

Today's feast celebrates the special place that Mary has in the life of the Church. This place is first of all defined by her being chosen to be the mother of Jesus, his only human parent. This alone gives her a uniqueness which is shared by no other person who has ever lived.

Today, we celebrate the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in body and soul to Heaven. What is really being said is that Mary, because of the dignity of her motherhood and her own personal submission to God's will at every stage of her life, takes precedence over everyone in the sharing of God's glory which is the destiny of all of us who die united with Christ her Son.

Mary intercedes for us in our needs, offering her human prayers on our behalf. The Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity.

Mary's greatness was not just in being chosen to be Jesus' mother but in her total acceptance of that responsibility in faith and trust, accepting blindly all that it might entail. The Gospel of Luke reveals the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in Mary's life. And, indeed, she had no idea the price she would have to pay to be the mother of Jesus. But, again, like her Son she had emptied herself in total service to him and today we celebrate her reward, her being raised to the highest place among the human race.

Mary is the mother of Jesus, who in his Body is the continuation of God's presence among us. Mary now stands glorious and bejewelled in the presence of her Son and his Father with the Spirit.

Today we join in her happiness. We look forward to the day when we too can share it with her. In the meantime, we ask her to remember us as we continue our journey on earth and to intercede for us with her Son that we may remain faithful to our call as faithful disciples. May we know God's will for us at all times and, like Mary, say our unconditional Yes to what he wants for us.

In the light of the Assumption of Mary, it is easy to pray her Magnificat 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.

"Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit and give me joy in seeking you more closely. Increase my faith in all your promises, my hope in the joys of heaven, and my love for You as my All."