

# **“MARY: EXEMPLAR OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR”**

A REFLECTION ON THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

THE REV. PETER ANTHONY

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The feast of the Assumption is one in which we celebrate at the same time the fragility and glory of the human life. Mary's life in the New Testament is frequently one characterised by danger, uncertainty, and the dangers of human sickness and death. Throughout her son's earthly ministry, however, she remains faithful to him despite the times of confusion and worry that clearly afflicted her. In this way, she shares in our experiences and is our fellow traveller in this vale of tears.

Yet Mary's life was also characterised by extraordinary events that set her apart from us, and give us hope. God had chosen Mary to be the Ark of his new covenantal presence amongst his people. He prepared her to receive in her own flesh the Eternal Word. As a result of this, he would not allow the Mother of his Son to know death and took her body and soul into heaven at the end of her earthly life.

In Mary, we see what God promises us as the goal and fruit of our Christian discipleship: life with him for ever. In Our Lady we see the triumph of grace as she is saved and glorified through the actions of her Son. She experiences in a unique way the Resurrection life which God promises us all. She is the exemplar of what we hope for.

How appropriate that this feast should be our focus this August. All too often over the past eighteen months, we have known intimately the fragility of our human condition. We have not felt in control of our lives, and have been afflicted by fear and worry. Yet God calls us out of that place of anxiety to trust in him, as we now move to rebuild life together and plan for the future. Mary is to us a model of what it means truly to be human and a child of God, trusting in Christ's power to save.