

Please read the sermon of Saint John Mary Vianney on the Assumption of Mary at: <http://jmjsite.com/assumptionoftheblessedvirginmary.pdf>

Saint_Thomas_Aquinas_explains_the_Gospel_for_the_Assumption_of_Mary_into_Heaven.

And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me; and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear him. (Luke 1: 41-50)

AMBROSE; The Angel, when he announced the hidden mysteries to the Virgin, that he might build up her faith by an example, related to her the conception of a barren woman. When Mary heard it, it was not that she disbelieved the oracle, or was uncertain about the messenger, or doubtful of the example, but rejoicing in the fulfillment of her wish, and conscientious in the observance of her duty, she gladly went forth into the hill country. For what could Mary now, filled with God, but ascend into the higher parts with haste!

ORIGEN; For Jesus who was in her womb hastened to sanctify John, still in the womb of his mother. Whence it follows, with haste.

AMBROSE; The grace of the Holy Spirit knows not of slow workings. Learn, you virgins, not to loiter in the streets, nor mix in public talk.

THEOPHYL. She went into the mountains, because Zacharias dwelt there. As it follows, To a city of Juda, and entered into the house of Zacharias. Learn, O holy women, the attention which you ought to show for your kinswomen with child. For Mary, who before dwelt alone in the secret of her chamber, neither virgin modesty caused to shrink from the public gaze, nor the rugged mountains from pursuing her purpose, nor the tediousness of the journey from performing her duty. Learn also, O virgins, the lowliness of Mary.

She came a kinswoman to her next of kin, the younger to the elder, nor did she merely come to her, but was the first to give her salutations; as it follows, And she saluted, Elisabeth. For the more chaste a virgin is, the more humble she should be, and ready to give way to her elders. Let her then be the mistress of humility, in whom is the profession of chastity. Mary is also a cause of piety, in that the higher went to the lower, that the lower might be assisted, Mary to Elisabeth, Christ to John.

CHRYS. Or else the Virgin kept to herself all those things which have been said, not revealing them to any one, for she did not believe that any credit would be given to her

wonderful story; nay, she rather thought she would suffer reproach if she told it, as if wishing to screen her own guilt.

GREEK EX. But to Elisabeth alone she has recourse, as she was wont to do from their relationship, and other close bonds of union.

AMBROSE; But soon the blessed fruits of Mary's coming and our Lord's presence are made evident. For it follows, And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb. Mark the distinction and propriety of each word. Elisabeth first heard the word, but John first experienced the grace. She heard by the order of nature, he leaped by reason of the mystery. She perceived the coming of Mary, he the coming of the Lord.

GREEK EX. For the Prophet sees and hears more acutely than his mother, and salutes the chief of Prophets; but as he could not do this in words, he leaps in the womb, which was the greatest token of his joy. Who ever heard of leaping at a time previous to birth? Grace introduced things to which nature was a stranger. Shut up in the womb, the soldier acknowledged his Lord and King soon to be born, the womb's covering being no obstacle to the mystical sight.

ORIGEN; He was not filled with the Spirit, until she stood near him who bore Christ in her womb. Then indeed he was both filled with the Spirit, and leaping imparted the grace to his mother; as it follows, And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. But we cannot doubt that she who was then filled with the Holy Ghost, was filled because of her son.

AMBROSE; She who had hid herself because she conceived a son, began to glory that she carried in her womb a prophet, and she who had before blushed, now gives her blessing; as it follows, And she spoke out with a loud voice, Blessed are you among women. With a loud voice she exclaimed when she perceived the Lord's coming, for she believed it to be a holy birth. But she says, Blessed are you among women. For none was ever partaker of such grace or could be, since of the one Divine seed, there is one only parent.

THEOPHYL; Mary is blessed by Elisabeth with the same words as before by Gabriel, to show that she was to be revered both by men and angels.

THEOPHYL. But because there have been other holy women who yet have borne sons stained with sin, she adds, And blessed is the fruit of your womb. Or another interpretation is, having said, Blessed are you among women, she then, as if some one inquired the cause, answers, And blessed is the fruit of your womb: as it is said, Blessed be he that comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord God, and he has shown us light; for the Holy Scriptures often use and, instead of because.

TIT. BOS. Now she rightly calls the Lord the fruit of the virgin's womb, because He proceeded not from man, but from Mary alone. For they who are sown by their fathers are the fruits of their fathers.

GREEK EX. This fruit alone then is blessed, because it is; produced without man, and without sin.

THEOPHYL; This is the fruit which is promised to David, Of the fruit of your body will I set upon your throne. From this place we derive the refutation of Eutyches, in that Christ is stated to be the fruit of the womb. For all fruit is of the same nature with the tree that bears it. It remains then that the virgin was also of the same nature with the second Adam, who takes away the sins of the world. But let those also who invent curious fictions concerning the flesh of Christ, blush when they hear of the real child-bearing of the mother of God. For the fruit itself proceeds from the very substance of the tree. Where too are those who say that Christ passed through the virgin as water through an aqueduct? Let these consider the words of Elisabeth who was filled with the Spirit, that Christ was the fruit of the womb. It follows, And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

AMBROSE; She says it not ignorantly, for she knew it was by the grace and operation of the Holy Ghost that the mother of the prophet should be saluted by the mother of his Lord, to the advancement and growth of her own pledge; but being aware that this was of no human deserving, but a gift of Divine grace, she therefore says, Whence is this to me, that is, By what right of mine, by what that I have done, for what good deeds?

