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“Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled” (Luke 1:45).

Mary’s Assumption is a doctrinal feast and should be celebrated as such with deep joy for the central mystery it focuses on—the Incarnation. Because Mary accepted the Word of God in her womb, God became flesh and glorified our human nature. Though the Assumption of Mary is not mentioned in the Scriptures, the Church from the beginning has believed it totally appropriate that Mary has already completed the full transformation made possible by her divine son and shares his life in heaven.

Because Mary is one of us, what was promised to her is also promised to us. Her life’s journey and her Yes to God opened the way for us to imitate her perfect discipleship. The Word also comes to us by grace, and if we accept it, it becomes flesh in our lives. We carry God, give birth to God, and live God in a human way.

The church chose the Gospel story of Mary’s visit to Elizabeth for today’s liturgy to accentuate Mary’s role as the first evangelist. As soon as she conceived Jesus in her womb, she carried the Good News to her relative, whose miraculous conception bridged the first covenant with the new covenant. What righteousness could not accomplish for Zechariah and Elizabeth, grace had fulfilled. Their child was precursor to Mary’s child, and John leapt in the womb to proclaim Jesus.

Mary’s Assumption in glory honors her for completing her paschal passage as a model for us. She conceived the Word in faith, carried God in her flesh, gave birth to God in her life, shared him with the world, witnessed his sufferings, rejoiced in his

resurrection and was present with his followers when the Holy Spirit animated them to be the church, the body of Christ in history.

Today's solemnity is one of the few times the Lectionary includes Mary's *Magnificat*. In her canticle Mary rejoices that God is just. Mary gives a mother's voice to the indignation of every woman who has lost a child to war, poverty and the arrogance of power. Mary's majestic song is breaking news for "the proud in their conceit" who will be scattered, the mighty who will be "pulled from their thrones," the rich who have hoarded what belongs to the poor and will be "sent away empty."

If we have not known this side of Mary, we have not heard the full measure of the Good News she brought into the world by her obedience and courage. Mary's Assumption does not mean she is absent, but that because she is one with Jesus she is intimately and effectively part of the church and its mission to the poor.

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