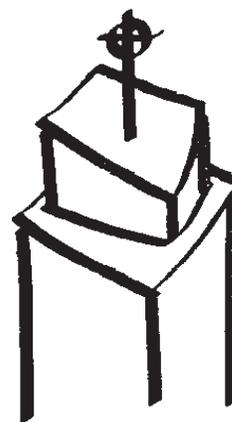


# OUR FAMILY

# NEWS



For Oblates of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Illinois



Summer, 2018

**LOOKING AHEAD:  
AUGUST 15, THE ASSUMPTION  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**



## **“From this day all generations will call me blessed.”**

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a test case for the Catholic view of what we call the development of doctrine. The Eastern Church has long believed and celebrated this mystery, although it has never defined it as revealed by God, but the Protestant world by and large rejects it on the grounds that it is not explicitly mentioned in Sacred Scripture. In the Western Church there is no explicit reference to it in the literature of the early centuries, and it was still disputed in the Middle Ages, but for many centuries now it has been celebrated in the liturgy and tranquilly accepted by the faithful, until its official promulgation as a doctrine of faith, revealed by God, by the authority of Pope Pius XII in 1950, just barely over half a century ago.

In order to justify the claim that this mystery was divinely revealed, the Church must hold that the Assumption is part of the deposit of faith that was made known by God before the close of the apostolic age, at which time we believe that the official revelation to the Church was complete. God spoke his final word in Jesus Christ, and since then has had nothing further to make known to the Church, though he expects us to continue to study and pray over the deposit of faith and thereby to penetrate more deeply into its richness and to assimilate it more thoroughly through living it faithfully. At the Second Vatican Council, in the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum*, the Church declared that “there is a growth in understanding of the realities and the words that have been handed down,...through the contemplation and study made by believers..., through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of the bishops.... Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything that has been revealed.”

In other words, while the deposit of faith remains the same, our penetration and acceptance of it grows and matures. While a casual reader of the passages from Scripture that are proclaimed in the Mass of this day may conclude that there is nothing in them about the Assumption of Mary, the Church has discovered through centuries of prayerful study that what is proclaimed contains additional layers of meaning below what appears on the surface. “All generations will call me blessed,” Mary said in her *Magnificat*. Is this not a prophecy of the

honor that would come to her in the future Church? The devotion to Mary that so many Christians love and practice is the fulfillment of that prophecy of St. Luke's Gospel. "Blessed are you among women," Elizabeth said to her, and "blessed are you who believed." It is because Mary was blessed by God that she is now blessed and revered by the Church.

The people of Israel wanted God to live among them. He was present, they believed, in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire in the Exodus, then in the mysterious cloud of the tabernacle, and finally in the Ark of the Covenant in the temple. This was always a symbolic presence. The newness of the New Testament consisted precisely in his *real* presence. In the incarnation God became truly present in humanity itself, in the person of Jesus, truly human and yet true God. The real temple is the humanity of Jesus, who took up his dwelling place in the womb of Mary. She is therefore the real Ark of the Covenant, who contains not merely the tablets of the law that contain God's word, but the very presence of God himself. That is why the Scripture proclaims her to be blessed. She is blessed for ever, for "all generations," because she lives with God and in God. She consented to become his dwelling place, the real temple of his presence. Since she became the dwelling place of God on earth, and his dwelling is eternal as he is eternal, she continues to dwell with him in heaven. This is what we are asserting by our faith in the Assumption of Mary.

Therefore the mystery of this solemnity can be stated quite simply and embraced by our faith. It is a matter of reciprocal hospitality. The Virgin Mary welcomed God, at his request, into her own dwelling place, which was simple and humble, but immaculately clean. In return God has brought her to live permanently in his palatial dwelling, which is beyond description, the goal of all human yearning. Thus she has become the Queen of the kingdom that we call heaven.

**+ Fr. Claude Peifer, O.S.B.**

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**Our Family News** is published in the special interest of the oblates of St. Bede Abbey. Please send changes of address and comments to The Editor, Our Family News, St. Bede Abbey, 24 W US Highway 6, Peru, IL 61354.

We welcome your submissions to this publication, either instructive or reflective, whether prose or poetry. They should in some way relate to the **Rule of Benedict**, Benedictine spirituality, and/or the oblate program. The editor reserves the rights to choose material for publication and to edit as necessary.



Ark of the Covenant,  
pray for us.

## UPCOMING EVENT

The annual oblate picnic is set for

**Sunday, July 15,  
from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 P.M.,**

in the shelter across from the academy.

Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service and beverage.

Feel free to bring a lawn chair, a deck of cards, or anything else that you think might be enjoyable for yourself or for the group.

## Abbey Prayer Schedule

Visitors are welcome to join the monks for Mass and for the hours of the Divine Office. Conventual Mass is celebrated on the first level of the abbey church, the hours of the Divine Office on the second level. The monks' schedule is as follows.

5:45 A.M. Morning Prayer\*  
7:45 A.M. Conventual Mass\*\*  
12:00 Noon Midday Prayer  
5:30 P.M. Evening Prayer\*\*\*  
\* on Sunday, 7:00 A.M.  
\*\* on Sunday, 10:00 A.M.  
\*\*\* on Saturday & Sunday, 5:00 P.M.

