



Daily Reflections

May 31, 2019

Scripture

Luke 1: 39-56

Mary set out

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."

And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever."
Mary remained with her about three months
and then returned to her home.

Our Scripture Reflection

After receiving the astonishing news that she would conceive and bear the Savior of the world, Mary makes a speedy trek through the challenging hill country of Judea so that she might witness to God's blessings to her. And when she arrives at her cousin's home, she bursts out in a spontaneous prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Please note: The exclusive focus of Mary's prayer is God, not herself. She is the personification of humility.

Food for your Journey

It's a scene that happens in the early months of pregnancy, in many an obstetrician's office across this great land. An expectant mother and father are ushered into an examining room. The mother-to-be lies on her back, on a vinyl-covered table topped by a sheet of crackly white paper. The nurse asks her to pull up the lower portion of her blouse, exposing her swelling abdomen. Taking a plastic squeeze-bottle, the nurse spreads a thin film of clear, conducting jelly on the expectant mother's skin and takes up a device that resembles an oversized electric razor. It's tethered by a thick wire to a

large, electronic console on wheels. Slowly the nurse slides the handheld device over the expectant mother's abdomen. It emits a soft, buzzing noise. Off to one corner of the room sits the a medical technician, peering intently into a computer screen. "Aha!" he exclaims, swiveling the screen around so the mother- and father-to-be can see it. "Look there!" The parents look — and there, almost lost in the grainy, low-resolution image, is a tiny, beating heart. They squint, and look some more: a scrawny leg becomes visible to their eyes, then an arm. A coil of umbilical cord connects to what must be the belly. The head — chin bent downward to the chest — seems impossibly large. It's a modern miracle: the ultrasound scan of a fetus in utero. Nowadays, it's the first vision most parents have of their child. That grainy, indistinct ultrasound image — thoughtfully given to them on a disk by the medical office staff — is likely to appear on social media. Ultrasound wasn't available, of course, to Mary and Elizabeth, those two expectant mothers in the first chapter of Luke. When Mary, cheeks flushed with pregnancy (and with the residual awe of having recently met an angel), comes up to her cousin Elizabeth, both women rely on the timeless technique of a hand on the belly to sense the reality of the child within. Elizabeth doesn't need the touch of a hand any longer, for the moment she beholds her cousin walking toward her, "the child leaps in her womb" (v. 41). Elizabeth's son — the child who will one day become John the Baptist — has, in some mysterious way, come to recognize his own cousin: Jesus Christ, Savior of the world. Somehow, with a mother's intuition, Elizabeth and Mary can each see the promise, growing within them. Through tears of joy they gaze into each other's eyes. Without exchanging a word, each one knows the other is deeply blessed.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, In a world where arrogance, false pride and self-absorption are so often the focus, I pray for the Grace of humility. May I never miss an opportunity to acknowledge and witness to Your goodness to me throughout my life. Amen