

12.21.2018 - Friday - Homily
Book of Songs: 2:8-14 LK: 1:39-45

There is a lot to take in from this beautiful passage spoken by Elizabeth to our Blessed Mother. First of all, we see the general tone of her greeting. It is one of great affection. It is easy to perceive the authentic joy in Elizabeth's heart as she encounters the Mother of God and her Lord dwelling within Mother Mary's womb.

“And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” This line reveals that Elizabeth took true joy in her encounter with Mary and saw this encounter as an abundant blessing. This is interesting since Elizabeth was so much older than Mary was. She could have “expected” Mary to be there and taken her visit for granted. But she did not; she saw it with much gratitude. It is also clear that Elizabeth is not the only one who is blessed to encounter the Mother of God and her Child. Elizabeth's baby, John the Baptist, who is living within her womb, is also filled with joy and leaps as an expression of that joy. What an amazing effect this visit has upon both Elizabeth and her unborn child.

This should raise a question in your own heart. Do you perceive the presence of Christ when He comes to you? If Elizabeth and her unborn child could perceive Him, shouldn't we also be able to perceive Him? When you enter a church, for example, are you immediately aware of the divine presence of our Lord? Do you sense His closeness? Moreover, when you receive Him in Holy Communion, is your heart intently fixed upon the Savior coming to you and residing within you? This takes faith and it takes eyes that are fixed on the coming and presence of the Lord.

Secondly, The journey and the visit are very much part of our own celebration of Christmas. Some members of your own family may have already arrived to visit you for Christmas after travelling a long journey. Others may be setting out in the next few days and their visit is eagerly

anticipated. Our airports, our ports, our bus stations, our train stations will be very busy places over the next few days. As Mary visited Elizabeth in the gospel reading and that visit was joyfully received by Elizabeth, so the act of visiting and the receiving of visits will be at the heart of our lives over the coming days. Mary's generous visit in the gospel reading was matched by Elisabeth's generous welcome, a welcome that recognized Mary's worth and that celebrated her goodness. If Mary shows us how to visit, Elizabeth shows us how to receive a visit. We welcome our visitors by recognizing the good that is in them, by recognizing the ways the Lord is working in their lives.

Pray, today, for the gift to see. Pray that our Lord will give you the eyes you need to perceive His divine presence all around you. And pray, especially, that your mind and heart will be open to His divine presence as you encounter and receive Him in Holy Communion.

Lord, I do desire to see you and to know you. I desire to discern your presence all around me and in every way that you come to me. Help me, especially, to be attentive to your presence in Holy Communion. May my heart always leap for joy at your coming to me in this most perfect way.

Jesus, I trust in you.