



INTRODUCTION

Let us have a short recall of the different Marian devotions
 What are they?

Among our Marian devotions which one do you like most?
 What image of Mary does it give you? Why? What does it
 tell about Mary?

We are celebrating an important holy day in our Church
 year. On August 15 we celebrate the Assumption of the
 Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day we remember that Mary
 was taken to heaven, body and soul. Our Gospel reading for
 today is taken from Luke's Gospel, and it tells us why Mary
 received such a special privilege from God. Let's listen
 carefully to this Gospel.



OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
 You have taken up body and soul
 into the heavenly glory the Immaculate Virgin Mary,
 Mother of Your Son: Grant, we beseech You,
 that, ever intent upon heavenly things,
 we may be worthy to be partakers of her glory.
 Through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
 One God, forever and ever. Amen.
From the Roman Missal



PHASE ONE REMEMBER THE STORY OF JESUS

1.1 Proclamation of the Gospel Story Lk 1:39-56

Enthroned the Bible on a table with lighted candle)

A moment of prayerful silence

*We will not be able to understand the Word of God unless
 God himself opens our hearts. Let us now welcome Jesus as
 he speaks to us through his Word*

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Mary is taken up to heaven;
 a chorus of angels exults.

R. Alleluia, Alleluia



*Reader: A reading
 according to the
 Gospel of
 Luke (1:39-56)
 All: Glory to you O
 Lord.*

Mary set out
 and travelled 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.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

1.2 Brief Guided silent Meditation / Personal Prayer

What picture of Mary comes to your mind as you listen
 to the reading?

1.2 Text in Context

Among the four Gospels, Luke has more stories about Mary
 whom he describes in a very familiar manner. For example,
 in today's Gospel Luke shows the story of Mary visiting her
 cousin Elizabeth. Only in Luke we can find Mary's song of
 praise to God, Magnificat. He describes Mary as an active
 and faithful woman who obeyed God.

1. Who are the two people mentioned in today's Gospel?
 (Elizabeth and Mary)

2. What interesting thing happened to each one of them?
 (Both of them are expecting a baby. Remember that
 Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist. She was very
 old and had not yet had any children. But God chose her and
 Zechariah to be the parents of John the Baptist, who was to
 announce Jesus' coming.)

3. How did Elizabeth greet Mary? What does this greeting
 remind you of?

4. How did Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting? (She sings
 a song of praise to God.)

5. What is the other name of this song of praise to God by
 Mary? (Magnificat)

6. What does the title "Magnificat" mean? It is named after
 the first word of its first line in Latin ("Magnificat anima
 mea Dominum," or "My soul magnifies the Lord")



Aug 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary. We marvel at her who was blest among women and showed us the greatness of the Lord. This special feast of the Church reminds us of Mary's heavenly birthday.

The Church teaches us that, *the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory* (Pope Pius XII *Munificentissimus Deus* 1950)

Why such a unique privilege given to Mary!

The time and context when Mary lived was crucial. It was the very period that the long-awaited Savior was about come. All were waiting for the Messiah, the one who would restore David's throne to make Israel great again. (Note that David lived around 900 B.C. E [Before the Common Era] that marks the counting of period based on birth of the Lord). This hope was carried down the ages, and was alive among the people who by this time were called Jews- the followers of Judaism. We know that Israel had been under foreign rule for many years. And it was about time to get a king who would free them. Truly, Christ has come to have everlasting rule not only to Israel but the to the entire creation and cosmos.

We recall young Mary at Annunciation when the angel, Gabriel, told her that she found favor with God and would bear a son, Mary said yes to God, though she did not completely understand what the angel said to her. Mary conceived a child and now we found her visiting her cousin Elizabeth who was also pregnant with a son in her old age. With the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth exclaimed to Mary: "*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb*

To be blessed means *having found favour with God* and to be filled with grace is a life in close union with God. Such **favour** and **grace** that Mary found with God started with her Immaculate Conception. Mary is special and close to God before all ages. God has appointed her for a mission and preserves her from any state of sin from the moment of her conception.

We seldom find direct reference to Mary in the bible, nor find about the assumption.

For example in the Book of Psalm, Mary is pointed as the dwelling place of God: *Arise, O Lord into your resting place. You are the ark which you have sanctified.* (Psalm 13:2-5)

The "LORD" in this line refers to Jesus and the "ARK" is the Virgin Mary in whose womb Jesus was conceived. She is truly the tabernacle of the WORD MADE FLESH

This unique privilege has freed her from the corruption of the grave and advanced her to the redemption of her body assured into heaven to be with her Son, in God's presence. (*Munificentissimus Deus*)

Looking at my life now, does God find favor in me?
Can Jesus find a place within me like the way Mary carries him in her womb?
Mary is taken body and soul to heaven, I share in this belief ?

We can imagine the great joy of Mary when she prayed: *My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.*

Focusing on these first two lines of the Magnificat, Pope Francis invites us to reflect on these two action words: *magnifies* and *rejoices*. Mary rejoices because of God. She could have been proud of being chosen by God among the women of her time. She could have thought: *I got it all because I am the best!*

But Mary rejoices simply because of God. He alone does "great things". She attributed all the merits to God whom she trusted like a child to a father. Mary exalts the Lord's greatness; she praises him saying that he is truly great. (Pope Francis)

Mary teaches us the secret of a happy life. God first and all good things follow.

What do I consider as the great things in my life now?
What might be the petty things that lead me away from true happiness?

PHASE THREE RESPOND – with/ in my personal faith /community faith story

Mary is totally opened to God all her life. No one could ever imagine what God has prepared for those who love and follow him. Mary is the best image of what each one of us can become.

How can I imitate Mary both in body and soul?
Do I look forward for heaven as my eternal home? What preparation should I do?



CLOSING PRAYER

Let us entrust to *Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted — whom we contemplate today in the glory of Paradise — the anguish and torment of those who, in so many parts of the world, are suffering in body and in spirit. May our heavenly Mother obtain comfort, courage and peace for all.*

Prayer to Our Lady, Assumed into Heaven

Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, we believe in your triumphant assumption into heaven where the angels and saints acclaim you as Queen. We join them in praising you and bless the Lord who raised you above all creatures. With them we offer you our devotion and love. We are confident that you watch over our daily efforts and needs, and we take comfort from the faith in the coming resurrection. We look to you, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. After this earthly life, show us Jesus, the blest fruit of your womb, O kind, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary <https://www.catholic.org/prayers>

BACKGROUND FOR THE CATECHISTS

CCC 966 "Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians:

In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death.

