

August 22: Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel for August 22th, feast of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gospel (*Lk 1:26-38*)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what

sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High;

and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever;

and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her,

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;

therefore the child to be born^[b] will
be called holy,
the Son of God.

And behold, your kinswoman
Elizabeth in her old age has also
conceived a son; and this is the sixth
month with her who was called
barren. For with God nothing will be
impossible.”

And Mary said, “Behold, I am the
handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me
according to your word.” And the
angel departed from her.

Commentary

Today we celebrate the feast of the
Queenship of the Blessed Virgin
Mary. Mary is Queen because she is
the Mother of Jesus, King of the
Universe. Today's feast was instituted

by Pope Pius XII in 1954 to venerate Mary as Queen, in conjunction with the feast of her Son, Christ the King.

The passage from Saint Luke's Gospel introduces us to Mary, a young girl from Nazareth. God has looked upon her with special love and chosen her to be the mother of his Son, in that small town far from the world's spotlights.

Mary's story is thus the story of a God who surprises us. And Mary allows herself to be surprised by the angel's announcement, and expresses her amazement. It is the amazement of seeing that God wants to become man, and that He has chosen her to be his mother. A simple girl from Nazareth, who does not live in a palace of power and wealth, and has never done anything extraordinary.

It is the amazement of seeing that God is in love with her: that she is the one full of grace. This expression,

“full of grace,” so familiar to us, is a greeting of great depth and points to the greatness of her vocation. Mary has been chosen to be the Mother of God, and therefore has been preserved from original sin from the very moment of her Conception.

“Full of grace” is the name that God himself gives her to indicate that she has been his beloved from all eternity, the one chosen to receive his most precious gift, Jesus, the incarnate love of God.

In contemplating our Immaculate Mother, all beautiful and pure, humble and without any pride or presumption, we can recognize our own true destiny, our deepest vocation: to be loved, to be transformed by love, by the beauty of God. God has placed his loving look on each one of us, calling us by our name. Like Mary, He has chosen us before the creation of the world to be holy and spotless in his sight.

The Virgin Mary is completely open to God; she trusts in Him fully, even when she doesn't fully understand. And she lets herself be surprised. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). That is her answer. God always surprises us, breaks our schemes, overturns our plans, and tells us: trust me, don't be afraid, let yourself be surprised, get out of yourself and follow me. He hopes that we will let ourselves be surprised. He wants to manifest himself in the simplicity and humility of our daily life.

Mary's queenship is not like that of earthly kings and queens. As Pope Benedict XVI said, "Mary shares in God's responsibility for the world and in God's love for the world. There is a worldly or common idea of a king or queen: a person with great power and wealth. But this is not the kind of royalty Jesus and Mary

possess. Let us think of the Lord; the royalty and kingship of Christ is interwoven with humility, service and love. It is above all serving, helping and loving . . . Mary is Queen in her service to God for humanity; she is a Queen of love who lives the gift of herself to God so as to enter into the plan of man's salvation."^[1] —

This attitude of service encourages us to go frequently to Mary, who will intercede for us, as Mother and Queen. Mary has the power of a queen, but she puts it at the service of her children, with deep humility. As Saint Josemaría wrote, “It is indeed just that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit should crown the Blessed Virgin as Queen and Lady of all creation. Take advantage of her power! With the daring of a child join in this celebration in Heaven. For myself, I crown the Mother of God and my Mother with my purified

failings, since I have no precious stones or virtues.”^[2]

On today's feast, let us have recourse to the intercession of our Mother Mary, Queen of the universe, who with her royal power will obtain for us the graces we need on our path to Heaven.

^[1] Benedict XVI. Audience. 22 August 2012.

^[2] Saint Josemaría. *The Forge*, 285.

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