

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary - one of the four Marian dogmas, and the patronal feast day of the Diocese of Saginaw, as well as our Cathedral church. Today also has a significance for me since it was on this day in 2006 that I was accepted into St. Paul Seminary; in 2007, I received Candidacy for Holy Orders; and in 2008, I was ordained to the sacred diaconate, prior to my ordination to the holy priesthood nine months later.

The four Marian dogmas are: (1) Our Lady's Divine Maternity - namely, that she is the Mother of God; (2) Our Lady's Perpetual Virginity - in that she remained a virgin both before and after giving birth to Our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ; (3) her Immaculate Conception - that she was conceived, by a special grace from Almighty God, without original sin; and finally - what we commemorate today, (4) her Assumption into Heaven at the end of her earthly life.

The dogma of Our Lady's Assumption was proclaimed in 1950 by Venerable Pope Pius XII, through an ex-cathedra statement He manifested the near-unanimous consent of the bishops of the Church (1,210 out of 1,232 - greater than 98%) which He had received four years prior in 1946.

Yet, far from being a recent invention; the celebration of the Dormition of Our Lady - namely, her death, resurrection, and Assumption is contained in various sources as early as the second century; and was widely celebrated in the Eastern Church by the fourth century.

St. Gregory of Tours wrote about this feast near the end of the sixth century, and the feast of the Assumption began to be celebrated in the West by the seventh century.

Two theological aspects contributing to our understanding of the Assumption are that it is very fitting the Our Lord Jesus Christ would embrace the fourth commandment of honoring his mother and father as only the Son of God can - namely by preserving her from the corruption of the grave, and granting her a glorified body in Heaven.

And following the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, since Our Lady was preserved from original sin, as well as all personal sin - the Assumption is a logical effect of that gift granted to her (who was full of grace) by Almighty God.

This dogma is also supported in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Catechism, as well as the writings of all recent popes.

The Assumption of Our Lady is for us a reminder of our ultimate end - namely ... and hopefully ... Heaven.

Pope Benedict XVI, in speaking of the Assumption says:

*Heaven is no longer a very remote sphere unknown to us. We have a mother in Heaven. And the Mother of God, the Mother of the Son of God, is our Mother.*

*[Christ] himself has said so. He made her our Mother when he said to the [beloved] disciple and to all of us:*

*“Behold your Mother!” We have a Mother in Heaven.*

*Heaven is open [to us,] Heaven has a heart.*

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us pray for an increase in the virtue of Hope ... reflecting on Our Lady's Assumption ... and assured of the Mercy of God through the Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ.