



Assumption, 15th August

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Our text is chosen to highlight the blessings given to Mary as the Mother of God. The fact of the Assumption is not recorded in the Scriptures but was part of the Sacred Tradition of the Church. The Assumption was declared Catholic dogma by Pope Pius XII 1/11/1950 by use of his Papal Infallibility. Mary accepted* the Lord's blessings at the moment she accepted to be the Mother of God through the Holy Spirit – the Annunciation. Her final blessing was the honour to be the first, after Jesus, to share in the resurrection of the body – she was assumed into Heaven. Her assumption is a sign of hope for all of us who await the resurrection of the body on the last day. Also, though so highly blessed, Mary graciously received all her blessings and thanked God the giver of blessings. So, Mary's response to the Annunciation (our text) is to visit with Elizabeth who needs help as she carries a child (John the Baptist) in her advanced years – the Visitation. This first sharing of the Good News happens at Mary's greeting of Elizabeth. Mary responds with praise and thanks to God – the Magnificat. For us, Mary continues to help us in our times of need. And, in response, we are called continue the spread of the Good News that began at the Visitation.

Read: **Luke 1: 39 - 56**

Meditatio: How soon do I react when I become aware of someone in need? If I have received good news, with whom do I share it? Are 'service and thanks' first reactions for me? The hill country of Judah was a dangerous area; do I let my safety concerns overwhelm my efforts to help and serve? Have I experienced how personal greetings bring joy? Have I been an agent of sharing the Good News? Why is the 'Good News' good for me? Have there been moments when I have experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit? Do I feel honoured that Mary, the Mother of God, cares for me? What has the Lord promised to me? Do I believe in his promises? Do I believe in his promise of eternal life to those who faith? How do I give thanks for God's blessings to me? Have I an understanding of how God is working from 'age to age'? Has pride caused me to fall? Have I experienced the Lord's blessings when I have been low or in need? Do I understand the extent of God's mercy, i.e. his thorough-going care for me as well as for every other person? How does Mary's readiness to serve and her thankfulness for God's blessings challenge me? Is my hope strengthened through Mary's (the first of disciple's) Assumption? Have I appreciated how important is my belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the dead? How deep is my devotion to Mary?

Oratio: Pray for prompt care for those in need. Pray for courage to face the challenges of service. Pray that Mary will inspire us to be faithful disciples. Pray for the locked-in and the isolated (especially through this Pandemic). Pray for pregnant women, may they receive the support they need. Pray that people will keep in touch and visit one another in whatever ways that are possible. Pray for an understanding of the Good News. Pray for the spread of the Good News throughout all peoples of the world. Pray for an appreciation of God's blessings, i.e. the extent of God's mercy. Pray for a thorough-going thanks and praise to God. Pray for Mary's intercession for all in need. Pray that Mary's feast of the Assumption will deepen our hope of eternal life and the resurrection of the body on the last day. Pray pride will not cause a fall but rather turn us to thank God for his blessings. Pray for a deeper devotion to Mary.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Pray the Hail Mary and recall Mary's participation in the Good News and its spread. Reflect on the connections between the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Assumption.

✍ Fr Joe

Luke 1: 39 - 56

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made to her by the Lord would be fulfilled'.

And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour; because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid. Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy – according to the promise he made to our ancestors – of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

Gospel for Assumption Mass, during the Day

N.B. The Magnificat, Mary's prayer in this Gospel, is prayed every day in Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office).

* Mary was first blessed in her Immaculate Conception.