

SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

VIGIL MASS

Luke 11:27-28

As Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

MASS OF THE DAY

BYZANTINE RITE

Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

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ROMAN RITE TEXTS UP TO 1951

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Why Mary and Martha?

St Bruno (1045-1123)

"These two women are the leaders of the army of the Church, and all the faithful follow them. Some walk in Martha's footsteps, others in Mary's; but no one can reach our heavenly fatherland unless he follows one or the other. Rightly then have our fathers ordained that this Gospel should be read on the principal feast of our Lady, for she is signified by these two sisters. For no other creature combined the privileges of both lives, active and contemplative, as did the Blessed Virgin. Like Martha she received Christ—yea, she did more than Martha, for she received him not only into her house, but into her womb. She conceived him, gave him birth, carried him in her arms, and ministered to him more frequently than did Martha. On the other hand, she listened, like Mary, to his words, and kept them for our sake, pondering them in her heart. She contemplated his Humanity and penetrated more deeply than all others into his Divinity. She chose the better part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Quoted in Prosper Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year*

William Durandus (1230-1296)

The Gospel is read about Martha and Mary, which at first sight appears to have no relevance, and yet it is indeed relevant, according to an allegory. For Jesus entered into a certain 'small castle', that is, into the Virgin Mary, who is called a castle since She is terrible to demons, and armed Herself well against the devil and against vices. But She is called 'a small castle' in the diminutive (*castellum*) because of her humility, and because of Her unique condition, since "neither before nor henceforth hath there been or shall be such another." (quoting the 2nd antiphon of Lauds on Christmas day.) And Martha, that is, the active life, received Him. For She most diligently reared Her Child, and brought him into Egypt, and showed her goodness in the active life, by going to Elizabeth, and serving her, and just as She was (like) Martha in the active life, so also she was (like) Mary Magdalene in the contemplative life. Whence in another Gospel is read, "Mary kept all these words in her heart." (Luke 2, 50) Now these two sisters signify the active life and the contemplative life, which were clearly in the Blessed Virgin Mary, and through them she exaltedly, honourably, and with great delight, received Christ in Herself.

Rationale Divinorum Officium, Book 7, chapter 24.

1950-1969; 1970-

Luke 1:39-56

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechari'ah and greeted Elizabeth.

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb;

and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

1950- And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

1969 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy.

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;

for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm,

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,

he has put down the mighty from their thrones,

and exalted those of low degree;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.