

May 31

# The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Marian Feast Day

A soft breeze cooled Mary as she strained up the steep hill at the end of her journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Her hand rested on her belly, and she remembered the angel Gabriel's words to her: "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus" and "Behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God" (Luke 1:31, 36–37). Mary reached the crest of the hill, caught sight of her cousin, and called to her in greeting.

Elizabeth was drawing water from the well in the courtyard. When a bright and joyful voice called out to her, a sudden pressure bounded in her womb. Her baby boy inside her body had leapt in recognition of the voice! The words the angel had spoken to Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah, about her baby flashed across her mind. "He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb," the angel had said, "and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God" (Luke 1:15–16).

Elizabeth turned and sought the one who had called her. When her gaze lighted on Mary, she brightened with joy. The Holy Spirit flooded Elizabeth, and she cried out, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." She stretched out her hands, and Mary and her cousin Elizabeth held each other close. "How does this happen to me;" Elizabeth continued, "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" (Luke 1:41–44).

Elizabeth's words filled Mary with a deep peace. She praised God who had blessed her, for she was a small and humble woman; a nobody in the eyes of the world. She had done nothing to make herself worthy of God's favor. But the Father had chosen her to be the mother of His Son. Mary's words spilled over with joy and love of God: "My soul magnifies the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46–47). And she proclaimed a great prayer in praise of God's glory.

Mary stayed with her cousin until Elizabeth gave birth to her son. Afterward, she returned to her home in Nazareth. Dear Mary, help my soul magnify the Lord!

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