

The Assumption of our Lady

Luke 1:39-56

39 Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. 40 She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. 41 Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? 44 For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. 45 Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

46 And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord 47 and my spirit exults in God my saviour; 48 because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid. Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, 50 and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. 51 He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. 52 He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. 53 The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. 54 He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy 55 – according to the promise he made to our ancestors – of his mercy to Abraham and his descendants for ever.' 56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

Other readings: Apocalypse 11:19 12:1-6,10 Psalm 44 (45) 1 Corinthians 15:20-26

There is of course no gospel reading which narrates the Assumption into heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her sharing body and soul in the risen life of her Son. St Paul, in the second reading for the feast, speaks of Christ as the 'first-fruits' from the dead, and then of 'those who belong to him', who follow him into life. We can consider Mary to be the first among these, for she was the first to respond to the call to serve Christ.

The gospel reading demonstrates with what faith and generosity she answered God's call. She visits her cousin Elizabeth, filled with a spirit of prayer and praise, which is spelled out at length in her song of joy, the *Magnificat*. God's mercy to Abraham and his descendants, of which she sings, is a fidelity which never ends and which leads God's faithful people, body and soul, into the life of God.

The inexpressible glory of the risen life bestowed on Mary is suggested in the vision of the woman 'adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head' from the Book of Revelation, which has traditionally been used to celebrate the glory Mary receives through her being 'assumed' body and soul into the presence of God.

What does the feast of the Assumption tell us about the value of our bodies?

Why is it that Mary is so privileged by God?

We pray that we may be filled with the hope of the resurrection.

Let us pray for a deeper appreciation and love for the mother of Jesus.