

HOW DOES THIS IMAGE SPEAK TO ME
IN MY PRAYER AND LIFE?



Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Lord, may we follow Mary's example in reflecting your holiness. *Entrance Antiphon*

The sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the ark of the covenant could be seen inside it. *Revelation 11: 19*

All will be brought to life in Christ. *1 Corinthians 15: 22*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. *Luke 1: 46*

[God's] mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. *Luke 1: 50*

Today the virgin Mother of God was taken up into heaven to be ... a sign of hope for the people of God on their pilgrim way. *Preface of the Assumption*



AMDG

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION
YEAR C, 14 AUGUST 2016

**The Lord has done great
things for me!**

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray that with the help of Mary's prayers,
we too may reach our heavenly home.

Father in heaven,
all creation rightly gives you praise,
for all life and all holiness come from you.

In the plan of your wisdom
she who bore the Christ in her womb
was raised body and soul to be with him in heaven.

May we follow her example in reflecting your holiness
and join in her hymn of endless life and praise.

I settle into my place of prayer, taking time to focus and to become still. When ready, I read the opening prayer, slowly, savouring those words or ideas that speak to me.

I share with the Lord the moments for which I want to give him thanks and praise, the moments when I experienced life, when I encountered God's holiness.

I try to enter into the joy of Jesus and Mary when they meet at the end of Mary's life.

I may recall people who have died and whom I know – perhaps family or friends for whom I still grieve. I imagine their joy when welcomed by Jesus, Mary and so many others. Perhaps they tell me that it is infinitely greater than we could ever hope for or imagine. Can I begin to imagine that joy and to look forward to sharing it?

I talk with Jesus, Mary and those whom I love. I bring my prayer experience to a close by praying the Our Father.

PART OF THE FIRST READING
REVELATION: 19A, 12: 1–6, 10

The sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the ark of the covenant could be seen inside it.

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon ... [which] stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert where God had made a place of safety ready. Then I heard a voice shout from heaven, 'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ.'

This reading points to Mary as Ark of God's covenant – the one who gave birth to the Messiah, but also to Israel – the nation from which the Messiah was born, and to the Church, called always to bring Jesus to our world.

I read the passage and then look into heaven with John. I see Israel, Mary, and the Church, crowned by God for their part in bringing the Messiah to the world. I contemplate:

- ♦ Israel, the source of Jesus' heritage: belief in one God, totally good, creator of all that exists, passionately in love with all people, often forgotten, but faithful and forgiving.
- ♦ Mary – mother, formator, disciple, suffering with Jesus, joy-filled in his resurrection and in her union with him in heaven.
- ♦ Christians throughout history – proclaiming and living God's word, reaching out to all people, persecuted and mocked.

I watch God crown them. What do I feel? I remember the suffering of each one, and the sin of Israel and the Churches. I pray for them. I talk with Jesus about my role as ark of the covenant, and ask him for what I need and desire.

GOSPEL LUKE 1: 46–55

And Mary said:

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my saviour;
for he has looked with favour 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 empty away.

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.'

The proclamation of Mary's Assumption in 1950, in the wake of the horrors of World War II, was a proclamation of the dignity of the human body and the integrity of the human person who will be raised to glory as a whole human being. It is a statement about each one of us.

I read this beautiful hymn, stopping where I feel drawn.

- ♦ I may pray it as Mary, rejoicing in God's goodness to her, in his mercy, in his care for the vulnerable, in his fidelity.
- ♦ I may pray it in the shoes of victims now in heaven: victims of genocide, of the atom and other bombs, of all forms of abuse. What might each part of the hymn mean for them? I try to enter into their joy. I pray that I may honour the dignity of every human being, and I pray for an end to war.
- ♦ I may pray it as my story. What does it mean for me?

I talk with God about what's in my mind and heart, and bring the prayer to a close in my own words.