



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



Solemnity of Mary Mother of God Cycle A

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And Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:19

Mary is the Mother of the Church. Through her intercessions, the Lord blesses us and holds us in the palm of his hand as our reading from the ancient book of Numbers today so poetically states: *"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord let His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace."* Numbers 6:24-26 Down through the ages, Mary blesses us with these words. The power emanating from the heart of Mary in her divine motherhood is the greatest gift Christ gave to the world and His Church.

Mary was declared by the Church Fathers to be the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne. Oral tradition has it that Mary was born in Jerusalem, presented in the Temple and took a vow of virginity. In the Gospel of Luke we learn that she lived in Nazareth, and was visited by the archangel Gabriel, who announced to her that she would become the Mother of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. Acknowledged by Elizabeth as the Mother of God, Mary intoned the Magnificat,

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Luke 1:46.

Following the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple, where St. Simeon rejoiced and Mary received word of sorrows to come later.

*"You, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins..." Luke 1:76-77*

Nothing is known of Mary's life during the next years except for a visit to the Temple of Jerusalem, at which time Mary and Joseph lost the young Jesus, who was in the Temple with the learned elders. The first recorded miracle of Jesus was performed at a wedding in Cana, and Mary was instrumental in calling Christ's attention to the need. Mary was present at the Crucifixion in Jerusalem, and there she was given into John's care. She was also with the disciples in the days before the Pentecost, and it is believed that she was present at the resurrection and Ascension.

There are no scriptural references concerns Mary's last years on earth. But according to ancient Oral tradition, she went to Ephesus, where she experienced her *"Dormition."* We celebrate this Feast of the Assumption on August 15th. The Catechism states it beautifully: *"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. Ccc 966

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

When the angels had left them
the shepherds said to one another,
*"Let us go now to Bethlehem
and see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us."*

So they went with haste
and found Mary and Joseph,
and the child lying in the manger.
When they saw this,
they made known what had been told them about this child;
and all who heard it were amazed
at what the shepherds told them.
And Mary kept all these things
and pondered them in her heart.
The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed,
it was time to circumcise the child;
and he was called Jesus,
the name given by the angel
before he was conceived in the womb.

The Gospel of the Lord