

Read

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

Psalms 45:10, 11, 12, 16

1 Corinthians 15:20-27

Luke 1:39-56

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 15, 2024



REFLECTION

Today we celebrate the assumption of Mary. At the end of her earthly life, Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. Though the assumption itself is not recorded in Scripture like the ascension of Jesus, it has been held as a belief of our faith since the early centuries of the Church.

On a day that celebrates the end of Mary's earthly life, you may wonder why we read about Mary visiting Elizabeth when they were both pregnant. One key word from the Gospel that can help us understand this connection is the word "blessed." This word calls our attention to God's actions in a person's life and the way in which that person has been set apart for God's purposes. Mary was certainly blessed by God, set apart to be the mother of Jesus and filled with grace to perfectly accept God's will. Our celebration of Mary's assumption into heaven reaffirms her state of blessedness and reveals God's continued action in her life, as he sets her who bore Christ apart from the corruption of death.

ACTION

Pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, which include (1) the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (2) the ascension of Jesus into heaven, (3) the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, (4) the assumption of Mary into heaven, and (5) the crowning of Mary as queen of heaven. Instructions for praying and Scripture passages you can use in your prayer can be found here: <https://ltp.org/s/pray-rosary>.



Do an image search for "the assumption of the virgin Mary." Choose an image you like and reflect on it as you pray the Rosary this week.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What do you find most striking about Mary's blessedness?
- ❖ How have you been blessed by God and how do you respond to that blessing?



August 15, 2024

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

LECTIONARY #622

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

Psalms 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

Today's Gospel reading highlights Mary's faith in her song of praise, which we commonly refer to as the Magnificat (from the Latin word that begins her song). In it, Mary retells the great story of God's saving presence in the history of her people. She places her trust in God's plan of salvation, even as it is unfolding through her. We are invited to pray like Mary and see God's hand working through our personal histories into our present moment. Like Mary, we rejoice in God's faithfulness and open ourselves to the ways he is living in us.

FOCUS: God has a unique plan for each of us.

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today, we celebrate the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church proclaims that at the end of her life, Mary was taken, body and soul, into heaven. This feast was celebrated in the early church and continued to be celebrated throughout history, but this teaching wasn't officially proclaimed as a dogma of our faith until 1950 by Pope Pius XII. This solemnity is one of three holydays of obligation that the Church in the United States celebrates that reflects on the life of Mary and how it reveals God's plan for our salvation through her son, Jesus.

Church Teaching Connection

"Our Lady . . . announces a radical change, an overturning of values. While she speaks with Elizabeth, carrying Jesus in her womb, she anticipates what her Son will say, when he will proclaim blessed the poor and humble, and warn the rich and those who base themselves on their own self-sufficiency. The Virgin, then, *prophesies* with this canticle, with this prayer: she prophesies that it will not be power, success and money that prevail, but rather that service, humility and love will prevail" (Pope Francis, Angelus Message, August 15, 2022).

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:

Mary holds a unique place in our faith. She was called by God to bear his son through miraculous means. There is no other person who could ever do this task in the history of our world because God set her aside for this purpose from the moment she was conceived in her mother's womb (that is what we celebrate in the Immaculate Conception). Even more remarkable was that she courageously said yes when she was in her early- to mid-teens (the average age of marriage for women during that time period).

God has a habit of calling people to do great things, regardless of their age—and that includes young people like yourself! There are many stories

in Scripture of young men and young women saying yes to God's call. Mary's example continues to inspire us and fill us with great joy and hope.

► **What other young people inspire you today?**

What did they do that inspires you?

After Mary learns that she will bear God's son through the power of the Holy Spirit, she travels to her cousin Elizabeth to help her during her pregnancy. Elizabeth also is experiencing a miraculous pregnancy, becoming pregnant when she is very old. Rather than focusing on herself, Mary's focus is outward, rejoicing with Elizabeth and helping her. The words of their meeting might sound familiar to you—Elizabeth's greeting is repeated in the prayer that we use in the Rosary, the Hail Mary: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

► **How many of you have ever prayed the Hail Mary? Have you ever experienced a profound moment with that prayer?**

Mary's yes to God's invitation to bear Jesus was a tremendously important moment in the history of salvation and changed the world. Though none of us are called to the same thing Mary was called to, we recognize that our yes also has the power to bring about joy and change. Like Mary, we can say yes to God's invitation. We don't always know the path that is ahead of us and are rarely given step-by-step instructions on how to live, but we are called to walk forward in faith each day. Mary didn't know what challenges would await her, but she did know that her God made the impossible happen. She sang of the wonderful works God did for his people in the past and believed that he wasn't done yet. What changes will we bring to the world with our yes to God? Only God knows, but the important thing is to trust in his plan and believe in his promises.

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.

Mary’s yes ushered in God’s salvation in a new way.

We are invited to say yes to God’s invitation each day.

Mary’s song of praise reminds us that in God service, humility, and love prevail over power, success, and money.

Act on the Word

My Magnificat

For this activity, you will need paper and pens or pencils and a Bible.

Share with the young people that Mary’s song of praise that we hear in today’s reading is known as the Magnificat, from the Latin word that begins her prayer. It is at once a history lesson, a testament of faith, and a calling. Today’s activity will help the young people meditate on the Magnificat and apply it to their own lives and histories.

Read the Magnificat aloud again slowly (Luke 1:46–55). Explain to the teens that in the first half of the prayer, Mary praises God and describes how he is blessing her now (Luke 1:46–49). In the second half of the prayer, she recalls God’s goodness and faithfulness to her people throughout history (Luke 1:50–55). These two halves will be used in this activity as a model for each young person to write their own Magnificat. Mary’s calling to bear God’s son was singular, but as Christians, each one of us is called to bring Jesus into the world in our own way.

To begin the first half of their prayer, instruct the teens to write “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord” on their paper and then invite them to reflect on the blessings they are currently

experiencing in their life. How is God present to them now? What is God doing in their life at this time? How can personal gifts, talents, and abilities be used to give glory to God? They can write their reflections down in the style of a prayer of praise.

For the second part of their prayer, invite the teens to reflect on the past and consider the ways God has worked in their own lives, in the life of their family, or in the life of their local community or even in the world. Where have they recognized God’s presence? They should add these to their prayers, giving thanks to God for what he has already done. They can also look ahead and write of what they hope God will do in the future. God’s love, care, and mercy for us will not change or go away. He took care of his people in the past and he will continue to do so in the future.

The young people should end their Magnificat with the words that end Mary’s prayer: “for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.” Then invite them to share their Magnificat with a partner or in small groups.

Closing Prayer

O God,
creator and source of all that is good,
you made us in the divine image.

Grant us the grace
to recognize your Son, Jesus,
in those we meet and in all our work.

Through Christ our Lord.

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.