

THE VISITATION



The Visitation by Charles Mahoney

Reflection:

Lifting Up the Lowly

“Sometimes it’s hard,” sang Tammy Wynette, “to be a woman.” In olden times, we women were deemed invisible, hysterical, or inconsequential: the weaker sex, denied voice and vote. Some women still suffer servile conditions and lack human rights.

But whom did God choose to carry and deliver his incarnate Son? A woman. A girl, really. Today we read Luke’s lovely account of a meeting between two pregnant women, a normally unremarkable visit, an occasion of no importance in the context of their society. And what odd pregnancies: In a post-menopausal woman too old to bear a child, and in a virgin maiden. Neither conception is even physically possible. Both babies are the mysterious handiwork of the Holy Spirit.

The image of Elizabeth’s infant leaping in her womb resonates. That urgent movement within the womb is like the soul awakening to God’s presence, rejoicing at the sound of God’s greeting, abiding in God’s love.

The closeness between Mary and Elizabeth is palpable. Their bond of kinship encircles all God’s children as Mary proclaims God’s greatness, God’s mercy, and God’s promise to care for the poor, the hungry, the lowly. Gently, she prods us to lift up those among us who are hurting. Sometimes it’s hard. We do it anyway.

Valerie Schultz (From “Give us this Day”)



Pope Francis speaking on the feast of the Visitation two years ago, encouraged Catholics to imitate Mary's humble joy in the little things in life.

"Mary journeys, encounters, and rejoices because she carries something greater than herself: she is the bearer of a blessing. Like her, may we too be unafraid to bear the blessing that people need."

"This is the secret of every Christian: God is in our midst as a powerful saviour. Our certainty of this enables us, like Mary, to sing and exult with joy," he said.

Pope Francis said that contemplating Mary can help one realize the quiet sacrifices, devotion, and self-denial made by so many mothers and grandmothers.

"As a good mother, Mary knows that love grows daily amid the little things of life." "Mary, lowly and humble, starts from God's greatness and despite her problems – which were not few – she is filled with joy, for she entrusts herself to the Lord in all things. She reminds us that God can always work wonders if we open our hearts to him and to our brothers and sisters," he explained.

The feast of the Visitation celebrates the Virgin Mary's journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who recognizes the unborn Messiah in Mary's womb.

Pope Francis explained that these journeys all have one thing in common: "they were never easy; they always required courage and patience."

"They tell us that Our Lady knows what it means to walk uphill ... She knows what it is to be weary of walking and she can take us by the hand amid our difficulties, in the most perilous twists and turns in our life's journey," he said. (Pope Francis' Homily for the Feast of the Visitation in Bucharest in 2019 – Adapted).

