

## *The Assumption of the Virgin*

### ***This week's thought is written by Fr James Hanvey SJ:***

"In the National Gallery in London there is an impressive painting by Francesco Botticini. Its theme is 'The Assumption of the Virgin' and it is believed to have been commissioned for a church in Florence around 1475/76.

I think that the first thing that strikes the person looking at the painting is its geometry. The contrasting colours delineate the two planes of earth and heaven. On the plane of earth is a hill on which there is a rectangular stone sarcophagus; it contains no body but is filled with lilies. The scene deliberately echoes the artistic depictions of the resurrection of Christ. The disciples are gathered in various groups. Some are gazing into the empty 'tomb', others gathered in discussion; a few seem to be caught in some interior act of wonder. I think Botticini has placed the viewer in a privileged position, which appears to elude the disciples.

The hill on which we find the disciples gathered around the flower-filled sarcophagus is part of a defined landscape. Two rivers flow from behind the hill towards us. They help us to locate the plane and to recognise that it is a flattened landscape with a low blue horizon. This shallow horizontal plane serves to heighten the vastness of the vertical plane of heaven, which opens up above the disciples, accessible to us but unrecognised by them. If the earth moves towards a defined horizon, the organisation of the different orders of heaven in tiered hierarchical rings, successively suspended in the golden vault of an open heaven, moves us beyond a horizon in time and space into an infinite depth. At the centre of the great colosseum of angels and saints is Mary, kneeling before her son. All the major figures of salvation history are gathered as privileged witnesses of the event. Here, Botticini is pointing to the eschatological significance of Mary's Assumption. The drama of our salvation is complete; we have moved from the puzzling witness of the flower-filled sarcophagus and its absent body on earth, to the transparent vision of heaven. His arrangement of the complementary but contrasting planes of earth and heaven moves us from speculation into contemplation. In this way, the painting acts as an icon. It changes our status; we are no longer just viewers. From being a *viator* we have become a *comprehensor* – from being wayfarers, we have come to rest in a fullness of vision and understanding.

Though painted nearly five hundred years before Pius XII defined the doctrine of the Assumption (1950), Botticini's painting contains all the major aspects that the definition was to recognise.<sup>[i]</sup> The painting, like the doctrine, was not without its controversy. While devotion to Mary seems to be so natural and central to the Catholic understanding and experience of the Christian faith, to many protestant Christians and others it is at least unnecessary and at worst a sign of how far parts of the Church have strayed from biblical faith. Yet this dispute is not new. Controversies over how the Church thinks about Mary and expresses those thoughts date back to the recognition of her ancient title, Theotokos ('God Bearer' or 'Mother of God'), at the Council of Ephesus (431).

In Mary's Assumption we can see that, finally, in God's presence we become completely ourselves, fully alive in body and soul. Still caught in the materiality of this world, itself yearning for freedom, we can barely imagine what it is to be alive in God's presence with God's own life. Yet in that presence, our history is not lost but redeemed and healed; now it can bear the fullness of God's glory.

Hopkins' poem comparing Mary to the air we breathe captures this:

*Was deemèd, dreamèd; who*

*This one work has to do—*

*Let all God's glory through,*

*God's glory which would go*

*Through her and from her flow*

*Off, and no way but so. [ii]*

In Mary's Assumption we can now grasp that Theotokos was more than just a title; it maps a whole ontology of grace. In this way, we can begin to grasp something of the meaning of the reality of the resurrection.

In her Assumption, Mary does not stand only in the presence of her son but again, as at Pentecost, she is found at the centre of the Church. So, too, her Assumption seals her solidarity with us. Yet Mary never loses her unique maternal mission to help us all find our way to her son. She belongs to the whole Church in every age. She is rooted in history but by God's grace not bound by it. Now all generations can lay claim to her maternal help. Wherever we are on that journey, the feast of the Assumption gives us a vision of the home that awaits us, and the promise that is and will be fulfilled. Mary of Nazareth, Mother of God and Mother of the Church assures us that the journey is worth making and that none of us travel alone.

