

## **THE VISIT OF THE ST. MARY TO THE RIGHTEOUS ELIZABETH** **(SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD 2006)**

Dearly beloved:

On Sunday, December 3rd, we commemorate the visitation of St. Mary to Elizabeth, Zachariah's wife. The Bible teaches us that the two devoted pregnant cousins met with good intentions. This is one of the first actions Mary did after Angel Gabriel had visited her. St. Mary is from Nazareth, a city in Galilee, while Elizabeth is from Judea. It takes a good three days of walking distance (around 75 miles) between the two places. Mary undertook this distant journey to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. With excitement, Mary entered the house with joy and greeted Elizabeth. Upon hearing the greeting of Mary, the infant (St. John the Baptist) leaped with joy in Elizabeth's womb. Elizabeth welcomed Mary calling her, "Mother of my Lord" and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb". For the next three months, Mary and Elizabeth enjoyed each other's company, with mutual respect, taking care of each other's welfare. They shared and exchanged their divine experiences. There was no gossip, but cordial conversation, enjoying and praising each other.

The word blessed literally means "happiness", "beatitude", or "makarios" in Greek. Mary was given the "blessedness" of being the mother of the Son of God. That blessedness also would become a sword, which pierced her heart as her Son died upon the cross. "Without God's Son nothing could exist; without Mary's son, nothing could be redeemed". Mary received both a crown of joy and a cross of sorrow. Her joy was not diminished by her sorrow because it was fueled by her faith, hope and trust in God and his promises.

**"Lord, fill us with your Holy Spirit and give us joy in seeking you more closely".**

**Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.**

### **Bible readings for Sunday.**

**(Visitation of St. Mary to Elizabeth, Zachariah's wife)**

### **Before Holy Qurbana:**

|                 |   |                            |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Genesis</b>  | - | <b>1: 24-31; 24: 15-18</b> |
| <b>Judges</b>   | - | <b>4: 4-16</b>             |
| <b>II Kings</b> | - | <b>5: 1-5</b>              |
| <b>Ester</b>    | - | <b>4: 1-17</b>             |
| <b>Proverbs</b> | - | <b>14: 1-19</b>            |

### **Holy Qurbana:**

|                       |                  |   |                           |
|-----------------------|------------------|---|---------------------------|
| General Epistles:     | <b>I Peter</b>   | - | <b>3: 1-7</b>             |
| Epistles of St. Paul: | <b>I Timothy</b> | - | <b>2: 9-15 ; 3: 11-13</b> |
| Holy Gospel:          | <b>St. Luke</b>  | - | <b>1: 39-56</b>           |

**Next Sunday, we commemorate the Birth of St. John the Baptist.**

With prayers,  
Thomas Alex