



On May 31, The Church commemorates **The Visitation** (Mary's Visit to Elizabeth) recorded in St. Luke 1:39-45. (The one year lectionary observes **The Visitation** on July 2) Mary's relative, Elizabeth has been with child for six months when Mary had received the announcement that she would give birth to Jesus. Elizabeth's child (John The Baptist) leaps for joy at being in the presence of Jesus as Elizabeth herself is filled with The Holy Spirit. The Old Testament Reading for **The Feast of The Visitation** is Isaiah 11:1-5; The Epistle Reading is Romans 12:9-16 and The Holy Gospel appointed for the day is St. Luke 1:39-56. The Magnificat (Mary's Hymn of Praise, St. Luke 1:46-55) praises God for His work of salvation through the coming Savior, who had done great things for her while exclaiming that His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. As Mary continues, she proclaims the strength of God who scatters the proud and brings down the mighty while exalting those of humble estate. God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty handed. God's blessings would be to Abraham's offspring forever. In Christ, the promised Seed of Abraham, the nations would be blessed because of God's love for the world through Christ, the Savior (St. John 3:16).

In **The Visitation**, we see God continue to deliver His promises that the Savior would come to do the work of Redemption and Salvation as God promised in the Garden of Eden after the fall into sin. The first promise of the Savior (Genesis 3:15) is seeing fulfillment as the announcement of The Savior's coming has been made to Mary and as Elizabeth knows also from her response and greeting to Mary upon her arrival.

Mary's visit to her relative, Elizabeth, demonstrates the faith of the Old Testament people in waiting for the promised Savior. Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary, along with many others, believed in the promise of a Savior throughout the Sacred Scriptures. They knew Israel's history and God's long-suffering patience and mercy as the time for the Promised Messiah drew near. None of them knew the future, yet by God's grace through His messengers (the angel's announcements) and through His Divine Revelation in the Sacred text of Holy Scripture, they recognized the time and place that God would bring the promise to fulfillment (Galatians 4:4-5).

Through God's Word, the Sacred Scriptures, God has revealed to us that the long promised Savior has come and has accomplished the work of Redemption on the cross and in the Resurrection, God the Father accepted His sacrifice for our sins, for the sins of the world, once and for all. We are enabled to recognize what God did in the lives of these faithful believers as we remember The Visitation through God's Word which shows how God intervened in their lives to bring about His promises in Christ. God intervenes in our lives as well, as the experiences of Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary are related to us in Scripture so that we see how God fulfills His promises. In Christ, God has kept His promise to us to give us forgiveness, life and salvation through the life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

The Visitation continues to be an important reminder for us of the presence of Christ made clear in the response of Elizabeth's child (John) within her womb. Even at this early stage of the work of Christ, the response of John to the presence of the Savior is one of praise and worship. St. John 1:1-3 teaches that Jesus is the Word who was always present with God the Father who is God from before the foundation of the world. Then St. John 1:14 tells us the "Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." The presence of God in the person of Jesus brings great blessings even as John acknowledged in his young life within the womb. Jesus, God in human flesh, brings forgiveness, life and salvation by His work on the cross and in His victorious resurrection from the dead. In Jesus, new life is begun, given and bestowed by God's Grace through the merits of Christ the promised Savior. The hymn writer praises The Father Son and Holy Spirit for the gifts of grace to us through Christ our Savior as he writes:

*Praise, all you people, the name so holy
Of Him who does such wondrous things!
All that has being, to praise Him solely,
With happy heart its amen sings.
Children of God, with angel host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Alleluia, alleluia!*

LSB 797 stanza 5 "Praise The Almighty"

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen
In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt