

Read

Revelation 11:19a;
12:1-6a, 10ab

Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16

1 Corinthians 15:20-27

Luke 1:39-56

LIVING THE WORD

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15, 2021

REFLECTION

Today's Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary celebrates the Mother of God being assumed, body and soul, into heaven. Her union with Jesus knows no bounds. Mary carried Jesus in her womb, raised him as a child, and journeyed with him throughout his ministry. Mary stood at the foot of the cross as her son made the ultimate sacrifice for all humankind. As a mother, Mary shared so closely in Jesus' entire life. The church affirms the belief that she too shares with him the glory of heaven.

In today's Gospel reading, we hear Mary proclaim the glory of the Lord. She is pregnant with Jesus, knowing him as the growing human inside her womb and believing he is destined for greatness. What prompts Mary to cry out these great things to Elizabeth? How does she know what her son will do? Mary's closeness to God is evident from the beginning. Mary trusts God's plan for her life and the life of her son, who is God's Son, too. It is only fitting that she spend eternity in Christ's presence.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What line stands out to you from Mary's proclamation in today's Gospel?
- ❖ If you were to write your own proclamation about the greatness of the Lord, what line would you add?

ACTION

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord," Mary shouts with joy (Luke 1:46). Her trust in God runs deep. Think about how your life proclaims the greatness of God. How do you, in words and actions, bring God's love into the world? Then like Mary, share your answers with someone you love. Find your Elizabeth; a parent, grandparent, or friend. Proclaim the goodness of the Lord out loud for all to hear!





August 15, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

LECTIONARY #622

Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16

1 Corinthians 15:20-27

Luke 1:39-56

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Belief in the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary is a belief in God's saving action, and it is a reminder of our own hope in the resurrection of the body. The Church teaches that the physical body matters—it isn't just a shell for our souls, nor is it simply a tool for life on earth. Made in the image and likeness of God, the human person is more than exclusively a body, or just a soul that happens to have a physical body. What we do matters physically and spiritually. After Mary's life on earth ended, having been preserved from sin from the moment of her conception, Mary was assumed into heaven, body and soul. When the Lord returns at the end of time he will give the faithful resurrected bodies, and like Mary, we too can live in heaven, body and soul.

Q FOCUS: *Like the Mary, the Mother of God, we are called to embrace God's grace in our lives.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Although there are many Marian feast days and many titles for Mary, it is important to remember why the Church honors her with them. She provides us with a model, as all the saints do, of a life lived for Christ. In all of her actions, she points us to Christ. Her words in story of the Wedding at Cana in the Gospel of John (John 2:1-11) reminds us that our

trust in Jesus should be complete, in big and small matters. The next time there is a Marian feast day, reflect on how that aspect of Mary's life points us to a deeper relationship with Christ.

Church Teaching Connection

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the role model for the faithful. We call her the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church; indeed, it was Jesus' will that Mary be mother to all the faithful, as we understand from his words from the cross (see John 19:25-27). In the Virgin Mary we see a "new Eve," meaning that what was broken in Eve's disobedience was repaired in the Virgin Mary's obedience. When we reflect on the Virgin Mary, we consider what can occur when perfect faithfulness and desire for God's will meet (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 963-975).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 1:39-56

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in

a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

And Mary said: / “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; / my spirit rejoices in God my Savior / for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. / From this day all generations will call me blessed: / the Almighty has done great things for me / and holy is his Name. / He has mercy on those who fear him / in every generation. / He has shown the strength of his arm, / and has scattered the proud in their conceit. / He has cast 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 his children forever.” /

Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

The assumption of Mary into heaven is not an event noted in our Scripture reading today—in fact, the assumption is not mentioned in Scripture. We believe in the assumption of Mary through the Tradition of the Church, and the faithful have held this belief since the earliest years of the Church. However, today's reading helps us understand part of this teaching of our Church, that Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven at the end of her life on earth.

► **What liturgical season does this reading remind you of?**

We often think about Christmas when we hear this reading because it is part of the Gospel narrative of the birth of Christ. This relates to our belief in the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary because it highlights Mary's important role in God's plan for the salvation of the world.

In today's reading, two pregnant women—one elderly woman round with child, and one young woman newly expecting a child—meet at the elder's home in Judah. These two extraordinary women and their unborn children paint a picture of faith, joy, promise, and revolutionary change. Their greeting blossoms into Elizabeth's joyful proclamation; her unborn child recognizes the Lord's presence hidden in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Elizabeth proclaims the presence of the Mother of the Lord, and she recognizes the promise of God fulfilled in the unborn Jesus.

► **What was God's promise? What was being fulfilled in the person of Jesus? [You may want to reread Mary's response aloud.]**

Elizabeth recognizes the specialness of this moment in time, that God was now fulfilling his promised salvation to the people of Israel. She is filled with joy that she should be able to witness this in Mary, who was blessed to bear Jesus. Mary trusts in God's message that had been announced to her by the angel and accepted God's will in her life.

► **What does it mean that Mary is “blessed among women”?**

We believe that God preserved Mary from sin from the moment of her conception (this is why we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 8). Mary is truly blessed in that she is free from original sin, and her mind, body, and soul are wholly oriented toward God and his will. Because she is without sin, she is uniquely filled with God's grace. Because she is preserved from sin and filled with God's grace, Mary is assumed into heaven, body and soul.

Mary is a woman unlike any who existed before or after her time on earth. Her *fiat*, her yes, “Let it be done to me” (see Luke 1:38), is recognition of the revolutionary change that has begun to grip God's

creation. This change would be, in reality, righting the wrongs of sin. She knew that God had made this promise to his people, and she trusted in his fulfillment of that promise. Just as Mary and Elizabeth proclaimed this important message in today's Gospel, we are called to proclaim in our own lives today.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 10.

The Virgin Mary is an example of a holy life oriented toward God and his grace.

God always fulfills his promises and offers us all the joy of salvation.

Elizabeth expressed tremendous joy and faith when she saw God's promise fulfilled in the child Mary was carrying in her womb.

Act on the Word

The Assumption in Art

For this activity, you will need books of Catholic art or access to online images of Catholic art. Before the session begins, bookmark (in the book or online) several pieces of art (painting, stained-glass windows, sculptures, etc.) that represent the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You can also include images of the assumption from your own parish.

Many centuries ago, a majority of the faithful people could not read. They heard the Scriptures proclaimed at Mass, and they may have memorized certain portions of Scripture, but there were not Bibles readily available for the faithful to access (this was before the invention of the printing press). Instead, the faithful often learned about the faith through art. Music, stained glass windows, frescoes, paintings, and sculptures helped the faithful learn about God's action in the life of his people.

As a group, briefly discuss how the young people learn things through these visual and auditory arts. Then, talk about how the Church still makes use of

its rich artistic tradition in passing on the faith and teaching people about God's activity in the world.

Display the art you found of the assumption of the Virgin Mary. You can divide the young people into small groups or do this as a large group discussion. While observing the artwork, here are several topics of discussion:

- ✧ What types of colors are used? [Blue has been used historically to depict the Blessed Virgin.]
- ✧ How might the time period and locale the artist lived in influence the art and the reception of it by the faithful?
- ✧ Does the artwork show Mary looking human or angelic? If there are other figures in the image, who is included?
- ✧ Can you see how an artist might address the human fear of death?
- ✧ How can we grow in our understanding of Mary's assumption from Catholic art?

Closing Prayer

*Good and gracious God,
you sent your Son to be born of a woman
and so enter our human condition as a
sign of your love.
Grant that we may imitate Mary's humble
service in all that we do
and so be bearers of your love to the world.
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.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.