

The Assumption of Our Lady 2026

‘On your right stands the Queen in gold of Ophir’ (Responsorial Psalm)

I visited Ephesus a few years ago and went to see the house believed to have been the eventual home of Our Blessed Mother and St John the Evangelist. The house itself is a humble abode, up a rather winding road. It may very well be there that St. John wrote his Gospel and his other writings including The Book of Revelation. Mary was possibly his ‘proofreader’. Biblical Scholars are almost unanimous that a school of writers produced these manuscripts but there is perhaps some credibility to the claim that some of the work was done in that simple unpretentious abode? What really struck me about this place of pilgrimage was the absence of any sort of commercialism and the humble simplicity of the house. ‘Could this be the very spot from which the meek and humble Mary was assumed into heaven?’

In reading today’s Gospel I am struck by Mary’s ‘haste’ in visiting Elizabeth. No thought of self or her personal predicament, just concern for her elderly cousin. Immediately, on seeing Mary the child in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy and with absolute faith she humbly acknowledges the blessedness of Mary and the holiness of the Christ child she is bearing. Meekly she acknowledges her unworthiness to be in the presence of ‘the mother of my Lord.’ Impressively, the humble Mary too stresses her own unworthiness, ‘The Lord looks on his servant in her lowliness her nothingness, henceforth all ages will call me blessed...he has exalted the lowly.

In The First Reading in today’s Liturgy of the Word from The Book of Revelation there is a move from humility and meekness to majesty and glory as St John reflects on Mary as one whom the ‘dragon’ has no power over. As the beast attempts to devour the baby being born to her, the newborn child is ‘taken up to God’s throne and Mary escapes into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God.’ The lowly handmaid of the Gospel becomes the ‘theotika’, the God bearing Queen of Heaven whose son, Jesus, redeems the world.

Reflecting on this contrast between Mary’s humble earthly pilgrimage and her exalted heavenly status, Jesus’ instruction to the ambitious James and John immediately comes to mind, ‘If you want to be first you must be last and if you want to be master you must be servant of all.’ Mary, on her earthly ‘mission’ always put herself last and, like her son, was a humble servant. In doing so, she became Queen of Heaven at God’s ‘right hand in gold of Ophir’. Clearly, if we ever needed proof of the veracity of Jesus’ words to James and John, we need only to look at Mary. The message for today is IF we humble ourselves we too ‘shall be exalted.’

How stunningly reassuring is that?