

## *Season Of Advent*



*“Waiting in silence, creating space for steadfast love to grow within, may be the most essential practice of all. It is in many ways the spirit of Advent, that time of the Christian liturgical year when we practice the waiting of gestation and hoping, of trusting in new life not yet fully known.”* Mary C. Earle

Today we focus on the two great women of Advent.

Mary the Pilgrim and Elizabeth the Hostess

What is the snapshot vision of the Christian community painted by these two women?

### **We remember today:**

All women who, by word and action, play a vital and dynamic role in making the Kingdom of God a reality in our world. We pray especially for women who feel marginalized and alienated by the patriarchal structures of the Church and of society.

**Gospel:** Luke 1:39-45

Mary set out 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,  
“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.”

**Silence to allow the Word to reverberate in our hearts.**

## **Reflection**

### **Reader**

Mary journeyed with haste to the town of Judah where her cousin Elizabeth lived. One of the great insights of the Second Vatican Council was an invitation to see the Christian community as a pilgrim people journeying through history. Pilgrims are itinerant, don't carry a lot of baggage, never get comfortable, secure or tied down. Like Mary who sets the tone for us, we have to go with haste to the ends of the world with the Good News.

Today's reading reminds us that hospitality is a primary characteristic of the Christian community. Mary's first action step after the Annunciation is an act of hospitality. She hastened to Elizabeth to bring comfort. Feeding the hungry, making a place in our country for immigrants, making time for others in need makes us a real Christian community.

What happened when Mary and Elizabeth greeted one another in an act of hospitality? The Holy Spirit came alive and active! Mary, Elizabeth, John the Baptist were filled with the Spirit. This was truly a Pentecost moment. When two people of faith meet in an act of hospitality, the Spirit of Jesus is always present. When the Christian community greets one another in hospitality, Pentecost happens!

The Christian community is an Advent community. Advent teaches us to wait with a sense of promise. Mary and Elizabeth had hope based on a promise that something would be fulfilled. Neither woman knew fully what was going to happen to them but they believed and hoped nonetheless. They had patience and waited together. They affirmed and supported one another. Are we not a community gathered around a Promise?

Finally, Mary was filled with joy! Elizabeth was filled with joy! John leapt for joy! Why are they filled with joy? Because Jesus was present! Joy is the authentic sign of the presence of God. A Christian community without joy makes no sense! Are we joy-filled as a Christian community?

## **Silence and Sharing**

### **Hymn**

“Joyful Messenger” from Comfort My People CD by Monica Brown

“Sing of a Lady” from Sacred Land CD by Liam Lawton

## **Litany of Mary of Nazareth**

Glory to you, God our Creator... Breathe into us new life, new meaning.

Glory to you, God our Savior... Lead us into the way of peace and justice.

Glory to you, healing Spirit... Transform us to empower others.

Mary

Model of hospitality... Be our guide.

Model of trust... Be our guide.

Model of patience... Be our guide.

Model of courage... Be our guide.

Model of risk... Be our guide.

Model of openness... Be our guide.

Model of joy... Be our guide.

Oppressed woman... Lead us to life.  
Liberator of the oppressed... Lead us to life.  
Marginalized woman... Lead us to life.  
Sign of contradiction... Lead us to life.  
Breaker of bondage... Lead us to life.  
Political refugee... Lead us to life.

Mother of the liberator... Pray for us.  
Mother of the homeless... Pray for us.  
Mother of the dying... Pray for us.  
Mother of the nonviolent... Pray for us.  
Widowed mother... Pray for us.  
Unwed mother... Pray for us.  
Mother of us all... Pray for us.

### **Prayer**

Mary of Nazareth, we entrust our lives to you. Shelter us from war, hatred and oppression. Teach us to live in peace, to educate ourselves for peace. Inspire us to act justly, to reverence all God has made. During this Christmas season and throughout the New Year, root peace firmly in our hearts and in our world. Amen.

Closing Hymn            Hail Mary: Gentle Woman  
                                  Salve Regina  
                                  Magnificat

***BLESSED EDMUND RICE,  
PRAY FOR US!***

***LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS.  
FOREVER.***



