



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience
Mary of the Assumption (8/15) – August 17, 2024
Anointing of the Sick
Presider/Homilist: Mary Eileen Collingwood



Suggestion: Please have a copy of the written liturgy and a piece of bread, cup of wine/grape juice, and **oil for anointing** (*olive oil or a fragrant oil of your choosing*), so you can participate fully in this liturgy.

Come in. Come into this place that we make special by our very presence.
Where the ordinary is sanctified, the human is celebrated, and the
compassionate is expected.

ALL: Together we make this a holy place with our every act of celebration.

With the flame of St. Bridget, we proclaim the transformative power of God. We
give thanks that God's transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at
work within us and in all creation. Amen.

Opening Song: **O Word of God** by Ricky Manalo, © 2002 Published by OCP
<https://youtu.be/nXcKJdOD6yY?si=fXLqAfJF9pgpy1yz>
(lyric/video- end at 1.04)

O Word of God, come into this space.
O Word of God, come send us your grace.
Open our minds; show us your truth,
Transform our lives anew. (x2)

Today's readings plunge us into Mary's determined resolve to place her faith and trust in her Creator. It is from that space within her that she can express her joy and resolve in concurring, and rising up from the forces that would bring her down into the depths of despair. Encouraged by her witness of faith, we begin our prayer today with the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, an encounter with Christ that we experience each and every time we celebrate the sacraments.

Anointing of the Sick

Our presence here on Earth is, for most, a long and arduous journey, leaving us in need of strengthening so that we are able to survive the vicissitudes of life. Our faith tells us that the Spirit will pitch her tent among God's Holy People, providing the care and shelter they need to go on. Oil, long believed to be a strengthening agent for those embarking on a difficult journey or task, is administered as a blessing before departure. *You may use the oil found in your own home for this anointing—olive oil or a fragrant oil of your choosing.*

1. Praise to you God, the Holy One! You sent Jesus to live among us to bring us hope...
2. Praise to you Jesus, the Eternal Word, You share in our humanity and heal our infirmities...
3. Praise to you, Holy Spirit and Counselor, Your unfailing power gives us strength in our bodily weakness....

(All raise oil)

O Holy One, in your compassion you bring healing to the sick. We pray today in faith, as we acknowledge your Spirit within this oil, which nature has provided to serve our needs. May your +blessing come upon all who are anointed with this oil, and may we be freed from pain and illness and made well again in body, mind and spirit. Amen.

God of mercy, ease our sufferings and comfort us, as we anoint ourselves with this holy oil. We ask you this through Jesus, the Anointed One.

ALL: Amen.

Each person anoints their forehead and hands:

Through this holy anointing may our God of love and mercy strengthen us with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

4. May God who frees us from all our weaknesses hold us close and raise us up.

ALL: Amen.

5. O God, through this holy anointing,
Grant us comfort in our suffering.

6. When we are afraid, give us courage,
when afflicted, give us patience,

7. When dejected, give us hope,
and when alone, assure us of the support of your
holy people.

We ask this through Jesus, our healer.

ALL: Amen.

All raise hands in blessing:

ALL: May our Creator God of all Consolation, Jesus, our Brother, and the Holy Spirit, our Guide and Protector +bless us in every way and grant us hope all the days of our lives. Amen.

May the Holy One fill our hearts with peace.

ALL: Amen.

Gloria: ***Praise, Give Glory to God*** by Denise Pyles on *Creation of Love*, © 2010-03-19.

<https://youtu.be/tA22QokvwPA?si=1gXks20MeRTt-8UC&t=25>

(no video; begin 0:25)

Praise, praise, give glory to God! Nations, peoples, give glory!
Strong the love embracing us, faithful our God forever.
Alleluia, alleluia! (x3)

Opening Prayer

O God of Tenderness and Love, we come before you in need of reassurance. In our days of restlessness, we yearn for your Word of comfort. May this prayer today be a beginning of a new vision. May all our troubles be silenced as we embrace your promise of life anew in a world filled with the goodness of your grace. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD*

*We now experience the Spirit of Our Living God as we listen to
the Scripture readings broken open and shared by all.*

First Reading--Responsorial: Psalm 16

Cantor: *Keep me safe, O God, You are my hope.*

You Adonai, are all I have,
and You give me all I need: my life is in Your hands.
I am always aware of Your presence;
You are near, and nothing can shake me. **R**

