applied to her in advance.
- God promises each one of us a share in that resurrection of Christ.
- We too are destined to share fully, body and soul, in the happiness of heaven.
- In Mary, that promise of God is already being fulfilled.
- What he is doing for her, he will most certainly do for us as well.

D) MARY IS OUR ADVOCATE AND OUR MOTHER

- Mary has been given to us as our mother and our advocate.
- She interceded for others during her life on earth
- She was united in prayer with the Apostles as they awaited the coming of the holy Spirit
- And from her place in heaven she continues to intercede for us.
- Instinctively we turn to her so often and with such confidence in the "Hail Mary",
- asking her to "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."