

Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

15th August 2021

Apocalypse 11:19; 12:1-6, 10

1 Corinthians 15:20-26

Luke 1:39-56

HOMILY

There is an image a pregnant woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head in the first reading. Believers came to recognize that woman as a symbol of Mary among other things. This is confirmed with today's gospel reading where we meet another pregnant woman. It is Mary, who as we see in the Gospel, physically carries Jesus in her womb to Elizabeth, her older cousin. This says something to us as disciples of the Lord. We are all called to carry Jesus to others. It is in our baptismal calling to become bearers of the Lord's presence to all.

Mary has been described as a pattern for our pilgrim way and today it is shown how she can be a pattern for our pilgrim way. She is on a long pilgrimage to Elizabeth. When Mary reached her destination and greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Mary's encounter with Elizabeth invites us to ask if others are more alive in the Spirit for having been in our company.

But just as Mary's presence filled Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth's presence filled Mary with a spirit of prayer. It works on both sides.

Mary's prayer shows her to be a radical woman who hungers for a new justice on earth, where the lowly are exalted, the hungry are filled, and oppressive powers are overcome.

Mary shows us that authentic faith expresses itself not only in love but in working for justice.

As one who shares fully in the Lord's risen life, we can confidently turn to Mary, asking her to pray for us in three areas:

- to be bearers of the Lord's presence
- to enable us to fill others with the spirit and
- to work for justice.