

Let me try to set a tone here through an un-usual start to a Homily – an antiphon. So, sing with me sisters & brothers the following: **The Lord is close at hand; come let us worship Him.**

From the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm “You are near, O Lord...”

[Ant]

From Amos “Israel, prepare yourself to meet the Lord, for He is coming.”

[Ant]

From Luke 1:68 “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of his servant David.”

[Ant]

And so, with great joy, Elizabeth’s baby (the unborn John the Baptist) ‘sang out with joy’ through dance within his mother’s womb, upon experiencing the presence of God still within the holy vessel that was Mary.

These two women represent the transition we have all been preparing for. Elizabeth, at this point in her life, was a woman of advanced years and infertile. She was a very devote woman and she, as her husband, was what Luke called without blame. This is to say they were good people and in good standing with God. There infertility, as in all such cases, is a medical condition and not a sign of being unworthy or as some sort of punishment for past sins. She represented Israel in her devotion yet less than perfect condition – she represents the Old Testament.

Mary, on the other hand, was a very young woman just starting to come into her own. She has an entire future ahead of her and then in a flash everything changes with a visit from the angel Gabriel – the very same angel that announced to Zachariah that he and Elizabeth will finally have a child. Unlike the old couple, this brave young woman did not question the message. She, with blind faith, accepted what God was asking of her.

One woman represents that past and carries a child that will reach out and herald the future coming of our Lord, Emanuel, God with us. The other holds our future, the world’s very salvation – our salvation. Both women are strong and of great faith. They represent all women throughout the ages that have been the backbone of our lives, our upbringing, our churches, and our faith. Amen to that I say, Amen!

And what of this meeting of two great women? Mary as a young, pregnant teen heads off to go visit her aged cousin and most likely on a mission of duality. To render assistance, but I suspect to also gain comfort and knowledge from a loved one going through the same process not only carrying a child within her but also being a very direct servant of God’s will. One through the miracle of an unlikely conception by natural means and the other through the interactions of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Conception.

Homily for Sunday Mass, December 23, 2018  
Fourth Sunday in Advent – Luke 1:39-45  
----Father Mike Cadotte----

Upon their initial meeting we find the wise older cousin lavishing her younger cousin with praise. No jealousy, no contempt, but pure love and joy that rings out to this very day every time we pray the rosary, “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are you amongst women, and blest be the fruit of your womb, Jesus” (Luke 1:42). And Elizabeth’s baby gets in on the joy by leaping for joy himself as he realizes he just met Jesus – the Lord to whom he will be born to herald. When was the last time any of us leaped for joy over something truly awesome and great? I watched my 3-year-old nephew do just that act yesterday. We seem to temper such joy as we advance in years – such a shame.

And what of these two babies? God brings forth John the Baptist to prepare the world for the Christ – que the sackcloth, locust, honey, and River Jordan. God then enters our world in the flesh through the birth of Mary’s baby, the son of God – God incarnate. If this does not sum up all that Jesus will teach us, I don’t know what does.

Just last week we baptized little baby Theodore. I tell you straight up that I cannot look upon that child without a smile on my face. He is such a good baby and represents, as all babies do, all that is good and right in the world. He represents love. The love of two parents, the love of God in His design of creation, the love that we all share for each other when we can bring down our self-made defensive walls and worldly filters. God as an infant represents pure love, peace, joy, and thus hope for us all. Notice that is also our theme for Advent as well; as we prepare to meet our baby Lord once again and experience those amazing emotions. The same emotions that we be the corner stone of His teachings and His call for us to love each other as we love God and ourselves.

From the Christmas greeting of our Bishop (which is posted to our webpage),

On this Christmas 2018 let us all again open our hearts to the Lord as we do to a baby, let us renew our commitment to serve Christ as we would a baby and allow ourselves to be His people. From the beginning of his life he called us to think, to amend our thinking and indeed develop our faith. In those changes lies his power and ours. In those changes lies our ability to cope and move forward.

And so, may the Holy One from heaven come down like gentle rain; may the earth burst into blossom and bear the tender Savior. (Isaiah 45:8)

Come Lord Jesus! Come!

AMEN