

livingtheword

www.livingtheword.org.nz

Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mass during the Day

Reading 1

Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

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.

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."

Reading 2 1 Cor 15:20-27

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.

Reflection Process / Questions

- **5 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
- **5 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
- **5 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
- ***The Assumption of Mary.*** Pope Pius XII asked all Bishops in 1950 if their congregations believed that Mary was assumed into heaven. 98 percent answered Yes. The Pope recognised that God was speaking through the Church and the sense of faith of the 'faithful'. Mary's assumption - being taken up - does not mean she did not die but after her 'sleeping' she was taken body and soul into heaven. We as Christian disciples hope to follow after her.
- Christian interpretation has often seen in this first reading the figure of Mary. However the early writer was not writing of Mary but the figure of 'Israel' - God's People - The Bride - The 'Church'. The Church giving painful birth to disciples is in tension with the dragon who has worn a variety of faces. The Roman Empire seeking to crush Christianity. Persecution of Jewish leaders on the growing sect of disciples in Jerusalem. Reading the passage with this background what strikes you? What face of the dragon have you experienced trying to 'devour' your discipleship?
- On Special Solemnities the selection of readings seeks to teach deep truths of faith. St Paul writes of the first-fruits...

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 first fruits; 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."

Gospel Lk 1:39-56

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 looked 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 mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. 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 forever."

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

- ... the first offering back to God. Jesus rises first... and then each one in proper order those who belong to Christ. Do you consider it fitting and right that Mary is 'taken up' first to enjoy the resurrection with her son? What is your response to the feast of the Assumption of Mary? What does it teach you? Mean for you?
- The historical site of the Visitation is in the small village on the outskirts of Jerusalem called 'Ein Karem'. In the Church of the Visitation there are large bronze figures of Mary and Elizabeth, their two pregnant tummies almost touching as they greet each other. A conversation happens between Elizabeth and Mary, but also between John and Jesus. The Old Testament is meeting the New Testament. Zechariah, the High Priestly family, the Jewish Priesthood, is meeting the New Priesthood of Christ. God's promises of old, now fulfilled. The long waiting of the Old Testament is now turned to 'leaping for joy'. The Ark of the Covenant which King David 'leaped for joy' before (2 Sam 6,5) is now fulfilled with John leaping for Joy before Mary, bearing Christ and the new covenant'. In the baby and disciple John we see our own leaping for joy in the Church before the Eucharist. What image strikes you the most? What could it teach you for your life?
- The Magnificat of Mary rejoices in her Savior, but it is not in a timid tone of a young virgin. Luke places on Mary's lips a battle cry. A great reversal of life and fortunes is happening. She who is lowly, from a humble rural town, has had great things done 'for me'. The world has been tipped-up-side-down with everyone falling from their positions and possessions. In Mary's religious and prophetic prayer we glimpse the great reversal that Jesus will accomplish in his mission. What does casting down the mighty and lifting up the lowly mean to you?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?