

# THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: DAY

## LECTIONARY #622

READING I Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab

### A reading from the Book of Revelation

God's **temple** in heaven was **opened**,  
and the **ark** of his covenant could be seen in the temple.

A **great** sign appeared in the sky, a **woman** clothed with the **sun**,  
with the **moon** under her feet,  
and on her **head** a **crown** of twelve **stars**.

She was with **child** and **wailed** aloud in pain as she labored to  
give birth.

Then **another** sign appeared in the sky;  
it was a **huge red dragon**, with seven **heads** and ten **horns**,  
and on its heads were seven **diadems**.

Its tail **swept** away a third of the **stars** in the sky  
and **hurled** them down to the **earth**.

Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth,  
to **devour** her child when she gave birth.

She gave birth to a **son**, a **male** child,  
destined to **rule** all the nations with an iron rod.

Her child was **caught up** to God and his **throne**.

The woman herself **fled** into the **desert**  
where she had a place **prepared** by God.

A narrative reading filled with fantastical images; the text demands great energy and passion in its telling.

Start with heightened intensity.

Each part of this image is more amazing than the last!

Your voice can take on a sinister tone, but keep your energy up to convey the ferocity of this creature.

Slow down on "huge red dragon," then return to a normal pace.

Use the words "swept" and "hurled" to show the beast's power.

Pause at the end of this line.

Slow down and lower your intensity a little. This is a moment of joy.

Pick up your pace again; "caught up" and "fled" indicate quick action.

A sense of relief; all will be well. Pause.

### READING I

The appearance of the Ark of the Covenant represents God's fidelity and portends the victory of Christ and the Church over evil forces. That confrontation takes place in heaven with the fierce dragon's attack against the woman and her son. It signifies that from all eternity God had planned Christ's birth and the devil's powerlessness before his divine person. The woman adorned with the sun, the moon, and the stars symbolizes God's people; she is the Virgin Mother of God, the Church.

The evangelist, Luke, narrating the Annunciation, portrays Mary as the representation of the faithful remnant of Israel: to her the angel addresses the prophet Zephaniah's greeting to the Daughter of Zion ("Do not fear," Zephaniah 3:16). Her pregnancy, prophesied by Isaiah ("The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel," 7:14), carries within it the suffering of Calvary: Israel of old gave birth to the Messiah and then became the new Israel, the Church, who suffers the dragon's persecution. God will protect the persecuted woman in the des-

ert, as he did the people of God in the exodus—the desert being the traditional place of refuge for the afflicted.

### READING II

After affirming Christ's Resurrection, Paul explains its positive implications. The "first fruits" is the thanksgiving portion of the harvest offered to God, and it consecrates the rest of the harvest to follow. Christ's Resurrection is the firstfruits that consecrates the harvest of believers that will follow. The union of Christians with Christ is so intimate that his Resurrection is the force of

This is a proclamation of joy.

For meditation and context:

**TO KEEP IN MIND**

A *didactic* text makes a point or teaches something. Help your assembly to follow the argument and understand what's being taught.

A didactic reading. There's great joy in this teaching; let that come through in your proclamation.

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-unz

Paul repeats the same point—that Christ's Resurrection prefigures our own—in different ways.

This should sound self-evident.

What follows is a list of three events.

This is good news! The world will be freed from every oppression and evil. Don't make it sound like a terrible Armageddon.

Slight pause after "for" so the final phrase sounds like a quote.

our resurrection. Human existence, both natural and supernatural, involves solidarity. In Paul's argument, "In Adam . . . in Christ," Paul presents Adam as a type of Christ. Just as Adam's disobedience resulted in everybody's death, Jesus, the new Adam, ushers in the resurrection from the dead. Salvation culminates in the resurrection of the body at the end of time.

Paul's christological perspective embraces cosmic dimensions, which are evident when he describes the climax of history, "the end." He presents Christ's final relations to his enemies and his Father in

Then I heard a loud **voice** in heaven say:  
 "Now have **salvation** and **power** come,  
 and the **Kingdom** of our **God**  
 and the **authority** of his **Anointed One**."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16 (10bc)

**R. The queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold.**

The queen takes her place at your right hand in gold of Ophir. So shall the king desire your beauty; for he is your LORD.

Hear, O daughter, and see; turn your ear, forget your people and your father's house. They are borne in with gladness and joy; they enter the palace of the king.

READING II 1 Corinthians 15:20–27

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**

Brothers and sisters:

**Christ** has been **raised** from the dead,  
 the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep.

For since **death** came through **man**,  
 the **resurrection** of the dead came **also** through man.

For just as in **Adam** all **die**,  
 so too in **Christ** shall all be brought to **life**,  
 but **each** one in proper order:

**Christ** the **firstfruits**;  
**then**, at his **coming**, those who **belong** to Christ;  
 then comes the **end**,

when he **hands** over the Kingdom to his God and Father,  
 when he has **destroyed** every **sovereignty**  
 and every **authority** and **power**.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies **under** his feet.  
 The **last** enemy to be destroyed is **death**,  
 for "he subjected **everything** under his feet."

both royal and military language: Christ "hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty" and Paul inserts a proof from Scripture, referring to Psalm 110:1; 8:7. God is the agent and the aim, and we are the beneficiaries of the action. In writing that "the last enemy to be destroyed is death," Paul reflects that death is not just one cosmic power among many but the ultimate effect of sin in the universe. Christ defeats death where it prevails: in our bodies. The destruction of the last enemy is the "coming to life" of "those who belong to Christ."

**GOSPEL**

The *Magnificat*, the Canticle of Mary, ends the cycle of birth annunciations at the beginning of Luke's Gospel account and reveals the greatness of the mystery. It is the Church's thanksgiving hymn for the marvels God accomplished through the mother of his Son, for God's mercy is "on those who fear him in every generation."

But even before that hymn, the greetings exchanged by the two women reveal and celebrate the mystery. "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb." Elizabeth knew that