

# MARY INSPIRES US TO RESPOND TO THE DEADLY CHALLENGES OF COVID & CLIMATE CHANGE

*SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY – 15 AUGUST 2021*



*The Assumption of Mary by Titian*

Congratulations to Clint McGoldrick who was admitted into [Candidacy for Permanent Diaconate](#) last night.

Thank you to Bishop Ken who led us in Eucharist and received and blessed Clint at the 6pm Saturday Mass.

Congratulations today to the first of three groups of children receiving their [First Eucharist](#) later today.

## OUR VISION

As we walk along the path, there is a temptation to **look down always**.

And we would miss so much of life.

**We would miss what is above** – the sky and clouds and rainbows and stars and moon, the peaks of mountains, the crown of tall trees, the birds flying through the air, birds nesting in the trees

**We would miss what is around us** – the beauty of people; the beauty of nature, the opportunity to care gracefully for someone in need.

Always looking down – deprives us of a fuller view of reality, of perspective.

**We are all created to look up, to look down, to look around, to look inside and outside of ourselves.**

Today's [Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#) reminds us to look up and around and within.

For followers of Jesus, Mary shows the way in her love for Jesus during her **earthly life**, and in following him into the fullness of love and joy in **eternal life**.

## THE INSPIRATION OF MARY HELPS US

The inspiration of Mary helps us to look out into the world and focus our own lives on Jesus,  
The inspiration of Mary helps us to look above into eternal life, where, through the grace of God, Mary loves us deeply.

In The [Catechism of the Church](#), Part One, Section Two 1., Chapter Three, Article 9, Paragraph 6 we are taught that:

*'Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim, born of her: to be given, by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross, as a mother to his disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold your son." '*

*'After her Son's Ascension, Mary "aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers." In her association with the apostles and several women, "we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation." '*

*'The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians'*

*'By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity.'*

Through the grace of God, Mary accompanies us in our life's journey. May we now reflect on the way Mary accompanied Elizabeth in today's Gospel passage.

## GOSPEL OF LUKE 1:39-56

*"In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.*

*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,*

*'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'*

*And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,*

*and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'*

*And Mary remained with her for about three months  
and then returned to her home."*

#### MARY'S RESPONSE

This extraordinary passage raises questions for us -

- How do we rejoice in God?*
- How do we, as humble servants, praise God?*
- In what ways are we blessed by God?*
- In what ways do we experience the mercy of God in our lives?*
- How are we in solidarity with the poor?*
- How does Mary accompany us in our own lives?*

Mary could see in history how God overcomes

- our egotism, our prejudices, our vanities.
- our denial of reality, our poor excuses, our stubborn mentality,
- our avarice, our self-centredness and our dishonesty.

**Today we are challenged by the critical issues**

- **of Climate Change and**
- **of the importance of COVID Vaccinations and Safety Protocols**

In our media

- we see international and national daily totals of COVID recorded cases, deaths and recoveries.
- we see the effect of floods and fires in the northern hemisphere.

*With the safety of the human family at risk, how can some people live in denial?*

## AN AUSTRALIAN EXAMPLE OF DENIAL

Today we can agree about the essential services of sewerage and rubbish collection. This helps us to live safely. But this progress in human community living was hard-fought.

We take Melbourne as an example. In the 1870s and 1880's as the city grew, **urban pollution was horrific**. Diphtheria and typhoid caused many deaths. 550 people in Melbourne died from typhoid in 1889.

Thomas Keneally in his composite history 'Australians' quoted a bitter comment by a reforming Victorian politician at the International Medical Conference in early 1889.

*"We value so highly our constitutional rights – the rights of man to pollute running water ... that many of us would oppose to the death any interference with ... the vested right of every Englishman to carry death into his neighbour's household."*

(Australians. A Short History. Allen & Unwin. Paperback edition 2018 page 440)

Eventually the Melbourne community acted to protect life. The search for truth led to action. Enough people cared enough to make a difference.

## DENIAL TODAY

Denial of reality is not new. In every age there is the challenge to search for the truth and to protect human life.

**As we draw strength from Mary's insight into history,  
may we act together to keep each other safe during the COVID Pandemic  
and may we act together to protect the earth, our common home.**

Our Parish Pastoral Council voted recently to support the [Laudato Si' seven-year program](#) of Pope Francis to care for the Earth. (More information to come.)

The [Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#) this month searches for the truth. On the last weekend of this month, we will discover more from this statement about our responsibilities to the earth and to the poor.

## POPE FRANCIS TEACHES US ABOUT MARY

Pope Francis taught us about Mary and the Solemnity of the Assumption, at his Angelus instruction on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

*"Mary shows us that in order to live a happy life,  
we should put God in first place because he alone is great.  
How many times instead, we are distracted by things of little value:  
prejudice, resentment, rivalry, envy, illusions, superfluous material goods....  
How much pettiness there is in life! We know this.  
Today Mary invites us to raise our gaze  
to the "great things" that the Lord carried out in her.  
The Lord does many great things in us too, in each of us.*



*We must recognize them and rejoice, magnify God for these great things..."*  
*'The feast of the Assumption of Mary is a call to each of us,*  
*especially those who are afflicted by doubt and sadness,*  
*and live with their gaze turned down, unable to raise their glance.*  
*Let us look up. Heaven is open.*  
*It does not inculcate fear.*  
*It is no longer distant because on the threshold of Heaven,*  
*a mother, our mother, is awaiting us.*  
*She loves us, she smiles at us and she thoughtfully assists us.*  
*Like every mother she wants the best for her children and she says to us:*  
*"You are precious in God's eyes;*  
*you were not made for the small satisfactions of the world,*  
*but rather for the great joy of heaven".*  
*Yes because God is joy, not boredom. God is joy.*  
*Let us allow Our Lady to take us by the hand.*  
*Each time that we hold the Rosary in our hands and pray to her,*  
*we are taking a step forward, towards the great destination of life.*  
*Let us allow ourselves to be attracted by true beauty.*  
*Let us not be befuddled by the trivialities of life,*  
*but rather let us choose the greatness of Heaven. '*

*"May the Holy Virgin, Gate of Heaven,*  
*help us daily to trustfully and joyfully look to where our true home is,*  
*where she is awaiting us like a mother."*

Pope Francis at the [Angelus instruction for the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary](#) on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020 said:

*'The Virgin Mary, whom we contemplate today in heavenly glory, is the "Mother of hope". This title of hers has been recently included in the Litany of Loreto.*  
*Let us invoke her intercession for all the situations in the world*  
*that are most in need of hope: hope for peace, for justice, hope for a dignified life.'*

Responding to the loving inspiration of Mary who intercedes for us, let us pray.

*Mother of Hope, pray for us.*

Amen.

Fr Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/081521-Day.cfm>



*The Virgin in Prayer by Sassoferrato*