ORIGEN; Now in saying this, she coincides with her son. For John also felt that he was unworthy of our Lord's coming to him. But she gives the name of "the mother of our Lord" to one still a virgin, thus forestalling the event by the words of prophecy. Divine foreknowledge brought Mary to Elisabeth, that the testimony of John might reach the Lord. For from that time Christ ordained John to be a prophet. Hence it follows, For, lo, as soon as the voice of your salutation sounded, &c.

AUG. But in order to say this, as the Evangelist has premised, she was filled with the Holy Spirit, by whose revelation undoubtedly she knew what that leaping of the child meant; namely, that the mother of Him had come to her, whose forerunner and herald that child was to be. Such then might be the meaning of so great an event; to be known indeed by grown up persons, but not understood by a little child; for she said not, "The babe leaped in faith in my womb," but leaped for joy. Now we see not only children leaping for joy, but even the cattle; not surely from any faith or religious feeling, or any rational knowledge. But this joy was strange and unwonted, for it was in the womb; and at the coming of her who was to bring forth the Savior of the world. This joy, therefore, and as it were reciprocal salutation to the mother of the Lord, was caused (as miracles are) by Divine influences in the child, not in any human way by him. For even supposing the exercise of reason and the will had been so far advanced in that child, as that he should be able in the bowels of his mother to know, believe, and assent; yet surely that must be placed among the miracles of Divine power, not referred to human examples.

THEOPHYL. The mother of our Lord had come to see Elisabeth, as also the miraculous conception, from which the Angel had told her should result the belief of a far greater conception, to happen to herself; and to this belief the words of Elisabeth refer, And blessed are you who have believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told you from the Lord.

AMBROSE; You see that Mary doubted not but believed, and therefore the fruit of faith followed.

THEOPHYL; Nor is it to be wondered at, that our Lord, about to redeem the world, commenced His mighty works with His mother, that she, through whom the salvation of all men was prepared, should herself be the first to reap the fruit of salvation from her pledge.

AMBROSE; But happy are you also who have heard and believed, for whatever soul has believed, both conceives and brings forth the word of God, and knows His works.

THEOPHYL; But every soul which has conceived the word of God in the heart, straightway climbs the lofty summits of the virtues by the stairs of love, so as to be able to enter into the city of Juda, (into the citadel of prayer and praise, and abide as it were for three months in it,) to the perfection of faith, hope, and charity.

GREG. She was touched with the spirit of prophecy at once, both as to the past, present, and future. She knew that Mary had believed the promises of the Angel; she perceived when she gave her the name of mother, that Mary was carrying in her womb the Redeemer of mankind; and when she foretold that all things would be accomplished, she saw also what was as to follow in the future.

AMBROSE; As evil came into the world by a woman, so also is good introduced by women; and so it seems not without meaning, that both Elisabeth prophesies before John, and Mary before the birth of the Lord. But it follows, that as Mary was the greater person, so she uttered the fuller prophecy.

BASIL; For the Virgin, with lofty thoughts and deep penetration, contemplates the boundless mystery, the further she advances, magnifying God; And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.

GREEK EX. As if she said, Marvelous things has the Lord declared that He will accomplish in my body, but neither shall my soul be unfruitful before God. It becomes me to offer Him the fruit also of my will, for inasmuch as I am obedient to a mighty miracle, am I bound to glorify Him who performs His mighty works in me.

ORIGEN; Now if the Lord could neither receive increase or decrease, what is this that Mary speaks of, My soul doth magnify the Lord? But if I consider that the Lord our Savior is the image of the invisible God, and that the soul is created according to His image, so as to be an image of an image, then I shall see plainly, that as after the manner of those who are accustomed to paint images, each one of us forming his soul after the image of Christ, makes it great or little, base or noble, after the likeness of the original so when I have made my soul great in thought, word, and deed, the image of God is made great, and the Lord Himself whose image it is, is magnified in my soul.

BASIL; The first-fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy. Because then the holy Virgin had drunk in all the graces of the Spirit, she rightly adds, And my spirit has leaped for joy. She means the same thing, soul and spirit. But the frequent mention of leaping for joy in the Scriptures implies a certain bright and cheerful state of mind in those who are worthy. Hence the Virgin exults in the Lord with an unspeakable springing (and bounding) of the

heart for joy, and in the breaking forth into utterance of a noble affection It follows, in God my Savior.

THEOPHYL; Because the spirit of the Virgin rejoices in the eternal Godhead of the same Jesus (i.e. the Savior,) whose flesh is formed in the womb by a temporal conception.

