

Reflecting
on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



Prepare to be attentive to *The God Who Speaks* in this story.

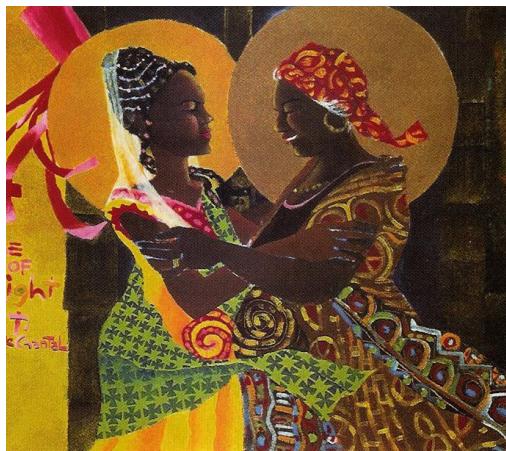


- Light a candle or tea light if possible.
- Perhaps place a flower from the garden or a plant next to the light.



Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Assumption. Here we offer some images to lead us into a reflection.

- Where is your eye drawn to?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- What are you noticing?



Listen to *Holy Virgin, by God's decree.*



Holy Virgin, by God's decree,
You were called eternally;
That he could give his Son to our race.
Mary, we praise you, hail, full of grace.
Ave, ave, ave, Maria.
By your faith and loving accord,
As the handmaid of the Lord,
You undertook God's plan to embrace.
Mary we thank you, hail, full of grace.
Joy to God you gave and expressed,
Of all women none so blessed,
When in mankind your Son took his place.
Mary, we love you, hail, full of grace.
Refuge for your children so weak,
Sure protection all can seek.
Problems of life you help us to face.
Mary, we trust you, hail, full of grace.
To our needy world of today
Love and beauty you portray,
Showing the path to Christ we must trace.
Mary, our mother, hail, full of grace.

Now, either read slowly to yourself this story from the Gospel according to Luke or better still, read it aloud, again slowly.

From the Gospel according to Luke 1:39-56



In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.' And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his
servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call
me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their
hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

Spend a few moments allowing some aspect of the Gospel – a word/phrase or image – to touch you more deeply and read this part a second time, aloud if possible.

Take a few moments to receive and reflect on this poem by Malcolm Guite.

The visitation



Here is a meeting made of hidden joys
Of lightenings cloistered in a narrow place
From quiet hearts the sudden flame of praise
And in the womb the quickening kick of grace.
Two women on the very edge of things
Unnoticed and unknown to men of power
But in their flesh the hidden Spirit sings
And in their lives the buds of blessing flower.
And Mary stands with all we call 'too young',
Elizabeth with all called 'past their prime'
They sing today for all the great unsung
Women who turned eternity to time
Favoured of heaven, outcast on the earth
Prophets who bring the best in us to birth.

As a result of your reflection, offer some prayers of intercession for the people and situations in our world today that seem to you to be most in need.

Let's begin with the prayer Archbishop Malcolm has asked us to pray at this time and then you may like to include one or more of prayers that follow and/or add your own:



God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

We pray for all who, ordinarily, would have been on pilgrimage in Lourdes during the summer ... may St Bernadette's 'Beautiful Lady' intercede with her Son for abundant blessings during the coming year.

We pray for expectant parents as they await the arrival of new life within their families ... may they appreciate the beautiful gift of life that is within them.

We pray now in the words Jesus gave us:

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

To end your time of reflection, listen to *O, Mother Divine.*



O, Mother Divine
Keep us safe in thy protection
May our thoughts be sanctified
To honour and praise
Give us thine most holy blessing
May our hearts be free from sin
Through your prayer and intercession
May we know his love within

O, Mother of Mercy
Comfort those in fear and sorrow
Help the weakened strengthen heart
Through your loving embrace
Those in need of your assistance
Will be evermore amazed
For the sorrows you have witnessed
You shall be forever praised

O, Mother of God
Help us in our hour of darkness
Be our light and guide us home
To the glory of the Lord
Holy Mother, I shall love thee
Thy name of all most blest
As I pray for his forgiveness
For his comfort and his rest

O, Mother of mine
May I never cease to praise thee
Through thy ever blessed son
My soul shall be redeemed
To the mother of my Saviour
I offer prayers on high
For the day that I shall see him
And gain eternal life

Acknowledgements

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