Botticini's depiction of the disciples reveals an almost humorous honesty. They're rather like a group of theologians trying to come to grips with what has happened but still either looking into that strange, lily-filled casket or too absorbed in their own discussion to notice what is now so magnificently before them. They need to move to that other plane. It is there that everything – the person, the history of Mary, and even the whole reality of salvation that they are trying to understand – becomes revealed. If they do not move, the casket, like the empty tomb, will always remain a strange phenomenon, a question that cannot produce an answer.

Whether we are theologians so preoccupied with tenure that we miss the mystery before us, or just busy getting through a day or a life, we need these glorious and audacious doctrines to arrest us and direct our eyes to another plane, one that puts things in perspective and gives us hope."

*James Hanvey SJ is a Senior Research Fellow in Theology at Campion Hall, University of Oxford.*

[i] '...that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.' *Pius XII, Munificentissimus Deus (1950), §44.*

[ii] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe'

A link to the full original article by Fr James is provided here  
<https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/reflections-assumption>

**Welcome.....** If this is your first time reading the newsletter, then you are particularly welcome. Please get in touch - we'd love to tell you about everything that's going on here, and invite you to join us. Just to start you off, elsewhere in the newsletter you will find our services and other activities. Look at our website <https://www.catholicwinchester.org.uk/>, or our [Facebook page](#) or email [office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk) If you are interested in becoming a Catholic, visit our [Journey in Faith webpage](#).

**THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY** 14<sup>TH</sup> August 2022

**Entrance Antiphon:**

A great sign appeared in heaven:  
a woman clothed with the sun,  
and the moon beneath her feet,  
and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

**First reading:**                   **Apocalypse 11:19, 12:1-6,10**

**Responsorial Psalm:**       **Ps 44:10-22, 16. R. v. 10**  
On your right stands the queen, in garments of gold.

**Second reading:**           **Corinthians 15:20-26**

**Gospel Acclamation:**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia!**

Mary has been taken up into heaven;  
all the choirs of angels are rejoicing.

**R. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Luke 1:39-56**

**Communion Antiphon:**

All generations will call me blessed,  
for he who is mighty has done great things for me.

**Happy Birthday to Fr Brian Croughan** – we wish Fr Brian a very happy 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday this week. Sadly, Fr Brian is currently in hospital so please do keep him in your prayers at this time.

**Mass time change – St Gregory's** On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August, the morning Mass at St Gregory's will be celebrated at the earlier time of 9am.

**Changes to Night Prayer** – As Fr Anthony will be taking a well deserved summer break, Night Prayer will not take place until Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August.

**THANK YOU** from the Catholic Women's League (CWL) to all who supported August's Charity Soup and Pud Lunch, and also their recent Wednesday Coffee/Cake/Chat mornings. Together they have raised £215 for the Winchester Hospice. The next CWL Charity Soup and Pud Lunch will be on **Friday 2nd September**. All are Welcome!

**Calling all young people aged 11-18**

Would you like to meet with other young people from Ukraine and other countries? Winchester Vineyard Church and St Peter's Sanctuary Welcome Hub will be having an event for young people aged 11-18 from Winchester and those new to Winchester from Ukraine and other countries. If you are interested, please submit names to [office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

The date is Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August from 6-8pm and it will be held at Vineyard Church Winchester, Unit A, Bar End Road SO23 8NP. The Sat Nav code is SO23 9NR. We also need adults, preferably with a DBS check that is appropriate for working with children and young people, to help with games and serving pizza and drinks. Please contact the parish office using the above email address if you are able to help in this way.

**Parish 100 Club:** The winner of the July £50 monthly prize was Sheila King. The draw for the August £50 prize will be made on Sunday 29 August after the 11.00 mass at St Gregory's. New members always welcome. Please contact the Parish office for further information.