And so I am full of happiness and joy,
and I always feel secure;
Because You will not allow the one you love to see the pit;
You will not abandon to the depths below
the one You love. **R**

You will reveal the path of life to me,
and give me unbounded joy in your presence.
Your help brings pleasure forever. **R**

Cantor: Alleluias

Second Reading - Gospel: Luke 1:46-55 (adapted)

A reading from the Holy Gospel attributed to Luke:

And Mary said:
“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed.
For you have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age
for those who revere you.
You have shown strength with your arm,
You have scattered the proud in their conceit.
You have disposed the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of Israel, your servant,
mindful of your mercy—
the promise you made to our ancestors—

to Sarah and Abraham
and to their descendants forever.”

The inspired words of the evangelist, Luke. Amen.

Cantor: Alleluias (pause for reflection)

Third Reading

A reading from *In Pursuit of Peace* by Joan Chittister

A sign of what we can become...

Psalm 16 sings, “You will not allow the one you love to see the pit... you will reveal the path of life to me, give me unbounded joy in your presence.” Those whom God loves, the psalm promises, will be raised up above the thousand daily deaths that come into every life. When we raise our hearts and souls to God, the things that drag us down will lose their grip on us. When we refuse to become imprisoned by things and status and ambition and self and greed, our souls are set free and our bodies are unburdened. Life becomes livable again. Enough becomes enough. God becomes God again.

But where can we possibly go to find someone whose life is not tethered to the earth to the point of death? What proof do we have that anyone can rise above what we want—to what we can become? The answer surely is Mary of the Assumption whose love of God lifted her far above the goals and gains of those who had never really seen the Christ for what he was, because their mind’s eye was taken up totally with what they were themselves.

Mary of the Assumption teaches us to keep our eyes on the things of heaven; to free ourselves from the fetters of anything lesser; to develop a vision outside of ourselves; and to allow ourselves to be lifted up beyond the petty and the transient to the eternal and the unalloyed. Mary of the Assumption is a sign of what we can become if we are willing to let go of what we have planned for ourselves.

The inspired words of Joan Chittister, a contemporary prophet and spiritual leader. Amen. (pause for reflection)

Shared Homily: Mary Eileen

It appears that we are constantly being challenged by someone else’s interpretation of history. The readings today and the feast we celebrate are no different.

I want to begin declaring my love and devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. My mother named me “Mary” because I was born on Christmas Day and she couldn’t think of a better name to give me. Since that time, I have developed a deep devotion to Mary, my namesake.

However, there are different ways to understand *Mary of the Assumption*.

We know that the Assumption was defined as a dogma in the Roman Catholic Church in 1950, by Pope Pius XII in the Apostolic Constitution “*Munificentissimus Deus*”. Theologically, this was the last chapter of their story of Mary’s special nature of being born and assumed into heaven without sin. It was believed that if a person did not inherit sin through their birth or committed sin in their lifetime, they cannot die, as death was for sinners. Therefore, the only way to finalize this belief is the dogma of Mary being “assumed” into heaven without dying first. This dogma was the Church’s way of constructing a theology that fit their ideas on Mary.

And why is this part of the Church’s belief system? Because the church theologians believed that the “Son of God” couldn’t possibly have been conceived through normal human means, as that would defile the nature of God. Copulation was considered necessary for furthering the human species, but was not considered a holy act—yet was certainly relevant in growing the Jewish and Christian populations.

The nativity stories in Matthew and Luke were written years beyond the death of Jesus and Mary. They were composed to imagine the birth of the Savior and sow the seeds of Jesus of Nazareth’s special nature as the Messiah. The Hebrew scriptures are filled with longings for a Messiah. Therefore, the gospel writers constructed a story along a vein that was consistent with the scriptural tenor of the time. And they considered their stories believable.

So today we have before us one belief of Mary being sin-free from birth, and another belief stated thousands of years later of Mary being assumed into heaven because if she didn’t sin, she wouldn’t have died like the rest of humanity. Both beliefs developed centuries after the fact.

This is an explanation of how Mary was initially given a place in Church history. Our chosen readings offer another understanding.

