

*Did you know . . .*

### **The Assumption of Mary**

On Wednesday, August 15, we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. In the United States, (in years when it does not fall on a Monday), it is a holy day of obligation. The Assumption of Mary was proclaimed a dogma of faith by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950: “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 into heavenly glory.” [*Munificentissimus Deus* 44]

Although this was already a common belief in the Catholic Church, Pope Pius XII prepared extensively before declaring this dogma. St. Pope John Paul II noted: “In May 1946, with the Encyclical *Deiparae Virginis Mariae*, Pius XII called for a broad consultation, inquiring among the Bishops and, through them, among the clergy and the People of God as to the possibility and opportuneness of defining the bodily assumption of Mary as a dogma of faith.

The result was extremely positive: only six answers out of 1,181 showed any reservations about the revealed character of this truth.”

“By contemplating Mary in heavenly glory, we understand that the earth is not the definitive homeland for us either, and that if we live with our gaze fixed on eternal goods we will one day share in this same glory and the earth will become more beautiful.

Consequently, we must not lose our serenity and peace even amid the thousands of daily difficulties. The luminous sign of Our Lady taken up into Heaven shines out even more brightly when sad shadows of suffering and violence seem to loom on the horizon.

We may be sure of it: from on high, Mary follows our footsteps with gentle concern, dispels the gloom in moments of darkness and distress, reassures us with her motherly hand.

Supported by awareness of this, let us continue confidently on our path of Christian commitment wherever Providence may lead us. Let us forge ahead in our lives under Mary's guidance.” [Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience, August 16, 2006*].

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