

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Solemnity † Sunday, 15 August 2021

[This Solemnity supersedes the 20 Sunday of Ordinary Time]



In England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: Those who suffer persecution and denial of human rights
Keynote: Mary goes before us taken in glory to be with Christ

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

The language of the final book of the bible, being apocalyptic in style makes for difficult reading for modern reader, and is for us hard to understand! The Book of Revelation expresses the idea that God has, through Jesus Christ, revealed truths about heaven, and earth, past, present and future. In this reading, there is a clear reference to the Temple of the Old Testament in which God was seen to be dwelling and always present among the Chosen People of Israel.

In this account, the Ark of the Covenant once housed in the Temple is seen again: *'The sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the Ark of the Covenant could be seen inside it.'* Then follows, the vivid image of the woman who brings forth the male child, the one who will save God's people. The 'woman' is also seen to represent the Ark of the Covenant bearing as she does the very presence of God – *'the woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations.'* Then the cry goes up *'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God and all authority for his Christ!'* Mary and the People of God, bring forth the Christ into our world – so the eternal reign of God begins.

Responsorial Psalm 44 (45): 10-12, 16 – A royal wedding song in praise of the blessings of God

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15: 20-26

'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came though one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come though one man.' The pivotal meaning here is that the first man Adam, brought death into the world through disobedience, and Christ, the second Adam – obedient even unto death – brings life in the resurrection. *'Just as all men die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ.'* The raising up of Jesus is then the pledge of life for us all. This feast today celebrates the possibility of our assumption – our own resurrection – with Christ in glory.

Gospel according to Luke 1: 39-56

Mary's cousin Elizabeth is also with child, and in this encounter cousin Elizabeth recognises in the Spirit that Mary and her child are both blessed by God. *'Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit... Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? ...Yes, blessed are those who believed that the promise made by the Lord would be fulfilled.'*

The canticle Mary sings – known as the *Magnificat* – is full of allusions to the Old Testament, and indicates a deep understanding of the significance of this child bearing: *'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,'* sings Mary, *'and my spirit exults in God my saviour because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid... for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name...'* Both Elizabeth and Mary invite us to believe and to trust in the promise of God. We can rejoice with these two women at the good news they share!

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NOTE: Vigil Mass Readings – 1 Chronicles 15:3-4, 15-16, 16:1-2; 1; Ps 131 [132]; Cor 15:54-57; Luke 11:27-28