

**Sunday 16 August 2026**

**A Feast of Mary the Mother of God**

**Collect:**

Almighty God,  
who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
and chose her to be the mother of your only Son:  
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood  
may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Isaiah 61:10-11; Psalm 45:10-17; Revelation 11:19-12:6, 10; Luke 1:46-55*

Joy and pain are mixed in equal measure throughout our readings, perhaps recalling the complexity of childbirth and motherhood. The date of today's remembrance of Mary follows that for the Roman Catholic feast of her assumption – described as her triumphant raising up into heaven – however, for Anglicans, it is an opportunity to celebrate the woman at the centre of the story of Jesus and to whom many churches are dedicated. Our first reading from Isaiah 61 directly links Mary to Jesus, showing how their agendas are one. Jesus quotes the opening lines of this chapter: 'The Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives...' in his hometown of Nazareth at the start of his ministry in Luke's Gospel. The portion we have been given today is the final two verses of the chapter, vindicating the speaker, who is determined to be a prophet to the lowly. The lines about a bride draw us into Psalm 45, where a queen is being addressed on her marriage to the king, used here to explore the commitment of Mary to God and her unique role as the God-bearer.

Our text from Revelation brings us back to the pain and risk of childbirth, but also to the added jeopardy for Mary of bringing to birth the Saviour, a sign that would be opposed by many. In the dragon waiting to devour the newborn and the mother's escape into the wilderness there are echoes of Matthew's description of Herod's violent determination to destroy Jesus that culminates in the massacre of the innocents and the flight into Egypt. The poetry of the final verse leads us back to the God who saves the struggling in Isaiah 61 and onward to our Gospel reading, Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat. Mary is portrayed as a meditative thinker, who ponders on what she has seen or heard, so perhaps the Magnificat isn't as spontaneous as Luke describes it, but is more a mother's considered reflection on the sort of son, saviour, messiah, she wishes to bring into the world. Her words distil generations of scripture down to the essentials as, with Isaiah and all the prophets, she proclaims belief in her God, her son, as one who is just, compassionate and a champion of the voiceless and powerless.

God most high,  
whose handmaid bore the Word made flesh:  
we thank you that in this sacrament of our redemption  
you visit us with your Holy Spirit  
and overshadow us by your power;  
strengthen us to walk with Mary the joyful path of obedience  
and so to bring forth the fruits of holiness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 124; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20*  
*Twelfth Sunday after Trinity*