

Readings: *Revelation 11:19 – 12: 6, 10; Psalm 44(45): 10 – 12, 16; 1 Corinthians 15: 20 – 26; Luke 1: 39 – 56.*

The Feast we keep today – and the doctrine which underlies it – are a particular manifestation of four fundamental beliefs of the Church – beliefs which we profess in brief form every time we recite one of the creeds.

First, we profess our faith that God is the creator of *all things visible and invisible*, which, of course includes the material universe, of which the Book Genesis says that *God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good*. This ‘good creation’ includes the human body.

Secondly, we profess our faith that the *Lord Jesus Christ...by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man*.

Thirdly, we profess our faith that he *died, rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven*.

And, fourthly, we profess our belief in *the resurrection of the body*.

The doctrine of the bodily assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a confirmation of our belief in these four fundamental articles of faith. It demonstrates the goodness of our human nature, destined by God – not to disappear at death, but to be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

It reaffirms our belief in an indissoluble bond between Jesus, the Son of God, and Mary who is the *Theotokos*, the God-Bearer.

It reasserts our faith that in his death and resurrection Christ has destroyed the power, not only of sin and suffering, but even of death, and has *opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers*.

And it provides a demonstration of our belief in the *resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come*.

Our celebration of the Assumption is both our joyful acknowledgement of the unique place of Mary in the redeeming work of her Son, and the setting out of our confident hope that we, too, shall be made sharers in the glory of the risen Christ.

This year – when joyful singing in our worship will be limited, or even absent – let us pray that God will give us an inner joy, as, in union with Mary our Mother, we rejoice in the victory of Christ and look forward to the blessedness of heaven.