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Commentary on the Gospel: Assumption of Our Lady

Gospel for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 1:39-56*)

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed

is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;

for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear
him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm,

he has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts,

he has put down the mighty from
their thrones,

and exalted those of low degree;

he has filled the hungry with good
things,

and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his posterity
forever.”

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

Commentary

On this joyful day when the Church celebrates the Assumption of Our Lady in body and soul to heaven, the Gospel for this solemnity narrates the scene of Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth.

Our Lady right away realizes that Elizabeth, because of her advanced age, will need help in the final stage of her pregnancy. So without worrying about the possible inconveniences of the trip, Mary "arose and went with haste into the hill country" (v. 39). Luke doesn't tell us whether Joseph accompanied our Lady, but it is quite possible that he

did so, since they were betrothed and the stay would last several months.

Mary's readiness to serve her cousin reflects the joy of her diligent and humble love. The maiden from Nazareth has just accepted her exalted vocation as the Mother of God. But this ineffable gift doesn't turn her attention on herself. Rather we see Mary's heart overflowing with a spirit of service and loving concern for others.

Saint Josemaria liked to meditate on this scene and learn from Mary's naturalness. "Blessed are you for believing, said Elizabeth to our Mother. Union with God, supernatural virtue, always brings with it the attractive practice of human virtues. Mary brought joy to her cousin's home, because she 'brought' Christ."[1] On another occasion he advised: "Turn your eyes towards our Lady and see how she

practises the virtue of loyalty. When Elizabeth needs her, the Gospel says that she went *cum festinatione* – joyfully making haste. Learn from her!”[2]

When Mary reaches her destination, amid the joy of the two mothers, the Baptist leaps with joy in Elizabeth’s womb, thus beginning his own mission as the Precursor who announces the Messiah’s arrival. Elizabeth in her humility is overjoyed at the visit of “the mother of my Lord” (v. 43). It is the Holy Spirit, who dwells in both Elizabeth and the Baptist (cf. *Lk* 1:15.41), who enables them to sense the divine presence, even though hidden and humble. And it will be the Paraclete who will teach us to recognize our Lord when He comes to us, in the Sacraments and in the needs of others.

Just as the scene of the Visitation shows us Mary's diligence and eagerness to serve others, to bring her Son to them, so now she continues showing towards us the concern that she showed Elizabeth.

As Pope Francis said: "The feast of the Assumption of Mary is a call to each of us, especially those who are afflicted by doubt and sadness, and live with their gaze turned down, unable to raise their eyes. Let us look up. Heaven is open. It doesn't cause fear, nor is it distant, since on the threshold of Heaven a mother, our mother, is awaiting us. She loves us, she smiles at us and thoughtfully assists us."[3]

"Like every mother she wants the best for her children and she says to us: 'You are precious in God's eyes; you were not made for the small satisfactions of the world, but rather for the great joy of heaven.' Yes,

because God is joy, not boredom. God is joy. Let us allow our Lady to take us by the hand.”[4]

[1] Saint Josemaria, *Furrow*, no. 566.

[2] Saint Josemaria, *Furrow*, no. 371.

[3] Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 15 August 2019.

[4] *Ibid.*

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