

Reflecting the Light The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Wednesday, August 15, 2018 8:15 AM **Rev 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab;** 1 Cor 15:20-27; Lk 1:39-56
(The moon is a perfect symbol for Mary because Mary never claimed to have any glory of herself.)

“A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”

Now the linguistic symbolism in the Book of Revelation strikes modern ears as very alien, very odd, but in its day it used symbols and images that were very common to the culture at that time. So dragons, deserts, stars, suns, moons, **this is all part of the cultural heritage of what we call late antiquity when this book was written.**

Now the point I want to make today is **why Mary is pictured with the moon under her feet.** You might think that’s a minor thing, but it is actually very interesting. In ancient antiquity the moon was called the queen of heaven, *Regina Caelorum*. This is a title that Christians apply to Mary, *Regina Caelorum*, the Queen of Heaven or of the heavens literally. And the moon was called the lady clothed in the sun or the woman clothed in the sun. Now what does that mean? Well, it means **the moon has no light of itself.** The moon is often very bright, but only with light that comes from the sun. And Christians believe **this is a perfect symbol for Mary because Mary never claimed to have any glory of herself.** Mary recognized from the very beginning of life that everything she had was God’s. She had an unusual awareness; it must be miraculous, **an unusual awareness of how everything comes from God.** This is of course the bare truth, but Mary realized it in a way most people don’t.

We grow up more or less thinking, well, we just don’t think about ourselves or where we come from. **We don’t think about the real meaning of life.** We just take everything for granted and we live and we do things. We may believe something religiously, but often that stays on the

surface, not for Mary. **For Mary her devotion to God was the deepest reality in her heart.**

And she realized that her human awareness, we call sometimes the mind, **her human awareness was in fact God in her.** She recognized that; she didn't claim it for herself. We often think that our mind is ours. No, our memories are ours. Our feelings are ours. Our thoughts are ours, but **the awareness itself is not ours.** We can only be aware because we are made in the image and likeness of God, This is a profound truth and mystery we live every day and often don't even think about it. **But for Mary it was a constant awareness, a self-awareness. That's who she was.**

And as such she was perfect, **a perfect candidate to be the Mother of God.** Of course she had to be prepared for this by this unusual gift in her Immaculate Conception, and so on. But **she also represents the best of humanity, and the best of humanity is available to us.** She is the first disciple of Christ, but **we can all be disciples of Christ.** She was very aware of God's light within her, that she was nothing but a moon reflecting the light of God. We can also come to that awareness. Now what militates against us of course is pride. **Pride makes us imagine we are the sun,** we are the center, we create our own radiance, we create our own awareness. It's all about us. That Mary did not do, but we don't have to either. **We are free to model our lives on this most humble servant of God.** The Church celebrates her ascension/assumption into heaven, her ultimate victory with God to draw us to the same goal.