**SATURDAY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

# GAUDE, VIRGO GLORIOSA

The Virgin Mary is invited to rejoice: *Gaude, virgo gloriosa, super omnes speciosa*. The invitation to joy is constant in the Old Testament. However, the reasons why one is invited to rejoice are different. In Joel, God's presence among his people is a gift of new life, of everlasting abundance. God is the true source of all perfect joy. After the devastation, God is once again with Israel.: *“Fear not, O land! exult and rejoice! for the LORD has done great things. Fear not, beasts of the field! for the pastures of the plain are green; The tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and the vine give their yield. And do you, O children of Zion, exult and rejoice in the LORD, your God! He has given you the teacher of justice: he has made the rain come down for you, the early and the late rain as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will repay you for the years which the locust has eaten, The grasshopper, the devourer, and the cutter, my great army which I sent among you. You shall eat and be filled, and shall praise the name of the LORD, your God, Because he has dealt wondrously with you; my people shall nevermore be put to shame. And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel; I am the LORD, your God, and there is no other; my people shall nevermore be put to shame.”* (Jo 2,21-27). In Zephaniah, too, the reason for joy and rejoicing once again comes from the Lord. His presence brings new life and powerful salvation: *“Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has removed the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies; The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear. On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love, He will sing joyfully because of you” (*Zep 3,14-27). In Zechariah, the reason for joy is God's desire to dwell again in Jerusalem, after the storm and hurricane of exile: *“Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the LORD. Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD on that day, and they shall be his people, and he will dwell among you, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. The LORD will possess Judah as his portion of the holy land, and he will again choose Jerusalem. Silence, all mankind, in the presence of the LORD! for he stirs forth from his holy dwelling.”* (Zek 3,14-17). God is always the source of true joy. Out of Him, without Him, there is no true joy. They are all ephemeral and caducous.

The Virgin Mary is also invited to rejoice. This invitation is not turned to Her by prophetical voice, but directly by the Angel Gabriel: *“In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."* (Lk 1,26-28). Mary is invited to rejoice for two reasons: because She is full of grace and because the Lord is with Her. He dwells in her heart. She is completely filled with her God. The antiphon we are meditating on invites the Virgin Mary to rejoice, because: *“Virgo gloriosa, super omnes speciosa – because She is the glorious Virgin and because She is the most beautiful, the most unique, the only one above all other creatures of the Lord, above all other virgins”.* Such beautiful Virgins as Mary are not found in the universe. Mary is invited to contemplate Herself in her more than human, almost divine beauty and to exult. She must not, however, rejoice out of an impulse of pride, but out of a feeling of the deepest humility. Looking at and contemplating her beauty, She must raise the highest, the holiest, the most beautiful song of praise and blessing to the Lord. She must intone her eternal ‘*Magnificat’* to thank, bless, praise, celebrate the Lord for the greatness He has worked in Her. After all, this is the invitation to joy. To see Herself and in Herself God who made Her so great, so beautiful, so sublime, so noble. When one sees God's work, one cannot but sing a hymn of praise and blessing. God is to be celebrated in all his work. If the firmament celebrates the praise of the Lord who created it so beautiful and harmonious every day, how much more should this hymn of praise be raised by the Virgin Mary, who was made by God more beautiful than the whole universe put together.

Even he who is writing must rejoice, exult, and be glad. He must also bless, celebrate, magnify, and sing a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord because He sent the Virgin Mary to deliver him from the lion's jaws and bring him to the pure truth of the Word of His Son. Not only that. But also because the Virgin Mary wrote the Word of the Son in his heart, making it more and more his breath of life and his breath every day. But also because She gave him the mission to breathe the Word of her Son into every heart eager to know Jesus and the Virgin Mary, to know the Holy Spirit and the heavenly Father, to know the Church, to know the present and eternity from the Word of Jesus the Lord. The children of the world and of the devil did not want to understand what the Lord had done through his Mother. They had words of condemnation. However, the children of the world and the children of Satan can do nothing against the Mother of God. They can do nothing now and they will be able to do nothing tomorrow. They could do nothing yesterday. The one who is writing testifies to this truth because today the Mother of God calls him, today She urges him, today She exhorts him, today She encourages him, today She confirms him in his mission to breathe the Word of her Son upon the world. If the Mother of God were not with him, after one day he would have returned to the lion's mouth for his eternal death. Instead, the Virgin Mary has bound him to Herself with heavenly bonds that no one can ever break. Because of this bond, a song of eternal blessing and thanksgiving rises from his heart to her. **15 June 2025**