

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mary was always a virgin, both in conceiving Jesus, giving birth to him, and remaining virgin ever after. God granted her this privilege to emphasize that this was a unique moment in history—the birth of Jesus who is the Son of God and the Son of Mary. The liturgy of the Church speaks of Mary as “ever virgin.” In the early Church some denied this, arguing that the Gospels speak of the brothers and sisters of Jesus, and thus maintained that Mary did not remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus. But already in the fourth century, theologians pointed out that the Greek word for brother used in the New Testament can refer also to cousin. A second explanation was that these brothers and sisters were children of Joseph by a previous marriage. However, it is the constant teaching of the Church that Mary remained a virgin even after the birth of Jesus. In her virginity, Mary lived a life dedicated exclusively to her Son and his mission. Her example has been followed by some of



Christ’s disciples who have lived lives of consecrated virginity and celibacy from apostolic times to the present.

In the mystery of her Assumption, Mary experiences immediately what we all will experience eventually, a bodily resurrection like Christ’s own. “The Immaculate Virgin . . . when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord

of lords and conqueror of death” (CCC, no. 966, citing LG, no. 59).

Finally, in Mary we behold what the Church is already like during her pilgrimage of faith—and what the Church will become at the end of the journey. “Mary figured profoundly in the history of salvation and in a certain way unites and mirrors within herself the central truths of the faith” (LG, no. 65).