



21 December 2017

CHRISTMAS NOVENA – Sixth Day

Year B

In Praise of Mary, The Mother of the Lord

Today's Gospel brings us to meditate on the second Joyful Mystery: Mary's Visitation to Elizabeth. The two holy women have been the recipients of God's special favor: the gift of a child. For Elizabeth, her child is a most unexpected gift in her old age; for Mary, her child is an even more precious gift: the very Son of God.

Together with Elizabeth, we greet and proclaim Mary as "the Mother of our Lord" and "the Woman of Faith." In this Eucharistic celebration, let us open our hearts to welcome Jesus, who is brought to us by his Most Holy Mother to be our Brother, Savior, and Model.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

The Lord and Ruler will be coming soon, and his name will be called Emmanuel, because he will be God-with-us.

Greeting

P –Blessed be God our Father who gave us His only Son through the Blessed Virgin Mary. May His grace and peace be with you all.

All–And with your spirit!

Penitential Act

P –The Lord Jesus wants to come to us as he went to Elizabeth through the Virgin Mary. Let us examine ourselves and see if we are properly disposed to receive him. *(Pause)*

P –Lord Jesus, your presence brought joy to Eliz-

abeth and her son, John. Lord, have mercy!

All–Lord, have mercy!

P –Lord Jesus, at your visit, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Christ, have mercy!

All–Christ, have mercy!

P –Lord Jesus, you are our Lord and Savior. Lord, have mercy!

All–Lord, have mercy!

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

All–Amen!

Gloria

All–Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God,

Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –Hear in kindness, O Lord, the prayers of your people, that those who rejoice at the coming of your Only Begotten Son in our flesh, may, when at last he comes in glory, gain the reward of eternal life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All –Amen!

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st Reading Zep 3:14-18

The happiness of Jerusalem originated from the presence of the Lord. This foreshadowed the joy experienced by Elizabeth in receiving the visit of Mary Most Holy who was carrying in her womb the Savior of the world.

R –A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has removed the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear.

On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love. He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.

The Word of the Lord!
All–Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm Ps 33

R –*Exult, you just, in the Lord! Sing to him a new song!*

R. M. Velez

E--xult, you just, in the Lord!

Sing to him a new song!

* Give thanks to the Lord on the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises. Sing to him a new song; pluck the strings skillfully, with shouts of gladness. **R.**

* But the plan of the Lord stands forever; the design of his heart, through all generations. Blessed the nation whose

God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for his own inheritance. **R.**

* **Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our shield, for in him our hearts rejoice; in his holy name we trust. **R.****

Gospel Acclamation

All–Alleluia! Alleluia!
O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 1:39-45

We continue our meditation on the Joyful Mysteries of our salvation. Today's Gospel passage makes us reflect on the preciousness of God's gift to us in the person of Jesus, the "blessed fruit" of the womb of the Virgin Mary.

P –The Lord be with you!
All–And with your spirit!

P –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All–Glory to you, O Lord!

Mary set out in those days 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, "Most 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."

The Gospel of the Lord!
All–Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Prayer of the Faithful

P –As we meditate on the joyful mystery of the Visi-

tation, our attention turns to Mary Most Holy and Elizabeth, with Jesus as the source of their shared joy. Together with them, let us pray:

All–Lord, open our hearts to You!

C –For the Universal Church: May she ever more appreciate the role of women in the Christian community and constantly defend their dignity. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all wives: May they be instruments of sanctification for their husbands and promoters of harmony and joy in the home. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all mothers: May they raise their children in the holy fear and love of the Lord, and be an inspiration to them in the fulfillment of their duties. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all the women who have vowed their lives to the Lord: May they always be faithful to their commitments and mirror to the lay faithful the splendor of an undivided love. Let us pray! **R.**

C –For all girls: May they be loving daughters to their parents, treasure purity and a spirit of dedication to the good of others. Let us pray! **R.**

C –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions.
(Pause) Let us pray! **R.**

P –Lord God, may we prepare ourselves for the coming Christmas the way Elizabeth prepared herself for the birth of John, and Mary for the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
All–Amen!

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Preparation of the Gifts

P –Pray, brethren . . .
All–May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P –Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.
All–Amen!

Preface of Advent II

P –The Lord be with you!

All–And with your spirit!

P –Lift up your hearts!

All–We lift them up to the Lord!

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All–It is right and just!

P –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.

It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All–Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith!

All–When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!



All–Our Father ...

P –Deliver us, Lord ...