**Saturday and Sunday 5.30pm Masses** – We are considering possible changes to the times of the 2 evening weekend masses and would like to know people's thoughts on this. The current proposal is to keep the Saturday evening mass at 5.30pm, as it fits with the times of public transport for those travelling in by bus, but to change the Sunday Mass back to 6pm. Please provide feedback to Fr Mark or Michaela in the Parish Office. Thank you!

**Relics of St Bernadette to visit the Diocese** On **Thursday 8th September**, the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and on the morning of the **9th September 2022**, the relics of St. Bernadette will be visiting our Cathedral in Portsmouth. More details are due to be announced, but please be advised that attendance needs to be registered (choosing a dedicated timeslot) to ensure the comfort and safety of pilgrims. Click [here](#) to register. Further information on the national tour of the relics can be found here <https://stbernadette.org.uk/registration/>

**Pastoral Coordinator for Evangelisation**

**Based at:** Pastoral Centre, St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs, Jewry Street, Winchester, Hants SO23 8RY.

**Hours of work:** Part time (14 hours per week) to be worked on a flexible pattern to include some evening and weekend work.

**Salary:** £12-13 per hour depending on experience.

**Closing date:** Wednesday 24th August 2022 at 12 noon

For further details and how to apply, please click [here](#). We are seeking a Pastoral Coordinator for Evangelisation to support the Director of Evangelisation and Leadership in delivering and developing the parish Evangelisation Ministry and its programmes and initiatives, with a particular focus on our primary tool for evangelisation, Alpha.

**Welcome to** Arthur Porteous Ward, Lucy Vokes, Bryn and Cleo Aitken who were baptised at Peter's Church last weekend. May God bless these children with His love and grace, today and always.

**Funeral Notices:** Arnold Moreto RIP – **2pm Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August** at St Peter's Church  
Nandita Connolly RIP – **11.45am Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August** at St Peter's Church  
Patrick Anthony Ross RIP – **12.15pm Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August** at St Peter's Church (during Mass)  
Please pray for their family and friends at this difficult time. May God grant Arnold, Nandita and Patrick eternal rest.

**PRAYER CORNER:** During the summer and into September/October, our Prayer Corner petitions will be based on our Parish Prayer - taking a line from the prayer each week.

**This Week's Intention:** *Pour out your Holy Spirit upon each of us here*  
We pray that the Lord will pour out His Holy Spirit on us all, as He did on the first Pentecost, so that we receive His Sevenfold gifts.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR** the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:

Nandita Connolly            Patrick Anthony Ross  
Arnold Moreto                Sue Bolger

Mass Timetable	13 <sup>th</sup> August – 20 <sup>th</sup> August 2022		
Date	Mass Times & Intentions		
SATURDAY – August 13 <sup>th</sup> Our Lady on Saturday  THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - VIGIL	9.00AM	Mass at St Peter's	Pamela Watkins RIP
	5.30PM	Mass at St Peter's	K B Joseph RIP
SUNDAY – August 14 <sup>th</sup> THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	8.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Deceased members of the Reira family
	9.00 AM	Mass at St Thomas More's	People of the Parish
	9.15 AM	Mass at St Stephen's	Martin Rex Gilligan RIP
	10.30AM	Mass at St Peter's	Nandita Connolly RIP
	11.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	People of Ukraine
	5.30PM	Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of Joe & Vera Kelly
MONDAY – August 15 <sup>th</sup>	12.15PM	Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of the Neil family
TUESDAY – August 16 <sup>th</sup>	9.00AM	Mass at St Gregory's	Liselotte Lipa RIP (1 year anniversary)
	12.15PM	Mass at St Peter's	For the Dead & Founders
WEDNESDAY – August 17 <sup>th</sup>	10.00AM	Mass at St Peter's	CWL intention – for those preparing to start new places of education
THURSDAY – August 18 <sup>th</sup>	10.00AM	Mass at St Peter's	Simon de Costa RIP
FRIDAY – August 19 <sup>th</sup> St Bernard, Abbott, Doctor of the Church	10.00AM	Mass at St Gregory's	Hugh & Mary Ann McTernan RIP and their relatives deceased and living
	12.15PM	Mass/funeral at St Peter's	Patrick Anthony Ross RIP
SATURDAY – August 20 <sup>th</sup> St Pius X 21 <sup>st</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - Vigil	9.00AM	Mass at St Peter's	Soul of Eileen Gibson
	5.30PM	Mass at St Peter's	Ben's family

