

15. 8. 69
 13. 8. 70 (215)
 14. 8. 72 (215, 272)

Vivaldi: Magnificat (1st clar.) : My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed: for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name...

ANGELUS

"He who is mighty has done great things for me." Today is one of the greater, more important feast-days in honour of Our Lady, in the year. In many places it is celebrated with very special solemnity and festivity, as it has been for many ^{hundreds} ~~centuries~~ of years. But now that it is no longer a holy-day of obligation to attend Mass, here in HK, presumably fewer Catholics will be even aware of the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, to say nothing of its significance. This is, perhaps, to be expected in a secular, pluralist society such as we have here, where public holidays don't correspond very much with Christian festivals (except for Christmas & Easter): it's also an urban, commercial society. There are some people who think there's been a great falling-off of devotion to Our Lady in the Church in recent years: it may be so, or just a shift of emphasis to other forms of prayer & devotion as well. In any case, today's feast of the Assumption retains its long-standing place of importance in the worship and prayer of the Church, and it needs no apology or defence. What it does and should call for, though, is prayerful reflection on the meaning of what we celebrate so that we can participate in the liturgy of this day with understanding, interest and enjoyment. In 1950 Pope Pius 12th proclaimed it as an article of faith that Mary, the mother of God is in the glory of heaven, with her Son, in both body & soul. Despite some fuss at the time, there was nothing new about this article of faith, except for its

solenn proclamation as such. It ^{is a} has been the faith of the Church, expressed in different ways, even though there have been differences (still unresolved) as to how Mary's earthly life ended - did she die the normal human death or not? Thus there have been the two titles of today's feast, her Assumption into heaven (the one we use now, & wh. leaves the question open) and her Dormition, wh. suggests her passing through death to the life she now enjoys. Dormition was once a common word for a Christian death. It was the fact of Our Lady's Assumption wh., curiously enough, delayed the entry of feasts in her honour into the liturgical calendar - unlike the martyrs and others who were the first to have saints' days, there was no place which cd. claim the body of Mary, in which a special cult in her honour cd. begin. Her first and most important celebration was for her position as Mother of God, and this was and is tied up with the feast of Christmas. The earliest celebration of August 15th was, in fact, as the "Day of Mary, Mother of God", at Jerusalem. Later it was transformed into a feast of the Dormition, and by the yr. 600 was observed throughout the Byzantine Empire in the near & middle east. Only later still did its observance spread in the west of Europe, as the feast of the Assumption which we now have. This little bit of historical background may, I hope, help to underline the liturgical importance of (today's) feast, and help you to ^{appreciate its significance} (celebrate it fruitfully, even though it's no longer a holy-day of obligation. And for a prayer in music today, listen to this hymn for the feast of Assumption, wh. like the feast itself, comes from the Eastern liturgies: We praise thee, immaculate Mother of Christ our Lord, and we praise thy glorious assumption. MUSIC : PRAYERS

Russ. Lit 15
 (R266)

RHK NOW U. 28

Mary is the first, and so far the only creature to have reached the full glory of the new creation brought about by her Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, in His dying and rising again from death to reconcile all creation with God and enable men to reach a destiny beyond human power or vision. She is with God, totally transformed in soul and body by the power of Christ, sharing His risen life and love to the full: Christ's complete victory over sin has already had its full effect in her. This is her special privilege — the Lord has done great things for her. It's for this also that Mary is called the Mother of the Church, and is a symbol and image of the whole Church of Christ. For in her now, redeemed mankind can see the fullness of that glory which it, too, will reach to on the day of Our Lord's second coming, at the last Judgement. Her place with Christ is to be our destiny too. Celebrating the Assumption of O. Lady, we are necessarily reminded that the bodily resurrection of Christ in glory is for us as well — He is the first of a new creation; and, as if to explain its reality for each of us, He already has with Him, sharing the full glory of His risen, divine, life, one of ourselves, Mary His mother who shared His human love so closely on this earth. St Paul, in his letters, was very insistent on the fact of the resurrection and transformation that awaits each of us who are joined with Xt: it's not a fact most of us give very much attention to, or one that's easy enough to understand or imagine. All the more reason then, today, as we reflect in prayer on the glory and joy of Our Lady in heaven, to recall that our own destiny thro' Christ, is to be with her, sharing to the full her life and joy and love for God; to be, as she is already, totally transformed in body and soul into the likeness of Christ. We pray that we may share in the glory Our Lady has, a glory already ours in hope and in its beginnings in every sacrament we receive since Baptism gave us its seed, a glory wh. partly stand after our own deaths, will become fully ours in the Coming of Christ to wh. we look forward ⁱⁿ each celebration of Mass.