



Feast of the Assumption of Mary, August 15th, 2004

Readings

Revelations 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10a
1 Corinthians 15:20-27
Luke 1:39-56

Quotes

"Taken up into heaven, Mary shows us the way to God, the way to heaven, the way to life. She shows it to her children baptized in Christ and to all people of good will. She opens this way especially to the little ones and to the poor, those who are dear to divine mercy. The Queen of the world reveals to individuals and to nations the power of the love of God whose plan upsets that of the proud, pulls down the mighty from their thrones and exalts the humble, fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich empty away (cf. Lk 1:51-53)."

Pope John Paul II, Homily, August 15, 1999, Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

"Women's relational way of being in the world typically creates in them a deep vulnerability to being rendered desolate when suffering visits those whom they love and care about . . . With dry eyes or wet, women do more than a fair share of the crying of the world . . . Weeping women, women whose hearts moan like a flute because those they love have come to harm, are everywhere in the world. As *imago Dei* they point to the mystery of divine sorrow, of an unimaginable compassionate God who suffers with beloved creation."

Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, *She Who Is*, pages 259-260

Thoughts for your Consideration

The Feast of the Assumption of Mary - What happens to Mary is what God wants for all of us. We too are called to join Mary in her hymn of praise for the blessings of God. We too are part of the struggle that is imagined in the Book of Revelations, and we too are part of the victory over the "dragon." We too share in the "salvation and power." We too are destined to enter into eternal life. We too share in the fruits, of which Christ is the first. We too rejoice with Elizabeth and Mary in the coming of new life. We too proclaim the greatness of a God who is concerned for the impoverished, who lifts up the lowly, who fills up the hungry, who is filled with mercy and compassion, who enters into the human struggle for justice for all, who invites us to move beyond war and violence to peace and reconciliation.

The Gospel: The Visitation and Magnificat - The gospel today reminds us of what we might call "God's spirituality": a spirituality which turns the conventional values of the world upside-down.

- Although Mary is pregnant herself, she journeys to be with her cousin in her pregnancy; she looks and acts beyond her own small perspective.
- She praises a God who is concerned with the poor, who raises up the lowly.
- She proclaims a God who does not have a preference for the proud or rich.
- She rejoices in a God who does not focus on the power of the mighty.
- She centers herself in a God who focuses on mercy and compassion.

The spirituality of Mary invites us to the values of Catholic Social Teaching: concern for the poor, solidarity with all people, a preference for the ways of nonviolence rather than military might, forgiveness and reconciliation rather than domination and manipulation.

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

What is your favorite image of Mary, the Mother of Jesus? Why? How is this image connected with the values of Mary expressed in her Magnificat?

Actions - Links

- Women produce 60 to 80% of the food in most developing countries and this percentage is growing. In 1950 women performed almost 40% of agricultural work; today the figure is close to 50%. In sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, women provide 80% of staple foods; in Asia they perform 90% of the work in rice fields. To learn more about women and agriculture, visit the web site of Future Harvest [<http://www.futureharvest.org/people/women.shtml>].
- The Center of Concern's Global Women's Project [<http://www.coc.org/focus/?ID=907>] approaches questions of women's human rights and equity through a long tradition of research, theological reflection, advocacy, outreach, popular education and coalition building. In all of its programs, the Global Women's Project uses the lenses of gender, race and class to analyze the effects of political, economic and social policies on women and to advocate for change. Questions pertaining to women, and economic security, poverty, violence, power, and human rights are central to this work.

Prayers

O God,
I thank you for this day of life,
for eyes to see the sky,
for ears to hear the birds,
for feet to walk amidst the trees,
for hands to pick the flowers from the earth,
for a sense of smell to breathe in the sweet perfumes of nature,
for a mind to think about and appreciate the magic of everyday miracles,
for a spirit to swell in joy at Your mighty presence everywhere.
Amen.

Marian Wright Edelman, Founder of the Children's Defense Fund, Author of *The Measure Of Our Success*

O Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, with joy and wonder we seek to make our own your Magnificat, joining you in your hymn of thankfulness and love.

With you we give thanks to God, "whose mercy is from generation to generation", for the exalted vocation and the many forms of mission entrusted to the lay faithful.

With humility and magnanimity you were the "handmaid of the Lord"; give us your unreserved willingness for service to God and the salvation of the world. Open our hearts to the great anticipation of the Kingdom of God and of the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole of creation.

Your mother's heart is ever mindful of the many dangers and evils which threaten to overpower men and women in our time. O Virgin full of courage, may your spiritual strength and trust in God inspire us, so that we might know how to overcome all the obstacles that we encounter in accomplishing our mission.

Teach us to treat the affairs of the world with a real sense of Christian responsibility and a joyful hope of the coming of God's Kingdom, and of a "new heaven and a new earth".

Amen.

Pope John Paul II, December 30, 1988

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-Fr. John Bucki, SJ, Editor and Writer

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