

13. 8. 70 (276)

14. 8. 72 "

Our Father (Russell) R 269

On Saturday of this week, the 15<sup>th</sup>, we keep one of the big feast-days of the year in honour of Our Lady, the Feast of Her Assumption. As it's no longer, in HK, a holy-day of obligation, a lot of people will probably not be aware of the festival or give any thought to its significance. So, in Midday Prayer today, let's make some remote preparation for celebrating Saturday's feast-day. In many places, the 15<sup>th</sup> Aug. is a day of festivity and solemnity, the big religious occasion in the middle of summer holidays. Here, in a secular, pluralist society, public holidays don't correspond much with the Christian festivals, except for Christmas - Easter: we also have an urban and very commercial society - so it's not possible to have quite so much obvious festivity about the 15<sup>th</sup> Aug. as may be customary elsewhere. But this shouldn't be equated, as some people tend to do, with a lack or decrease of devotion to our Lady in the Church. True, there are ups and downs in the patterns of religious practices and devotion, and in recent yrs. there have been changes and new forms of prayer & devotion becoming more prominent. But the Feast of the Assumption retains its long-standing place of importance in the yearly cycle of worship and prayer in the Church - how festively it is celebrated depends on you & me, on the ordinary faithful of the Church, on how much real devotion to Our Lady we have (if this question of doctrine bothers you). We ought to give more time to prayerful reflection on the meaning of what we celebrate on Saturday, so that we can participate in the liturgy of that day with understanding, interest and enjoyment. What I was trying to say last Tues., the feast of the Transfiguration, is very relevant to the meaning of the Assumption of O. Lady as well: I'll come back to this later.

→ The Assumption itself is not a new doctrine - despite some fuss at the time, all

that Pope Pius XII did in 1950 in proclaiming as an article of faith that Mary, the mother of God is in the glory of heaven, with her Son, in both body & soul, was to proclaim solemnly what had been the accepted faith of the Church. There are still unresolved differences as to how Mary's earthly life ended - did she die the normal human death or not? Thus there have been the 2 titles for Saturday'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.

→ 117 124 (p2n ff.)