

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



The Mother of God of Tenderness by Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin (1914)

About the Solemnity

Over the years many theologians have reflected on Mary and her role in the Church. Over time, their reflections have led to doctrinal pronouncements and also feast days, the most significant of which is the Feast of the Assumption. So important is this feast in the life of the Church that it is a holy day of obligation (Christmas Day being the other holy day of obligation in Australia). The dogma of Mary's assumption was promulgated in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, and in essence it reminds us that Mary was full of grace and as such was assumed into heaven to be with her Son and her God.

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.
- Listen to *Hail Queen of Heaven* or a version of *Ave Maria*.

Collect: (from the mass during the day or 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.

READING

(Gospel for the Feast of the Assumption)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

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.

—Luke 1:39-56

The Gospel of the Lord.

Ponder:

Re-read the gospel. 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 following questions may help with this:

- Lord, what does this text mean to me?
- What is it about my life that you want me to change in response to this text?
- What troubles me about this text?

Reflect:

On the 15th August we remember Mary—a woman whose heart was with God. This young girl who accepted God's gracious invitation to be the mother of Jesus—the *theotokos* (God-bearer)—and whose every action is a proclamation of the goodness of God.

Perhaps the invitation for this week is 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 journey, to pray, to be a blessing for each other and to proclaim joy. In other words, in the day-to-day of our lives we are called to live with discerning hearts that are centred on God.

PRAY

Song of Mary (the Magnificat)

My soul proclaims the greatness of God
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
for he has looked in favour on his lowly servant,
and from this day all generations will call me blessed;
The Almighty has done great things for me:
holy is His Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him from generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his children forever.
(ICET translation)

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.