

Reading for the Memorial of the Queenship of Mary

22nd August 2026

First reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

‘A son is given to us.’

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.
You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end
on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 113(112):1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8. R cf. 8

*The Lord set him in the company of princes of his people.
or: Alleluia.*

Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord!
May the name of the Lord be blest both now and for evermore!
From the rising of the sun to its setting, praised be the name of the Lord!
High above all nations is the Lord, above the heavens his glory.
Who is like the Lord, our God, who dwells on high,
who lowers himself to look down upon heaven and earth?
From the dust he lifts up the lowly, from the ash heap he raises the poor,
to set them in the company of princes, yes, with the princes of his people.

Gospel Acclamation

cf.Lk1:28

Alleluia, alleluia!
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!
Blessed art thou among women.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

‘Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son.’

At that time: 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 tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour 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 for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

And Mary said to the angel, 'How will this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her.

Short reflection on the reading for today

While her own preferred self-designation was "Handmaid of the Lord" and she marvelled that the Lord "has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant," later generations did indeed call her blessed, and piled honours upon her, as in the Litany of Loreto, which lauds her in symbolic titles such as "Tower of Ivory", "House of Gold", "Ark of the Covenant", "Gate of Heaven", "Morning Star." What Mary herself would have thought of such grandiose titles cannot be guessed, but they satisfied the devotional needs of pilgrims making procession in her honour. By the Middle Ages Our Lady was venerated as "Queen of the angels and saints". Finally, five years after declaring the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven (1950) Pope Pius XII, at the close of the Marian Year of 1955, proclaimed the Queenship of Mary as a feast of the universal church. The feast was dated on August 22, to stress its connection with the feast of the Assumption, exactly a week earlier. Today's Gospel suggests that if Mary now reigns with her Son in heaven, it is because she gave herself over to God's purpose for her earthly life, as did Jesus her Son. There are many "vocational stories" in the gospels and in the bible as a whole. Today we read about the call of Mary, who displayed a whole range of responses to God's approach to her. Initially, she was "deeply disturbed" at being called God's "favoured one," who would conceive and bear a son. Then she questioned how this promise would come about, and it was only after reflection that she surrendered to what God was asking of her, "let what you have said be done to me."

"How can this be?" It is clear that Mary had to struggle with a dilemma before reaching her famous response, so vital for the destiny of our human race. There is always an element of struggle in reaching our own understanding of what God wants from us. Mary's response of total surrender to God's purpose for her life did not come easy to her and does not come easy to us. However, in our struggle to live in harmony with God's purpose for our lives, we all have the assurance of Gabriel's words to Mary, "Nothing is impossible to God." What may seem impossible to us is always possible with God's help. We can all come to make our own the words of Saint Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain" (1 Cor 15:10).