

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The feast day of the Assumption of Mary commemorates the belief that when Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, died, her body was not subjected to the usual process of physical decay but was "assumed" into heaven and reunited there with her soul. It is the principal feast day of the Virgin Mother.

It is celebrated annually on August 15 by many countries, particularly in parts of Europe and South America.

Colorful processions through the streets and firework displays mark the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption in Italy, as they do in Italian-American communities throughout the United States.



In Sicily and rural areas outside Rome, a bowing procession is the day's main event. A statue of the Virgin Mary is carried through the town to a ceremonial arch of flowers, where a group of people holding a statue of Christ awaits her arrival. Both statues are inclined toward each other three times, and then the Christ figure precedes the figure of Mary back to the parish church for a special benediction.

In Sao Paulo and other parts of southern Brazil the feast is called *Nosa Senhora dos Navegantes*, or "Our Lady of the Navigators". Pageants are held on decorated canoes, each carrying a captain, a purser, three musicians and two rowers. They travel to small villages to entertain and feast

PRAYER TO THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

Father in heaven,
all creation rightly gives you praise,
for all life and all holiness come from you.
In the plan of your wisdom
she who bore the Christ in her womb
was raised body and soul in glory to be with him in heaven.
May we follow her example in reflecting your holiness
and join in her hymn of endless love and praise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.