*Do the readings today broaden your understanding of the Assumption?
You are invited to share your thoughts.*

Holding these thoughts in the sacred space among us and strengthened by the support of one another, we now proclaim our affirmation of faith:

Affirmation of Faith

1. O Holy One, Creator of this vast universe:

We believe that you are not far from us, and that your loving care is shown in the life, ministry, death, and continued presence of Jesus, the Christ, whom you sent to show us the way to your living presence.

2. We believe that each of us is called to continue your presence and your work in this world by loving and caring for one another.
3. We believe that no one is beyond the reach of your love, and so no one should be beyond the reach of our caring. We believe that you call us to be one with you and with one another.
4. We believe that we have in our hearts the grace and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to live fully in your love when we are open to you.
5. We believe that you pardon our weaknesses and use them to teach us how to come to you. We believe in the resurrection of Jesus in our lives, and life everlasting in your Divine Presence.
6. May God, the source of all patience and encouragement, enable us to live as we believe, in harmony with one another so that with our hearts and voices and lives, we may glorify the God who names us and calls us to live in the fullness of being. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

Knowing our God is faithful, generous, and abiding, let us bring to our Tables our cares and concerns—for ourselves, our loved ones, and our world. Our response is: ***We awaken to your call.***

For whom and for what shall we pray?

Eternal Source of Life, help us discover how we can be most useful, for we long to see a world where there is joy, where it is safe to live, and where everyone belongs. Show us the way to nourish one another. Empower us to co-create this world as you intend it to be. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Sign of Peace

As we prepare this sacred meal, we reaffirm that just as Jesus was anointed, so is each of us. And so, we celebrate our Creator's fruitful love as we extend our blessing to one another with joy. May the peace that our brother Jesus offers be always with us!

Offertory (All raise bread and cup)

We place on our plate the harvest to be won by labor's love. And into the cup we pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from the Earth's fruits.

ALL: O Gracious One, giver of the gifts we bring, receive them from your church gathered here today, affirming the sacrament of your Presence among us.

Prayer Over the Gifts

O Holy One, in these gifts you give us food for body and spirit. May our strength be renewed by your generous blessings that will bring us health of mind and body. Amen.

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

7. Giving thanks to the Source of All Life, we open our hearts in the name of Jesus, who lives and loves, heals and empowers, through us.
1. We praise you, O God of wonder and life, as we celebrate Jesus' life and ministry and as witness to the life of compassion and love we are all called to live. We now lift up our hearts with the choirs of angels:

Holy Is This One, words and music by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan from *Our Roots Are in You* © 2015. Worldmaking.net

<https://youtu.be/wc13T8GMuao?si=e3mscH6M7gbLCh9Z> (no video)

Refrain: Holy, holy, holy is this one.
Holy, holy, holy is this one.

In the wilderness, on the mountain
Were you always? **R**

Here among us, come to love us.
Were you always? **R**

2. Creator God, we see around us the work of your hands, the fruit of your wisdom and love. The unfolding story of creation witnesses unceasingly to your creative power. We, your creatures, often deviate from that wisdom, hindering your creative presence in our midst.
3. Sending among us Jesus, our Light and Hope, you birth afresh in our world the power of Sophia Wisdom, and in the gift of the Spirit, your creative goodness blooms anew, amid the variety and wonder of life.

ALL: Spirit of Life, all that exists is blessed and enlivened by your presence.
+May these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine, and our very lives, be the
nourishment we need to sustain us in our time of need.

4. As a Christian people we celebrate the Open Table, proclaimed by Jesus
our liberator and our friend, a Table of abundant life, inclusive love, and
liberation, where all are welcome, and from which no one is to be
excluded.

At this gathering, we take bread, as Jesus took bread, and we remember, as
Jesus remembered, the constant presence of the Spirit of Life and Love. And
Jesus offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise bread)**

ALL: *Take and eat, all of you. This is my very Self, the Bread of Life which I give
to strengthen you.*

Jesus then raised a cup of blessing, spoke the grace, and offers it to us now,
saying: **(All raise cup)**

ALL: *Take and drink this cup of my life, the life force of the new and
everlasting covenant. It is poured out for you and for all, so that
you might be free. Whenever you re-member me like this, I am
among you.*

We give thanks for who we are in Christ:

ALL: Matter becomes conscious, the universe coming to reflect on itself:
earthen vessels that hold a treasure, temple of God's Spirit, the Body of
Christ.

