

About the Feast of the Visitation

Today's feast celebrates Mary going to visit her cousin Elizabeth and her faith in God's Word. Elizabeth was about six months pregnant when Mary heard about this news.

Elizabeth had prayed for years to bear a son, and she did. We are told nothing is impossible to God. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, John the Baptist jumped for joy in Elizabeth's womb – an extraordinary happening. Even before John the Baptist was born, he was showing us the way to Christ.

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary 31 May



What can we learn from today's feast?

Today's feast is about service to others and hospitality. Mary didn't dwell on her own situation when the Angel told her she would conceive and bear a Son. Instead, as soon as she heard about Elizabeth being pregnant, she set out to visit her. She did not just do a fleeting visit. She stayed with Elizabeth for the last three months of her pregnancy.

Our service to others, like Mary's, always needs to be done whole-heartedly and generously. Even in those times when we have our own problems to deal with and others call upon us, we need to set our own needs aside to attend the needs of others. In this way too, people will see Christ in us, just as John the Baptist recognized the presence of Christ in Mary's womb.

When Mary visited Elizabeth, she praised God for the wonderful things He had done for her in her life. We must remember in our prayer to thankful to God for the wonders He has done in our lives. We also must remember in gratitude the people that we encounter who are always so generous and helpful to us.

The Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who, while the Blessed Virgin Mary
was carrying your Son in her womb,
inspired her to visit Elizabeth,
grant us, we pray,
that, faithful to the promptings of the Spirit,
we may magnify your greatness
with the Virgin Mary at all times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-56

The Almighty has done great things for me

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to
a town in the hill country of Judah.
She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.
Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,
the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled
with the Holy Spirit.
She gave a loud cry and said,
'Of all women you are the most blessed,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
Why should I be honoured with a visit
from the mother of my Lord?
For the moment your greeting reached my ears,
the child in my womb leapt for joy.
Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the
Lord would be fulfilled.'
And Mary said:
'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
and my spirit exults in God my saviour;
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is his name,
and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him.
He has shown the power of his arm,
he has routed the proud of heart.

He has pulled down princes from their
thrones and exalted the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things,
the rich sent empty away.
He has come to the help of Israel his servant,
mindful of his mercy
– according to the promise he made to our ancestors –
of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'
Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back
home.

Antiphon

All generations will call me blessed,
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

Hymn for the Feast of the Visitation

Mary, as soon as you were told
Elizabeth would bear a boy,
you travelled to your cousin's house
where you greeted her with great joy.

When you greeted Elizabeth
the child in her womb leapt for joy,
for he knew that the child you bore
was not an ordinary boy.

"My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord,"
these words Mary you did exclaim.
The Lord had done great things for you,
in joy you praised His Holy Name.

Blessed are you, Virgin Mary,
for God's promises you believed.
Help us, we pray, to be like you,
praising the Lord for gifts received.

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono
Tune: Old 100th, LM