

20-5-2021

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - 15 August 2021

Gerard Moore

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Moore, Gerard. "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - 15 August 2021." *Pastoral Liturgy* 51, no. 3 (2021): 1-5.
<https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy/vol51/iss3/19>

This Liturgical Resource is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pastoral Liturgy by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.





15 August 2021

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Even given our desire to be like Mary, and to be in the spirit of the Mother of God, today's feast is not quite so straightforward. Today we celebrate her assumption into heaven, body and soul, untrammelled by the power of death. In this we hear her own understanding of the mercy of God, a mercy that has overcome death itself, and in doing so has signalled the disempowerment of injustice, greed and pride on earth.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the Word of the Father. Lord, have mercy.
You are our glory and our hope. Christ, have mercy.
You were born of Mary. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Revelation 11:19, 12:1-6,10

From the Book of Revelation, this passage is focused on the role of Christ in bringing salvation. Within it however we have the multiple connections to the woman who bears him, and the devotion of God to care for her and bring her to a place of safety and rest.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:20-26

Paul teaches us with directness and deep hope that we live within a new creation with Christ as the first fruits. After Christ we now see the defeat of death in Mary's transition from death to completion in Christ.

Gospel Reading

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39-56

What better preparation for life in the fullness of God than to proclaim the obedience of Mary, her surrender to the will of God, and her understanding of the integration of the will of God with the mercy of God exemplified in the care of the poor and needy.

Reflection

Our readings today are chosen with the feast in full view and invite us to engage directly with the mystery we are celebrating. The ancient church long speculated on the 'dormition' of Mary, her falling to sleep and incorporation as the first of the people of God to be taken up completely, in all her humanity, into the fullness of the life of God.

The feast then celebrates a number of events and concepts. First and foremost, the Mother of God is at the centre of our deliberations on what it means to be taken up into Christ. She is the first member of the human family to follow Jesus in the annihilation of death and the advent of eternal life. The contribution of Mary to our own faith and the transformation of the world is acknowledged in the liturgy.

The proclamation of the feast is itself an admission of the hope fuelling our church and ecclesial life that all things do not stop with death but come to a new beginning in an even greater expression of love. In this, Mary has not 'escaped' death, but rather she is privileged to allow us to understand that there are things greater than death that are in store for us.

And yes, it is true that our ultimate life is with God, but again the Virgin Mary is celebrated for her faithfulness on earth, in this world of pain and suffering where it matters, rather than for an attainment that goes beyond who we are and the way we live in the world.

The readings for the feasts of Mary are not always straightforward, and their application to the life of Mary is far from clear. What is important here to recognise is that the great feasts of Mary are of necessity about salvation in Christ.

Our first reading fits this pattern perfectly, as we celebrate the Assumption of Mary into heaven, and reflect upon her place in heaven. The passage is a vision, imaginative and powerful. It portrays the travails of the young pregnant woman as she faces inevitable death courtesy of the massive dragon. The reading contrasts the lone woman against the immense power and terror of the serpent. The woman is not without honour, emblazoned with the light of the moon, the sun and twelve stars. She is a bearer of light.

Yet the centrepiece of the text is not the woman but the child. In terms of contrast it is the new born who will overcome the powers of destruction, powers of which the dragon is but a manifestation. However, the power of the dragon is no match for the throne of God, nor as foretold will the forces in league with the dragon be a match for the Anointed One when he comes in glory. The theme of the reading is announced by the voice: now salvation and power has come.

There is a particular part of the reading that is in sync with our feast. Once the woman has given birth she is taken to a place prepared by God. The feast of the Assumption is a reminder of that place within the life of the Trinity in which is found the fulfilment of our lives.

The passage from the First Letter to the Corinthians requires less interpretation. Paul speaks of Christ as the first fruits of those who will be raised beyond death. As in Adam death came to all, yet in Christ all shall be brought to life. Death is the final enemy, and in Christ it is no more.

With the feast we are able to see Mary as reaping the benefits that await all humanity, the first of the many. Again, as in the first reading from Revelation, the focus is on Christ, but there is in Mary a first application of that victory to our lives.

The Gospel allows for key ideas in the first two readings to be given further emphasis. The visit to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist who foretells the birth of Christ, puts the spotlight on Mary and her role in salvation. We can see a parallel with the pregnant woman in the reading from the Book of Revelation. More importantly, as Elizabeth speaks to her now pregnant cousin, we see her fidelity to God and her fidelity to God's plan. Within this matrix of obedience to God there is too a glimpse of Mary's own generosity in her visit to her elderly cousin.

The second half of the reading, the hymn of praise we know as the *Magnificat*, captures our attention. Here we hear sung aloud Mary's praise of God and her understanding of the divine vision. In her proclamation of the greatness of God and the divine mercy, she extols the care of God for the lowly and the hungry, protecting them from the proud and the rich. And as she declares that God is faithful, we are struck by her own commitment to God: she is that faithful servant whose acceptance of the role asked of her allows all humanity to be taken up into Christ.

As in the feast of Mary's Assumption into heaven, we can see that she has already sung the meaning of heaven on earth. Life in God, broken and thwarted here on earth, is fulfilled completely when we are fully within the life of the Trinity. Our life within the fullness of divine love has similar characteristics to life now when lived in God: no one is hungry, all are respected, divisions based on wealth or influence are overturned. Our reflections on the honour given to the Mother of God as the next of the first fruits of those beyond death is also a reminder of the effect her life had on earth, and her attention to the lost and forgotten within the realms of human kings.



***May the Spirit which
sanctified Mary make
our gifts holy.***

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As Mary was raised body and soul to glory, we as pilgrims, bring our prayers with her to God our Father.

Petitions

We pray that the leaders of our Church will be strengthened to follow the discipleship of Mary; may she help them in their search for peace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray that the leaders of our Catholic Church in Australia remain inspired and willing to enter fully into the Plenary Council under the spiritual leadership of Mary, Mother of the Church, and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for leaders throughout the world that they will respect women and the precious nature of motherhood in their own nations.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for women preparing for the birth of their child, that like Elizabeth, they have the help and support they need.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering from illness. May they be strengthened in their difficulties; may those who care for them be full of love and compassion.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for comfort upon all who are dying and those who care for them. May they have the hope and inner strength that they need and may the prayers of Mary, our Mother, will be with them all.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving God, we know that the prayers we lay before you will be answered, through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Hail Queen of Heaven. J. Lingard/ H. Hemy. 507
I am the bread of life. S. Toolan RSM. 204
Immaculate Mary. B. Foley/ Lourdes Melody. 549
My soul rejoices. O. Alstott. 250
Salve Regina. Gregorian Chant. 546
There is nothing told. C. Willcock SJ. 548
Tell out, my soul. T. Dudley Smith. 550

AOV1

I am the bread of life. S. Toolan RSM. 49
O holy Mary. O. Alstott. 141.

AOVNG

Among all. Chris de Silva. 8

CWB

Canticle of Mary. Robert E. Kreutz. 604/605
Canticle of Mary. J. T. Mueller. 635
Hail Blessed Virgin, full of grace. Anthony G. Petti. 699
Hail Queen of Heaven, the ocean star. John Lingard. 702
Mary, crowned with living light. Stanbrook Abbey. 742
Now sing my soul, 'How great the Lord'. Michael Saward. 754

CWBII

My soul rejoices in God, my saviour. Owen Alstott. 212
Tell out, my soul. Timothy Dudley-Smith. 213
Hail, Queen of heav'n, the ocean star. John Lingard. 408
Hail, holy Queen enthroned above. Hermanus Conractus, adapt. M. Owen Lee CSB. 409
My spirit sings. Michael Mangan. 412.
Sing we of the blessed mother. George Boorne Timms. 417
The ark which God has sanctified. Stanbrook Abbey. 438

S&S1

Holy is his name. John Michael Talbot. 95

S&S2

Arrayed in gold. Trevor Thomson. 335
Hail Mary: gentle woman. Carey Landry. 336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 44: *The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.*
Psalm 44: Owen Alston. CWB 466
Psalm 45 (44): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 111
The queen stands at your right hand: Paul Mason. PM pg. 36
The queen stands at your right hand: Tony Alonso. LPSF pg. 100

Music selections by Michael Mangan

My spirit sings (FWS, SYJ based on the Magnificat) [Gathering, Gifts, Sending]
Mary's song of praise (DOM based on the Magnificat) [Gathering, Gifts, Sending]
O Queen of all (SYJ) [Gathering, Gifts, Sending]