All–For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All–Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2x)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All–Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

Blessed are you who have believed, that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.

Prayer after Communion

P –Lord, may participation in this divine mystery pro-

vide enduring protection for your people, so that, being subject to your glorious majesty in dedicated service, they may know abundant health in mind and body.

Through Christ our Lord.
All –Amen!



CONCLUDING RITES

P –The Lord be with you.

All–And with your spirit!

P –Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing. *(Pause)*

May almighty God keep you from all harm and bless you with every good gift.

All–Amen!

P –May His grace strengthen you to withstand the hardships of life.

All–Amen!

P –May He make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love all the days of your life.

All–Amen!

P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All–Amen!

P –Go in peace to love and serve the Lord in your neighbor as Mary did.

All–Thanks be to God!

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ELIZABETH, THE FIRST OF MARY'S DEVOTEES

Mary's visit to Elizabeth was quite a pleasant surprise for the elderly lady who had "barricaded" herself within her house from the moment she had discovered that she had gotten pregnant in her old age. That was her second pleasant surprise in six months. (The first, of course, had been her discovery that she was expecting a child, despite her being beyond the normal age of childbearing, and especially because she had been barren all her life.)

But **Elizabeth's greatest surprise came from learning that her young relative had been chosen by God to be the mother of the promised Messiah.** Probably, like just about everybody else, Elizabeth was convinced that the Messiah would be born of some queen and in a royal palace, while Mary was a simple, poor village girl who lived in a despised corner of Northern Palestine.

But rather than lead to doubt or deny the fact that Mary had indeed received such a sublime privilege and mission, Mary's "Good News" brought Elizabeth to greet her young cousin with the enthusiastic acclaim: **"You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the Child that you bear in your womb!"** That was not a simple human conclusion. **It was the Holy Spirit who had enabled Elizabeth to realize the loftiness of the dignity which such motherhood bestowed on Mary.**

In her humility, the elderly lady just could not under-

stand how the Mother of the Messiah had deigned to honor her with her visit. But that was beside the point, for she knew full well, by now, that the Lord's ways are inscrutable. What mattered was Mary. And for her, Elizabeth had still another compliment: **"Blessed are you because you believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled!"**

These few sentences, uttered by Elizabeth under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, make of her the first and most enthusiastic of Mary's devotees. Her words were not an empty compliment but the humble and God-inspired acknowledgment of Mary's dignity and worth.

Those who claim to believe that the Bible is the word of God should take the episode of the Visitation very seriously. Unfortunately, most of them fail to do so. They actually systematically ignore this episode as if it were one of the many "apocrypha" which are the fruit of popular exaggeration. Clearly, these poor brothers and sisters are blinded by prejudice against Mary Most Holy, the Mother of the Lord. This is a very serious handicap. We should pray that the same Holy Spirit who inspired Elizabeth may also work on them and bring them to repeat with love what old Elizabeth proclaimed with joyful admiration, and which the Church has been praying for the past two thousand years. – **Jess P. Balon**

Advent/Christmas Trivia

MISA DE GALLO: What Is It?

The *Misa de gallo* is a liturgical hybrid. The Liturgy prefers celebrations by octaves, or by eight consecutive days. In fact, the second phase of Advent, 17-24 December, is precisely that. It is an octave meant to heighten the awareness of the first coming of the Messiah some two millennia ago. The *Misa de gallo* keeps this basic "preparation for Christmas" orientation but lengthens itself into a novena, beginning on the 16th of December.

The tradition was *begun by the Spanish frailes*. The nine-day Masses were a golden opportunity to catechize the faithful, many of whom – like those of today – were not so regular for Sunday Mass. More importantly, the novena Masses were in *thanksgiving for the gift of faith* for these islands which alone had been converted to it. The *Misa de gallo* was a *national petition to remain steadfast in the Catholic faith*.

The *Misa de gallo* fits in well with the Filipino inclination towards sacrificial suffering. Not that we are a sadistic people. But we treasure more gifts obtained through some pain – *'yung pinaghirapan!*

Thus we are fond of dawn processions and the penitential celebrations of the *Semana Santa*.

Participation in these novena Masses has always been popular. In fact, to allow the farmers who usually would have to till the soil at a very early hour, the *Spanish padres held these Masses early enough so as not to interfere with the farmers' daily schedule*. So it was that as the cock crowed on the first watch, the village church's *campanillas* called the faithful for the 4:00 AM Mass. Thus the novena

Masses got their name – *Misa de gallo!*

Source: *Bajo las Campanas*
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