

19th

Week in Ordinary Time

BE STILL

Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise and offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord today.

THIS WEEK

- Monday 14 August: St Maximilian Mary Kolbe (Memorial)
- Wednesday 15 August: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity and holy day of obligation)

Sing

Hail Queen of Heaven or listen to a version of Ave Maria

Gathering Prayer

Collect (from the mass during the day for the Feast of the Assumption)

Almighty ever-living God,
who assumed the Immaculate Virgin Mary,
the Mother of your Son,
body and soul into heavenly glory,
grant, we pray,
that, always attentive to the things that are above,
we may merit to be sharers of her glory.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

THE GOSPEL

Gospel for the Feast of the Assumption

A reading from the holy Gospel according to 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 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Ponder

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) noted that in the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to practice *Lectio Divina* – the reading of God's word in prayer asking that it 'enlighten and renew' us. The gospel for the Feast of the Assumption invites us to reflect on Mary's role in Jesus' life.

- What word or phrase stands out for me as I read this text?
- With which character do I most identify in this text?
- What troubles me about this text?

Reflect

Perhaps this week offers an invitation to us to reflect on what it means to be a faithful disciple in the contemporary world.

The gospel for this feast may provide some clues. Perhaps we are called to pray, to be a blessing for each other and to proclaim joy. In other words, perhaps we are called to an awareness of how to live out God in the day-to-day of our lives. So, let us be joyful missionary disciples!

PRAY

May we keep the wisdom of Mary in our thoughts
May we hear the whispers of God in our hearts
May we turn our hands to service
And may we, inspired by the witness of Mary, respond
generously to the blessings of God that surround us. Amen.

About the Feast

In addition to Sunday, there are two days of Holy Obligation in the Australian liturgical calendar: 15 August (Feast of the Assumption) and 25 December (Christmas). This is a key feast that honours the role of Mary as the mother of Jesus and stems from the time of Pope Pius XII who placed an emphasis on the importance of Marian devotion. In 1950 he defined as dogma the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven. It was her "crowning glory ... to be preserved from the corruption of the tomb" (Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1950). It is a reminder to us of Mary's unique relationship with God.

IMAGE: *Assomption de la Vierge* by Charles Le Brun (1835). Wikimedia Commons.