AMBROSE; The soul of Mary therefore magnifies the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God, because with soul and spirit devoted to the Father and the Son, she worships with a pious affection the one God from whom are all things. But let every one have the spirit of Mary, so that he may rejoice in the Lord. If according to the flesh there is one mother of Christ, yet, according to faith, Christ is the fruit of all. For every soul receives the word of God if only he be unspotted and free from sin, and preserves it with unsullied purity.

THEOPHYL. But he magnifies God who worthily follows Christ, and now that he is called Christian, lessens not the glory of Christ by acting unworthily, but does great and heavenly things; and then the Spirit (that is, the anointing of the Spirit) shall rejoice, (i.e. make him to prosper,) and shall not be withdrawn, so to say, and put to death.

BASIL; But if at any time light shall have crept into his heart, and loving God and despising bodily things he shall have gained the perfect standing of the just, without any difficulty shall he obtain joy in the Lord.

ORIGEN; But the soul first magnifies the Lord, that it may afterwards rejoice in God; for unless we have first believed, we can not rejoice.

GREEK EX. She gives the reason why it becomes her to magnify God and to rejoice in Him, saying, For he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden; as if she said, "He Himself foresaw, therefore I did not look for Him." I was content with things lowly, but now am I chosen to counsels unspeakable, and raised up from the earth to the stars.

AUG. O true lowliness, which has borne God to men, has given life to mortals, made new heavens and a pure earth, opened the gates of Paradise, and set free the souls of men. The lowliness of Mary was made the heavenly ladder, by which God descended upon earth. For what does regarded mean but "approved;" For many seem in my sight to be lowly, but their lowliness is not regarded by the Lord. For if they were truly lowly, their spirit would rejoice not in the world, but in God.

ORIGEN; But why was she lowly and cast down, who carried in her womb the Son of God? Consider that lowliness which in the Scriptures is particularly praised as one of the virtues, so called by the philosophers "modestia." And we also may paraphrase it, that state of mind in which a man instead of being puffed up, casts himself down.

THEOPHYL, But she, whose humility is regarded, is rightly called blessed by all; as it follows, For, behold, from henceforth all shall call me blessed.

ATHAN. For if as the Prophet says, Blessed are they who have seed in Sion, and kinsfolk in Jerusalem, how great should be the celebration of the divine and ever holy Virgin Mary, who was made according to the flesh, the Mother of the Word?

GREEK EX. She does not call herself blessed from vain glory, for what room is there for pride in her who named herself the handmaid of the Lord? But, touched by the Holy Ghost, she foretold those things which were to come.

THEOPHYL, For it was fitting, that as by the pride of our first parent death came into the world, so by the lowliness of Mary should be opened the entrance into life.

THEOPHYL. And therefore she says, all generations, not only Elisabeth, but also every nation that believed.

THEOPHYL. The Virgin shows that not for her own virtue is she to be pronounced blessed, but she assigns the cause saying, For he that is mighty has magnified me.

AUG. What great things has He done to you; I believe that a creature you gave birth to the Creator, servant you brought forth the Lord, that through you God redeemed the world, through you He restored it to life.

TITUS BOS. But where are the great things, if they be not that I still a virgin conceive (by the will of God) overcoming nature. I have been accounted worthy, without being joined to a husband, to be made a mother, not a mother of any one, but of the only-begotten Savior.

THEOPHYL; But this has reference to the beginning of the hymn, where it is said, My soul doth magnify the Lord. For that soul can alone magnify the Lord with due praise, for whom he deigns to do mighty things.

TITUS BOS; But she says, that is mighty, that if men should disbelieve the work of her conception, namely, that while yet a virgin, she conceived, she might throw back the miracles upon the power of the Worker. Nor because the only-begotten Son has come to a woman is He thereby defiled, for holy is his name.

BASIL. But holy is the name of God called, not because in its letters it contains any significant power, but because in whatever way we look at God we distinguish his purity and holiness.

THEOPHYL; For in the height of His marvelous power He is far beyond every creature, and is widely removed from all the works of His hands. This is better understood in the Greek tongue, in which the very word which means holy, signifies as it were to be “apart from the earth.”

THEOPHYL; Turning from God’s special gifts to His general dealings, she describes the condition of the whole human race, And his mercy is from generation to generation on them that fear him. As if she said, Not only for me has He that is mighty done great things, but in every nation he that fears God is accepted by Him.

ORIGEN; For the mercy of God is not upon one generation, but extends to eternity from generation to generation.

GREEK EX. According to the mercy which He has upon generations of generations, I conceive, and He Himself is united to a living body, out of mercy alone undertaking our salvation. Nor is His mercy shown indiscriminately, but upon those who are constrained by the fear of Him in every nation; as it is said, upon those who fear him, that is, upon those who being brought by repentance are turned to faith and renewal for the obstinate unbelievers have by their sin shut against themselves the gate of mercy.

THEOPHYL. Or by this she means that they who fear shall obtain mercy, both in that generation, (that is, the present world,) and the generation which is to come, (i.e. the life everlasting.) For now they receive a hundred-fold, but hereafter far more.

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