



The Holy See

HOLY MASS
ON THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV

Pontifical Parish of Saint Thomas of Villanova (Castel Gandolfo)
Friday, 15 August 2025

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today is not Sunday, yet we celebrate in another way the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, which changed the course of history. In Mary of Nazareth, we recognize our own history: the history of the Church, immersed in the common lot of humanity. By taking flesh in her, the God of life — the God of freedom — has conquered death. Yes, today we contemplate how God overcomes death — yet never without us. His is the Kingdom, but ours is the “yes” to his love that can change everything. On the Cross, Jesus freely uttered that “yes” which would strip death of its power — the death that still spreads wherever our hands crucify and our hearts remain imprisoned by fear and mistrust. On the Cross, trust prevailed; so did love, which sees what is yet to come; and forgiveness triumphed.

Mary was there, united with her Son. In our day, we are like Mary whenever we do not flee, whenever we make Jesus’ “yes” our own. That “yes” still lives and resists death in the martyrs of our time, in witnesses of faith and justice, of gentleness and peace. Thus this day of joy becomes also a day that calls us to choose – *how* and *for whom* we shall live.

The liturgy of this feast of the Assumption offers us the Gospel passage on the Visitation. Saint Luke recorded in this passage a decisive moment in Mary’s vocation. It is beautiful to recall that day, as we celebrate the crowning moment of her life. Every human story, even that of the Mother of God, is brief on this earth and comes to an end. Yet nothing is lost. When a life ends, its uniqueness shines even more clearly. The *Magnificat*, which the Gospel places on the lips of the

young Mary, now radiates the light of all her days. One single day — the day she met her cousin Elizabeth — contains the seed of every other day, of every other season. And words are not enough; a song is needed, one that continues to be sung in the Church “from generation to generation” (*Lk* 1:50), at the close of every day. The surprising fruitfulness of barren Elizabeth confirmed Mary in her trust; it anticipated the fruitfulness of her “yes,” which extends to the fruitfulness of the Church and of all humanity whenever God’s renewing Word is welcomed. That day, two women met in faith, then stayed together for three months to support each other, not just in practical matters but in a new way of reading history.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, the Resurrection enters our world even today. The words and choices of death may seem to prevail, but the life of God breaks through our despair through concrete experiences of fraternity and new gestures of solidarity. Prior to being our final destiny, the Resurrection transforms — in soul and body — our dwelling on earth. Mary’s song, *Magnificat*, strengthens the hope of the humble, the hungry, the faithful servants of God. These are the men and women of the Beatitudes who, even in tribulation, already see the invisible: the mighty cast down from their thrones, the rich sent away empty, the promises of God fulfilled. Such experiences should be found in every Christian community. They may seem impossible, but God’s Word continues to be brought to light. When bonds are born, with which we confront evil with good and death with life, we see that nothing is impossible with God (cf. *Lk* 1:37).

Sometimes, unfortunately, where human self-reliance prevails, where material comfort and a certain complacency dull the conscience, this faith can grow old. Then death enters in the form of resignation and complaint, of nostalgia and fear. Instead of letting the old world pass away, one clings to it still, seeking the help of the rich and powerful, which often comes with contempt for the poor and lowly. The Church, however, lives in her fragile members, and she is renewed by their *Magnificat*. Even in our own day, the poor and persecuted Christian communities, the witnesses of tenderness and forgiveness in places of conflict, and the peacemakers and bridge-builders in a broken world, are the joy of the Church. They are her enduring fruitfulness, the first fruits of the Kingdom to come. Many of them are women, like the elderly Elizabeth and the young Mary — Paschal women, apostles of the Resurrection. Let us be converted by their witness!

Brothers and sisters, when in this life we “choose life” (*Dt* 30:19), we are right to see in Mary, assumed into heaven, our own destiny. She is given to us as the sign that the Resurrection of Jesus was no isolated event, no mere exception. In Christ, we, too, can “swallow up death” (cf. *1 Cor* 15:54). To be sure, it is God’s work, not ours. Yet Mary is that wondrous union of grace and freedom, which urges each of us to have trust, courage and participation in the life of God’s people. “He who is mighty has done great things for me” (*Lk* 1:49): may each of us know this joy and proclaim it with a new song. Let us not be afraid to choose life! It may seem risky and imprudent. Many voices whisper: “Why bother? Let it go. Think of your own interests.” These are voices of death. But we are disciples of Christ. It is his love that drives us — soul and body — in our time. As individuals and as the Church, we no longer live for ourselves. This — and only this

— spreads life and lets life prevail. Our victory over death begins here and now.

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