

August 2017

On the 15th of this month we keep the Solemn Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The place of Mary in the prayer life and devotion of the Church and the Liturgy is well summed up by the words of the Preface for the Feast as it describes her as

" the beginning and image of your Church's coming to perfection and a sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim people."

Mary is at the heart of the church at prayer, just as she was at the heart of the praying church of the Upper Room after the Resurrection, the church which received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. She is the one who is 'full of grace' and yet – or perhaps we would be better to say **and therefore** – she points away from herself and tells the people of God throughout the generations to do whatever He, Jesus, tells us (see John 2:5).

Having recently returned from the Shrine at Lourdes, many of our Diocesan family will be truly blessed for having shared something of this 'Marian Spirituality' at The Grotto - and yet it is way of praying and living which is taught to us by Mary each and every day, wherever we find ourselves. The Liturgy gives us a 'balanced diet' at the school of prayer – Feasts of The Lord Jesus, Feasts of Mary and Feasts of the Martyrs and Saints, they all flow from and lead us back to the one great mystery proclaimed in and through our daily living – that God so loves, treasures and values the world that he gives his only Son so that we may enjoy life in its abundance and in its fullness.

Happy August – and safe travels for those who are on the move.....

Canon Philip

Ps If you didn't get to Lourdes this year, or can't make it across to Walsingham in Norfolk, then there is a lovely shrine to the Blessed Virgin at Ladywell, Fernyhalgh, just outside Preston which is well worth a visit.