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Gospel for 21 December: The Haste of Tenderness

Gospel during Advent for
December 21, with
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk* 1:39-45)

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed

is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Commentary

After receiving the angel's announcement and saying “yes,” Mary sets out quickly to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is in the sixth month of her pregnancy.

The journey is a long one. Our Lady lives in Nazareth and her cousin lives near Jerusalem. A distance of about 150 km. But Mary doesn't hesitate in the face of the difficulties. She walks quickly, even though she too was

pregnant and risked encountering robbers on the road to the south. She is eager to care for her cousin.

Mary is like so many people who care for their family and strive to raise their children well, who face so much adversity, so much suffering, who care for the sick. They get up and serve.

Our Lady doesn't give importance to herself. She doesn't think that "since I am the mother of God, I am the important one. I am the one who should be the center of others' attention and care." No, Mary doesn't think like that. Her way of thinking is different: "since I am the most worthy, I have to help more."

Mary doesn't shut herself up at home, but goes quickly to take care of her cousin. And it is not a frantic haste, but the haste of tenderness in her eagerness to assist her cousin Elizabeth. And from that encounter

joy arises. The deep joy of Mary and Elizabeth, a joy that fills their lives. In the same way, if we learn to serve and go out to assist others, we will let God change this world of ours. We will be the look, the smile, the arms, the hands, the joy of God himself.

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