

*Homily of Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh*

*Solemnity of the Assumption, 2020*

*St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, Edinburgh*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, as you see, we are celebrating the feast of the Assumption. It's usually celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, but as it's so close to the Sunday, this year, with the permission of the Holy See, the feast is translated in Scotland to today.

This is a very popular feast, and if you have ever been on holiday in Western Europe around the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, you'll know what I mean. Many a little corner of Bavaria and Austria, and the quiet Catholic villages of France, and Switzerland and Italy and Spain and the Low Countries, from Poland to Portugal – many of them not only have their holidays around now, they have them in order to celebrate with faith and joy our Lady's journey into paradise at the end of her earthly life.

And it's not just on the continent: our Archdiocese and its cathedral are dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption. The Diocese of Motherwell too. Even our own parish of Fauldhouse, although dedicated to St John the Baptist, has, as its centrepiece, a beautiful representation, not of St John, but of our Lady of the Assumption. This feast has inspired artists, theologians and ordinary people in their devotions for centuries.

In Scotland, it also usually marks the end of the schools' summer holidays. So, the Assumption reminds us every year of our children and their teachers as they return to school, especially in these strange times, thinking in particular about those families where the children's first holy Communion was delayed because of the present health crisis. Let's hope and pray that they will enjoy a wonderful first holy communion day soon, in spite of the restrictions.

Another thing that I've been thinking about recently is how many women's religious congregations have the Feast of the Assumption as the moment when young women enter religious life, take the veil, take their first vows, or even profess their solemn vows as nuns or religious. There is even a young woman of this diocese who is entering the convent today, and I ask you to remember her in your prayers.

But it is a beautiful thought to recall how religious women, how our nuns associate themselves with Our Blessed Lady, assumed into heaven, on the day that they give themselves to religious life.

Like our Blessed Lady, our religious women say a perfect and complete "Yes" to God when prompted by His inspiration; they bear Christ to the world in their own flesh - by their words, their actions and their love for everyone; they follow Christ on his missionary journeys; like Mary, they listen to Him, seated at His feet; like Martha, they serve Him cheerfully and willingly; like Our Lady, they suffer with Jesus as He hangs on the cross; like Mary Magdalene, they keep vigil with Him in death; they welcome the

risen Lord when he appears; and they hope to reign joyfully with Him one day, in the presence of Our Lady and all the saints, in heaven.

As we remember Our Lady today, "falling asleep" and being welcomed into paradise by her Son, we remember all the people of our diocese, but especially all our nuns and religious women, as they seek to imitate Our Lady in her love and her patience, her sorrows and her joys.

Have a happy feast, and God bless you!