

Scripture Study

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Cycle C



Opening prayer

Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10b (Ps 45:10-12,16) 1 Corinthians 15:20-27 **Luke 1:39-56**

Overview of the Gospel:

- On August 15 the Church observes the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This solemnity celebrates Mary's being assumed (or 'taken up') into heaven by God (by contrast, Jesus *ascended* into heaven by his own divine power). Our Gospel reading for this Solemnity features the second joyful mystery of the rosary, what is known as 'the Visitation.'
- In the preceding scene in Luke's Gospel (1:26-38, the Annunciation), Mary has just learned from the angel Gabriel that she is to be the mother of the long awaited Messiah, the one who is to save her people, and all who fear God. (verse 50). Immediately upon giving her assent, her *fiat*, she proceeds on a four-day journey to the town of her cousin, Elizabeth, who is now six months pregnant with John the Baptist (Luke 1:1-24).
- As the two meet, John the Baptist leaps in his mother's womb from joy. Elizabeth proclaims Mary as the Mother of God (verse 43) and praises her faith (verse 45).
- Mary breaks forth into the beautiful canticle known as the *Magnificat*. Her song glorifies God for what he has done in her (verses 46-50); she teaches us God's preference for the humble (verse 51-53); and she proclaims the fact that God continues to keep his promises to his people (verses 54-55).

Questions:

- In the First Reading, we hear about St. John's vision of a woman in glory; a crowned queen (in ancient cultures the mother of a king) who is physically in heaven. Who is this Woman?
- Reading St. Paul's description in the Second Reading of how all those who believe in him and serve him faithfully will be raised like him, can you see how Mary's assumption is a sign of hope for all believers?
- In the Gospel reading, what is the purpose of Mary's journey to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth?
- For what does Mary praise God in the Magnificat? What contrasts does she make in verses 51-53? How do these reflect her knowledge of God? Of her standing before God? What level of social status do you need to fulfill God's purposes?
- Of the attributes of God celebrated in Mary's Magnificat, which do you appreciate the most? Which challenges you the most? Why?
- Who are the "arrogant," the "rulers," and the "rich" whose overthrow Mary celebrates? How will Mary's Magnificat be fulfilled in Jesus? From the perspective of the Magnificat, are you one of God's lowly servants—or an arrogant, rich ruler?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 717, 2675-77, 495, 148, 722, 2619, 971, 273

Closing Prayer

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords, and conqueror of sin and death. –Pius XII (Munificentissimus Deus)

"His mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation"

Scripture: *Luke 1:39-56*

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.



Meditation: How strong is your hope in the promises of God? Mary is a model of faith and hope for us. And she is among "the first-fruits" of "all those who belong to Jesus" and who share in his triumph (1 Cor. 15:20-24). There is a venerable tradition dating back to the early church which marks Mary's "falling asleep" (Feast of the Dormition in many Eastern churches) and her heavenly birthday when she was received into heaven. Her reception into heaven is seen as a sign to all believing Christians of the promise Jesus made that we too would be received into paradise. At the last supper Jesus told his disciples that he would prepare a place for them in his Father's house. "And when I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3).

What enabled Mary to grow in faith and to persevere in hope in the face of obstacles and trials? The Gospel of Luke reveals the presence and power of the Holy

Spirit in Mary's life. When Elizabeth and Mary greeted one another they were filled with the Holy Spirit and with a joyful anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promise to give a Savior. John the Baptist, even before the birth of the Messiah, pointed to his coming and leapt for joy in the womb of his mother as the Holy Spirit revealed to him the presence of the King to be born. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to enable us to know and experience the indwelling presence of God and the power of his kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the way in which God reigns within each of us. Mary accepted her mission with uncompromising faith and obedience. She acted with unwavering trust and faith because she believed that God would fulfill the word he had spoken. Her great hymn of praise echoes the song of Hannah (see 1 Samuel 2:1-10) and proclaims the favor of the Lord: *God exalts the lowly and he fills the hungry.* The Holy Spirit is ever ready to renew your faith and hope in God's promises and to make you strong in love for God and your neighbor. Do you live in the joy and confidence of God's indwelling presence with you through his Holy Spirit?

"Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit and give me joy in seeking you more closely. Increase my faith in all your promises, my hope in the joys of heaven, and my love for You as my All."

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