



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Solemnity

† Thursday 15th August 2019

[Holiday of Obligation]

In England and Wales – Prayer for the people of Europe

Keynote: Mary taken up in glory to be with the risen Christ

Book of Revelation 11: 19, 12: 1-6, 10

The language of the final book of the bible, being apocalyptic in style makes for difficult reading and is for us hard to understand! The Book of Revelation expresses the idea that God has, through Jesus Christ, unveiled truths about heaven, and the earth, past, present and future. There is a clear reference to the Temple of the Old Testament in which God was seen to be dwelling among the people. The Ark of the Covenant once housed in the Temple is seen again: *'The sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the Ark of the Covenant could be seen inside it.'* Then follows, the vivid image of the woman who brings forth the male child, the one who will save God's people. The 'woman' also seen as the ark of the covenant bearing God's presence – *'the woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations.'* Then the cry goes up *'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God and all authority for his Christ!'* Mary and the People of God, bring forth the Christ into our world – so the eternal reign and presence of God begins.

Responsorial Psalm 44 (45) – a joyful royal wedding song

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15: 20-26

'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man.' The pivotal meaning here is that the first man Adam, brought death into the world by disobedience, and Christ, the second Adam – obedient even unto death – brings by his obedience to the Father – life in the resurrection. *'Just as all men die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ.'* The raising up of Jesus is the pledge of life for us all. This feast today celebrates the possibility of our own assumption with Christ in glory. A time of hope and joy.

Gospel according to Luke 1: 39-56

Mary's cousin Elizabeth is also with child, and in this encounter Elizabeth recognises in the Spirit that both Mary and her own child are blessed. *'Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit... Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?... Yes, blessed are those who believed that the promise made by the Lord would be fulfilled.'* The canticle Mary sings – known as the *Magnificat* – is full of allusions to the Old Testament, and indicates a deep understanding of the significance of this childbearing: *'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,'* sings Mary, *'and my spirit exults in God my saviour because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid... for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name...'* Both Elizabeth and Mary invite us to believe and to trust in the promise of God.

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Note: The Mass of the Vigil has own readings – refer to the Lectionary.