(All raise bread and cup)

ALL: For it is through learning to live as Jesus lived,
And why he lived,
And for whom he lived,
That we awaken to your Spirit within,
Moving us to worship you truly,
Life-giving God,
At this time, and all time, and in all ways.

Cantor: Amen!

Communion Rite

We pray as these gifts are shared among us:

5. Loving God, you call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice.
We will live justly.

6. Loving God, you call us to be your presence in the world.
We will love tenderly.

7. Loving God, you call us to speak truth to power.
We will walk with integrity in your abiding presence.

(Presider raises bread and cup)

This is the Bread and Cup of Life, through which we are nourished, and we nourish one another.

ALL: We receive this bread and fruit of the vine as the presence of Christ among us!

All are welcome to receive at our Tables of Friendship!

Communion Meditation: **Spirit and Grace** by Ricky Manalo, © 2006, Pub. by OCP.
https://youtu.be/aoKR216fGuo?si=M9Ps_TyZUthvsUnq **(no video)**

Spirit and grace, here in this meal;
You are the wind that breathes through the field.
Gather the wheat and form us in Christ.
Come, be our source and breath of life.

Refrain: In the bread, blessed, broken and shared,
Christ is our life, whose presence we bear.
Come, O Spirit, make your grace revealed
In this holy meal.

Spirit and grace, here in this meal;
You are the life that flows through the vine.
Gather this drink and form us in Christ.
Come, be our source and blood of life. **R**

Spirit of God, sending us forth;
We spread your wisdom through-out all the earth.
Gather the nations and form us in Christ.
Come, be the presence in our lives. **R**

Together we lift our voices in the Name of Jesus: *(Jan Phillips, 2011)*

1. Our Father, Holy Mother, Creator of the Cosmos, Source of Life, You are in our minds, in our garden, in our loaf of bread and fruit of the vine.
2. Blessed be your names: Mother, Allah, Goddess, Beloved, Father, Radiant One, Yahweh, HaShem, Sophia.
Your Presence has come; your will is done on Earth as it is in the Cosmos.
3. May we give each other strength, mercy, tenderness, and joy and forgive each other's failures, silence, pettiness, and forgetfulness—as we ask to be forgiven by those we've hurt.
4. Lead us home to ourselves, to You, to clarity, to oneness.
And deliver us from the darkness of our ignorance and fear. Amen.

Closing Prayer

O God, fill our souls with holy joy, courage and strength to serve You.
Enkindle Your love in us and then walk with us along the next stretch of road before us. We do not see very far ahead, but when we have arrived where the horizon now closes down, a new prospect will open before us and we shall be met with peace. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing** – *Please extend your hands to bless one another:*

We give thanks for the blessings we have discovered all around us:

5. The Friendships that help us blossom into full human beings;
 6. Our health: the ability to see, to hear, to understand, and to celebrate life;
 7. The gifts of our abilities we have discovered in our lives, and all of our modest accomplishments.
1. May all our blessings continue to increase so that those who benefit from them can grow and flourish.
 2. And may Mary, the Mother of Jesus, be our constant companion on our journey of faith. Amen.

Held together by Love Divine, clothed with the nature of
Jesus our Companion, and reinforced by the strength of

the +Holy Spirit, we accept our call to go forth in love and service to others. May it be so.

Closing Song: ***Journey To Your Heart*** by Marie Dunne CHF, and sung by Patricia Bourke D'Souza <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yQQ6xj4RS4> (lyric/video)

As the new dawn breaks each morning, and the sun brings forth the light,
the day with new beginnings bids farewell to the passing night. Open up
your heart to the path that lies before you and do not be afraid to where it
leads you.

Refrain: The journey to your heart
will lead you to that place
where you will find your deepest peace.
Find the path that leads you to that sacred place.
Find the way that leads you to me.

Struggles may await you. Pain may walk beside you.
Darkness and sorrow may dim the light.
Trust the one who's with you each step along the way,
whose presence is forever bright. **R**

***Thank you for your courage to worship in a spirit of equality
and justice!***

***You are welcome to join us again—and to invite a friend—to support
this Community with your presence and prayer.***

* Scripture readings taken from the Inclusive Catholic Lectionary

** Inspired by John O'Donohue's words in *To Bless the Space Between Us*.