Confessions every Saturday 11.00am till 12.00noon and 4.30pm-5.00pm at St Peter's Church – booking not required  
Morning Prayer (livestream and open to public) every weekday, 8.00am at St Peter's followed by Adoration till 9.00am  
To participate online or see the recorded services for Morning Prayer & Adoration, go to our [YouTube channel](#)  
**ALL SERVICES (INCLUDING MORNING PRAYER) FROM ST PETER'S ARE LIVESTREAMED**

#### Useful Contacts

**Clergy:** Fr Mark Hogan (Parish Priest) ([mhogan@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:mhogan@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)) ;  
Fr Anthony Chiatu Njingo (Assistant Priest) ([cniingo@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:cniingo@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)) ;  
Deacon Gerard Dailly ([gdailly@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:gdailly@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)) and Deacon Martin McElroy ([mmcelroy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:mmcelroy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk))  
**Director of Evangelisation and Leadership:** Allegra Mutanda ([allegra@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:allegra@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Housekeeper:** Sarah Culhane ([sculhane@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:sculhane@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Finance and Property Manager:** Annette Parr ([annette@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:annette@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Facilities and Resources Manager:** Sean Reidy ([sean@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:sean@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Parish Administration Manager:** Michaela Waterfield ([michaela@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:michaela@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Sacristan:** Laurie Howe      **Caretaker:** Richard Phiri  
**Pastoral team – Baptism and First Holy Communion:** Rosanne Walker ([baptism@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:baptism@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)), ([FHC@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:FHC@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Pastoral team – Youth Ministry:** Jo Donaldson ([youthstuff@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:youthstuff@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Outreach Ministry Lead:** Mike Elks ([mike@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:mike@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
**Volunteer Director of Operations:** Dcn Gerard Dailly ([gdailly@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:gdailly@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk))  
**Volunteer Director of Communications:** Moira Redmond ([moirar@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:moirar@stpeterswinchester.org.uk))  
To get in touch with them, and for other general matters, please contact the Parish Office: 01962 852804 [office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk) .  
**PeterCares:** [petercares@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:petercares@stpeterswinchester.org.uk) **Prayerline:** [prayers@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:prayers@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)  
**Newsletter** (deadline for items Wednesday evening): [newsletters@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:newsletters@stpeterswinchester.org.uk) **Newsletter list:** [hello@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:hello@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)  
**St. Peter's School Office:** 01962 852820 [admin@st-peters.hants.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-peters.hants.sch.uk)  
**St. Thomas More's Stockbridge:** please email [stm@stpeterswinchester.org.uk](mailto:stm@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

**If you're away from your church or the Diocese, you can still keep in contact with all the latest news from the Bishop or the Diocese via :**

E- News <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/communications/news/enews/> (subscription service available)  
Twitter @PortsmouthRC      LinkedIn Catholic Diocese Of Portsmouth      Facebook @PortsmouthRC

**Mass Counts** We understand that some parishioners may still have concerns about spending time amongst larger groups of people. We will share the information we have on numbers attending the different masses in order for people to make an informed judgement on which one they would feel most comfortable attending.  
Please see the table for the mass counts from last weekend (7<sup>th</sup> August)  
**As a parish, we are now moving to people making a personal choice with regards to the wearing of masks in our churches, whilst being conscious of the needs of others around us.**

Mass	Church	Capacity	Attendance
Saturday 5.30pm	SP	381	65
8am	SP	381	72
9am	STM	98	62
9.15am	SS	150	110
10.30am	SP	381	152
11am	SG	115	80
5.30pm	SP	381	53