



Reflection by Greg Sunter

On the surface, today's gospel passage has little to do with the feast of the Assumption. There is no scriptural account of the Assumption and so we draw on a different significant gospel passage that features Mary. However, the account of Mary rushing to her cousin and exuberantly proclaiming the Magnificat is an example of Mary's joyful 'Yes' to life and to God that tradition tells us was rewarded in her bodily assumption into heaven.

Immediately prior to this account, the angel Gabriel has announced to Mary that she is to give birth to the Christ-child. Her humble response to the angel and to God is, 'Let it be done to me according to your word' even though she knew the shame and rejection her pregnancy would cause in her village. Whilst her initial response is subdued and humble, it is a 'Yes' to God's will. Mary's next instinct is an emphatic 'Yes' to life. The angel tells Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth, is also to bear a child. Elizabeth was an older woman and keenly felt the social and cultural shame of not being able to bear children. When Mary hears that Elizabeth is already pregnant she rushes to be with her. Where no life was thought possible, God has created life. Elizabeth would have been shamed and regarded as inadequate and of lesser standing because of her childlessness. In many ways, Elizabeth was deprived of her own life because she could not give birth. Mary's "Yes" to God and "Yes" to life is confirmed and amplified by God's granting fullness of life to Elizabeth.

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 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.

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The Living Word

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

15 August 2021

First Reading Rv 11:19; 12:1-6, 10

I saw a woman clothed with the sun and with the moon at her feet.

The sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the ark of the covenant could be seen inside it.

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon which had seven heads and ten horns, and each of the seven heads crowned with a coronet. Its tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and dropped them to the earth, and the dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert, where God had made a place of safety ready. Then I heard a voice shout from heaven, 'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 44:10-12. 16. R. v.10

(R.) The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.

1. The daughters of kings are among your loved ones.
On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.
Listen, O daughter, give ear to my words:
forget your own people and your father's house. (R.)

2. So will the king desire your beauty: He is your lord, pay homage to him.
They are escorted amid gladness and joy; they pass within the palace of the king. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Cor 15:20-26

As members of Christ all people will be raised, Christ first, and after him all who belong to him.

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order; Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Mary is taken up to heaven,
and the angels of God shout for joy.
Alleluia!*

Gospel Lk 1:39-56

The Almighty has done great things for me; he has lifted up the lowly.

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