Weekdays of Advent: December 21st

Gospel text (*Lk* 1:39-45): Mary set out in those days and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

"Blessed are you who believed"

Fr. Àngel CALDAS i Bosch
(Salt, Girona, Spain)

Today, the text of the Gospel corresponds to the second joyful mystery: the "Visitation of the Blessed Virgin to Her Cousin, St. Elizabeth". It certainly is a complete mystery! A silent burst of profound and intense joy as History has never ever narrated! It is Mary's joy that she has just become a mother, because it is fitting that all grace continues to come through Mary by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Latin word "gaudium" expresses a deep and intimate joy that does not burst out. Despite that, the mountains of Judah were covered with joy. Mary exulted as a mother who has just realized she is expecting a child. And what a Child! A Child that, before being born, already was making a pilgrimage through the boulder trodden tracks leading to Ain Karim, nestled in the heart and lovely arms of Mary.

Joy in Elisabeth's soul and face, and in the baby leaping in her womb. The words of Mary's cousin will travel through time: "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). The prayer of the Saint's Rosary, as a source of joy, is one of the new perspectives discovered by Saint John Paul II in his apostolic Letter about the Rosary of the Virgin Mary.

Joy is indivisible from faith. "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk 1:43). The joy of God and Mary has spread all over the world. To allow it within us, we need only to open ourselves through our faith to God's constant influence in our life, while walking our path with the Infant, with She who has believed, by holding St. Joseph's strong and enamored hand. Earthen paths, asphalt, cobblestones or muddy roads, any Christian always carries upon him, two dimensions of faith: the union with God and the service to others. Both quite closely linked up: with a unity of life, without

interruption between the two.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “When she hears this Mary sets out for the hill country, hastening for joy. Filled with God, where would she hasten but to the heights? The Holy Spirit does not proceed by slow, laborious efforts.” (Saint Ambrose)

- “Mary’s visit to Elizabeth occasions an encounter in the Holy Spirit between Jesus and John. Jesus is the younger of the two, the one who comes later. But he is the one whose proximity causes John to leap in his mother’s womb and fills Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Elizabeth is the first in the long succession of generations who have called Mary ‘blessed’. ‘Blessed is she who believed…’ (Lk 1:45). Mary is ‘blessed among women’ because she believed in the fulfillment of the Lord's word (…). Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the ‘fruit of thy womb’.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2676)