

# THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: DAY

LECTONARY #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.

Read this vision narrative with such energy  
that the assembly can visualize it.

Use heightened intensity for "wailed,"  
"pain," and "labored." Though much of  
the narrative is symbolic, for many in the  
assembly this description has been their  
reality of giving birth. Pause after "give birth"  
to mark the shift to the next cosmic vision.  
diadem = Di-uh-dem = royal crown  
Use a slight pause after "tail," then swiftly  
describe the sweeping and hurling.

Read with joy. The mood changes from the  
fantastical to one of wonder—the child is  
safely "caught up to God."

This is a good thing; the desert is a place  
of escape.

## READING I

Christ's resurrection promises to all who enter into and abide in relationship with Jesus the hope of our future resurrection. Mary, the mother of God, fittingly became the first recipient of that promised grace. Raised to glory by Christ in her assumption, the Church celebrates this solemn feast because it assures us that God keeps the promise of resurrection made in Christ.

Today's liturgy of the word for Mass begins, fittingly, with the vision of the woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12. The vision is framed within a broader

vision in which the heavenly temple is opened, and the ark of the covenant housed within it appears. Moreover, the vision of the woman concludes with a proclamation of power and Christ's authority. These framing elements recall Old Testament scenes in which God was present, in mysterious ways, to the chosen people prior to being fully revealed in Christ. At Mount Sinai, the heavens opened. God spoke to the people in thunderous proclamation. God etched the law on tablets, gave instructions for the ark in which those tablets were to be kept, reading shows those layers peeled back, so

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 So shall the king desire your beauty;  
in gold of Ophir. for he is your lord.

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

For meditation and context:

Use a loud voice as directed.

Corinthians = kohr-in-thee-uhnz

Try to bring to the verse the amazement you might feel if you were hearing this good news for the first time.

Adopt a tone of authority; no one will usurp God's position. His reign is unchallenged.

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,"

to speak, to reveal the great cosmic drama that unfolds in a new way in Christ and in his Church.

The woman symbolizes the chosen people, which has now expanded to become the Church. This people, as woman, labors to bring forth Christ (the child) into the world. But, like a vicious dragon, the world threatens both the woman and the child. God must protect them. The child—Christ—God snatches up to heaven. The woman—again symbolizing the Church—flies to the desert, where God has prepared a place for her. This cosmic imagery

READING II

depicting the relationship between the Church and Christ naturally correlates with Mary, the mother of God and the mother of the Church. As model and guide, Mary exemplifies how we, the Church, are to bring forth Christ into the world and follow where God leads, even into deserted places, trusting that God provides.

Paul, Christ's resurrection is the center-piece of salvation history. He is the first fruits, the initial harvest of many to come. Fundamentally, Paul recognizes that Christ's glorious resurrection is not a grace unique to the Lord; it will be shared. It is meant for all who have died and will die. Thus, Paul recognizes that the resurrection makes Christ a new Adam, the new primordial human person. For Adam, as the first primordial human person, ushered death into human experience. Conversely, in Christ, the new primordial human person, life reigns through the resurrection. The old, broader context of salvation history. For Paul recalls the mystery of Christ's resurrection and reflects on its place in the broader context of salvation history. For

GOSPEL Luke 1:39-56

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

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 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 shown the strength of his arm,  
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
in every generation.

Say the familiar lines from the Hail Mary  
and then pause.  
Use an upward inflection to show Elizabeth's  
slight confusion.

Some in the assembly might be familiar  
with Mary's Magnificat and may be saying  
it internally with you as you proclaim the  
reading. Don't rush it.

Emphasize the verbs. God's generous deeds  
effect change.

death-tainted Adamic order is supplanting  
the new, life-imbued Christ-touched  
order. The trajectory established by Adam  
is redirected by Christ. Our sad history  
becomes a hopeful future.  
Along with Paul, we can ponder how  
the grace of the resurrection will continue  
to be shared as God completes the story  
of salvation. Although details are sparse,  
Paul indicates that the grace of resurrec-  
tion glory will be distributed in an orderly  
manner. Christ, the first to rise, is naturally  
first. Then "those who belong to Christ" will  
be glorified. Then the end of all things will

come about and the cosmic contest  
was begun in Christ's resurrection is shared  
fully by Mary in her assumption.

GOSPEL

If the first and second read-  
ings invite us to ponder the  
grace of Mary's assumption within the con-  
text of a cosmic contest between good and  
evil and the cosmic distribution of resurrec-  
tion grace, respectively, today's Gospel  
invites us to contemplate Mary's assump-  
tion within the context of her everyday life  
in the Judean hill country. This Gospel pas-  
sage follows immediately after Gabriel's  
announcement to Mary that she is to bear

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 for ever."  
Mary remained with her about three months  
and then returned to her home.

Jesus and that Elizabeth is pregnant with John. Mary, having pondered the matter in the angel's presence, wastes no time when Gabriel departs. She hastens to Elizabeth. Mary's presence alone—as the ark of the new covenant—stirs the spirits of both Elizabeth and John, who is in utero. A spirit-filled Elizabeth repeatedly blesses Mary and the child she is carrying, Jesus. The inspired Elizabeth also questions: "how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

The blessings and question pave the way for Mary to declare her praise of the Lord for all that has been done for her. In her Magnificat, Mary proclaims the Lord's greatness and her own lowliness. Her role in the cosmic contest and the cosmic distribution of grace is not denied. Rather, Mary repeatedly emphasizes that the grace to be the mother of the Lord—Elizabeth's title for Mary—has everything to do with God's strength and care for the lowly and God-fearing. Mary makes the matter absolutely clear: her motherhood is pure gift, pure grace from God. Moreover, God's abundant mercy and grace showers down on all like her. So, if Elizabeth recognizes that she is

blessed to receive the mother of her Lord,  
God would bear her up to heaven in the  
assumption. E.W.