

We all know the story of Mary of Nazareth. We know the indispensable role she played in God's plan for humanity. Christians have honoured Mary from the Church's earliest days. So many feasts have been established in her honour, so many church buildings named for her, so many religious congregations called after her. Mary has been given so many titles – Mother of God, Mother of the Church, Madonna, Queen of Heaven, Mother of Perpetual Help, Immaculate Conception – the list goes on.

Today we celebrate one of the great Marian feasts. The doctrine of the assumption of Mary was promulgated by Pope Pius XII in 1950. It declares that Mary, "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." This teaching is an acknowledgement of Mary's singular role in the story of salvation. It is also a promise – that if we follow the example of Mary, if we seek always to say 'yes' to God as she did, then we too can look forward to life in God's presence forever.

GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN

Henri Nouwen was a Dutch priest and academic who taught at Yale and Harvard universities in the 1970s and 80s. He was well known for his books on spirituality and for his reflections on his mental health struggles. After her defeat in the 2016 US presidential election, Hillary Clinton says she turned to one of his books, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, for comfort in her grief. Nouwen's wisdom has been a gift to many.

But even though he had gained tremendous success as a writer and academic, Nouwen began to feel that something was missing in his life. He sensed that God was calling him in a different direction. Having prayed about it, he finally found himself joining the L'Arche community, a charity that cares for those with

intellectual and developmental needs. Henri Nouwen, this deep-thinking writer and professor, this world renowned spiritual guru, spent his final years bathing those who could not bathe themselves, feeding those who could not feed themselves, celebrating the sacraments with them, and seeing in them the beautiful face of Christ.

Like Mary the mother of Jesus, Henri Nouwen listened to God at work in his life and responded to it to the best of his ability. He heard the word of God and kept it.

Nouwen felt a profound connection to Mary's simplicity and humanity. In one of his journals, he describes meeting a priest who summed up Mary's meaning to the world: "To look at Mary," the priest said, "is to see God's original plan for humanity." "In her," Nouwen wrote, "we see the way God wanted us to be... Mary shows us how to receive the marvellous gift of God's love, and how to respond to God's redemptive action in our lives."

This is what we celebrate on the feast of the Assumption of Mary. If Mary shows us "God's original plan for humanity," so does her Assumption into heaven. In the Assumption, preserved forever before the face of God, freed from the corruption of the grave, Mary not only fulfils her destiny – but also offers us a glimpse of our destiny, too. Assumption is what God wants for us. Heaven is what God dreams for us. This is God's desire and design for us.

Today's feast reminds us of that promise – and that hope. We are called to model ourselves on the Mother of God – in her holiness, humility and humanity. If we want to reach heaven, if we are to claim our destiny, we must "listen to the word of God and keep it." That means, very simply, to live like Mary; to desire, like her, to bring the Word into the world; to birth Jesus every day, by all we say and do. ■



Today's readings

Rev 11:19.12:1-6.10
1 Cor 15:20-26
Lk 1:39-56

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Today we celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Mary. We celebrate our belief that Mary was taken up, body and soul, into heaven, where she enjoys eternal life in the company of her Son. It is a joyful feast for us Christians because it points to what we believe will be our destiny. We believe that what God has done for Mary, he will do for us also. That at the end of time God will raise our mortal bodies and bring us into the fullness of his life forever.

15 August 2021 – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Year B

Psalter Week 2

Stu(space)

SERIES: POINTERS ON THE JOURNEY

Season colour: WHITE

In this series, Gerard Moloney, C.Ss.R reflects on the Gospel in the context of today.



A GLIMPSE OF OUR DESTINY

If we want to reach heaven, if we are to claim our destiny, we must "listen to the word of God and keep it."

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – 15th August 2021

The Prophets

Ezekiel - a prophet in exile, the first one called outside of his native land. He was from a priestly family, the Temple was a powerful symbol for him. The people have no land, no Temple, no priestly rites, but God is with them. The question raised is "Are they willing to be with God?" Ezekiel touches the familiar themes of faithfulness, God's love is beyond their imaginations. The people are called to personal responsibility, to be renewed. God will plant a new heart within them, he will be the Good Shepherd. Literally God will gather his scattered sheep and bring them home. The theme of judgement, those who put their trust in other powers will see Jerusalem destroyed and their altars pulled down. Ezekiel tells the people that they will not be punished for the sins of those who went before them, but they must account for their own actions and choices. The people are invited to "come and know that I am the Lord God" The call to believe, to know that hope will be fulfilled is constant. There will be a new city, a new Temple... God will restore these things, but this time they must follow him, not their own ways.

"Music with Mona"

Re-starting guitar lessons in Kilmegan Centre, Castlewellan, P3 children and adults.
Phone 07585600452

Collections

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Dromara | £1,158 |
| Drumgooland | £2,389 |

Parish

| |
|--------|
| £1,158 |
| £2,389 |

Priest

| |
|------|
| £458 |
| £699 |

Recently deceased

James McAteer, Drumboy Road, Muninabane
Phyllis Flanagan, Clady

Anniversary Masses

Leitrim

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| Sat 14 th | Christopher Rice Michael Bannon James McAleenan Jackie Mooney Paddy and Brigid Curran and Deceased Family Members |
| Wed 18 th | Francis, Margaret, Sean and Margaret Cunningham and Martin McDonald |

Dromara

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|----------------------|---|
| Sun 15 th | Deceased Members of the McKinney Family (Artana) |
| Sun 22 nd | Elizabeth McCoubry (Derry) Alice Lundy and Deceased Members of McCann and Mageen Families |

Dechomet

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|----------------------|--------------|
| Sat 21 st | Agnes Rooney |
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Gargory

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| Sun 22 nd | Michael, Brigid, Leonard and Liam King |
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Blood Donation Sessions

Baptist Church Hall, Ballynahinch Mon 23rd Aug
1pm-4pm and 5pm-8pm. To book phone
08085534653 between 10am-4:30pm

Weekend masses

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| Sat | 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim |
| Sun | 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara |

Weekday masses

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|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mon 9 th | 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet |
| Tues 10 th | 9:00am Dromara |
| Wed 11 th | 7:30pm Leitrim |
| Fri 13 th | 7:30pm Dromara |

Changes in social distance in Church

The social distance in churches has been reduced to 1m. This means that every other seat is available for use and more people can be accommodated in each church. Last weekend there were seats available if more people had wished to attend.

The advice is that face coverings should be worn if possible. There are face masks available at the back of each church if people forget to bring a mask.

Eucharistic Ministers – if any Eucharistic Minister does wish to help out at mass, please let me know.

Thank you to the people who sanitise their hands on entering the church and clean the seats after use. Your care for each other is a great gift. Covid19 is present in the local community, please do what you can to prevent its spread.

Leitrim Cleaners

Fri 20th Aug – Kathleen's Team

