

May 31st: Visitation

Gospel text (Lk 1,39-56): Mary then set out for a town in the Hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, «You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!».

And Mary said: «My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit exults in God my savior! He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness, and people forever will call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, Holy is his Name! From age to age his mercy extends to those who live in his presence. He has acted with power and done wonders, and scattered the proud with their plans. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up those who are downtrodden. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He held out his hand to Israel, his servant, for he remembered his mercy, even as he promised our fathers, Abraham and his descendants forever». Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

«The baby within me suddenly leapt for joy»

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Today, we contemplate the Virgin Mary's Visitation to her cousin Elizabeth. As soon as she was told she had been chosen by God Father to be the Mother of the Son of God and that her cousin Elizabeth had also received the gift of motherhood, she decidedly set out for the hills to congratulate her cousin, to share with her the joy of having being blessed with the gift of maternity and to serve her.

The salutation of the Mother of God provokes that the infant Elizabeth carried in her womb, leapt with joy within his mother's entrails. God's Mother, who also carried Jesus in her womb, is a cause for joy. Families are happy when the arrival of a new life is announced. Christ birth certainly produces «good news of great joy» (Lk 2:10).

And yet, now a day, motherhood is not duly prized. Quite often other interests, which are an expression of convenience and selfishness, oppose to it. Parent's love implies an eventual renunciation scaring many married couples that, perhaps, should be more generous with the goods they have received from God and say “yes” to new lives in a more responsible way. Many families stop being “shrines of life”. The Pope Saint John Paul II confirms that birth control and abortion «have their roots in an hedonist and irresponsible mentality with respect to sexuality and presuppose a selfish concept of liberty, that sees in procreation an obstacle to the development of their own personality».

During five months Elizabeth did not leave her home, and thought: «Look what the Lord has done for me!» (Lk 1:25). And Mary said: «My soul glorifies the Lord (...) for He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant» (Lk 1:46-48). The Virgin Mary and Elizabeth value and are grateful for what God has given them: maternity! It is necessary that we, Catholics, find again the significance of life as a sacred gift from God to human beings.