

The Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
St. Luke 1:39-56
July 2nd, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

And Mary Said

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

A week and three months ago we celebrated the Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord. The angel Gabriel was sent to a city of Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin named Mary. He told her that she would give birth to a Son. She was to call His Name + Jesus, which means Savior, for He would great and would be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God would give to Him the throne of His father David. He would rule over the house of Jacob, and of His Kingdom there would be no end. For this reason—that she would give birth to the Savior—the angel Gabriel said that she was both blessed, and would be called blessed.

Having heard this news, she went with haste into the hill country of Judah to her relative Elizabeth, who was also pregnant with a son of promise; she was pregnant with the Forerunner of the Savior of the world, St. John the Baptist. When the greeting of the Virgin Mary reached the ears of Elizabeth the baby in her womb leaped for joy that the Savior of the world had come into their home. Elizabeth herself also cried out with a loud voice that the Virgin Mary was blessed, even as the fruit of her womb was blessed. She was blessed because she believed the things which were told her by the Lord through the angel Gabriel.

The Blessed Virgin Mary also sings out that she is blessed. In fact, all generations would call her blessed. This is why she is referred to as the *Blessed* Virgin Mary, and not simply by her first name. She is referred to as the *Virgin* Mary, to identify her as the one who through immaculate conception gave birth to a Son without having known a man. She was betrothed to a man named Joseph, but he did not know her—have marital relations with her—until after she gave birth to her Son, the Lord + Jesus, the Savior of the world. The Blessed Virgin Mary is blessed because she believed what the angel Gabriel told her, that she would conceive and give birth to a Son, and call His Name + Jesus.

According to our calendar these things took place a week and three months ago. Now, according to the liturgical calendar, we hear these events on the day in the calendar that would be the circumcision and naming of St. John the Baptist. St. Mary's visitation to her relative Elizabeth is highlighted by the Virgin Mary's song of praise known as the Magnificat. This song, which is the chief canticle in the Office of Vespers is the song of the blessed. Those who are blessed are those who believe on the Lord + Jesus, and cling to His works and merits. Those who believe have faith in the Lord + Jesus to rescue them from sin, death, and the power of the devil. We believe that the Lord + Jesus will save us from

our enemies of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, we are also blessed for we have believed the promise of our Lord God which calls us His highly favored ones.

The Magnificat is the song of the humble. It is the song of those who know their unworthiness to receive such good gifts from the Lord God. The Virgin Mary reveals in this song that she was nothing but a handmaiden, a servant. It reveals how far the house of King David had fallen. St. Joseph was a lowly carpenter, and St. Mary was a handmaiden. They did not live in palaces, or among kings and princes. The ancestral line of King David had fallen greatly. The Virgin Mary knows this, she knows her unworthiness. But still her soul can magnify the Lord and her spirit can rejoice in God her Savior, for the Lord God does not count her lowly state against her. He regards her lowly state.

This is why this song of the Magnificat is rightly the song of the humble. For the Lord God loves the humble. He loves those who confess their sin. He loves those who acknowledge their unworthiness to receive His gifts. According to our sinfulness we are all lowly maidservants. We are to be accounted as slaves and servants not children who sit at the table. According to our sinfulness we are worthy to be called sons and daughters; we are not worthy to be accounted as princes and princesses. But in our humility—in our daily repentance and contrition—we are magnified by the Lord. Through repentance of our sins our souls are magnified by the Lord; we are made great in His eyes; we are considered to be highly favored of the Lord.

The Magnificat makes this clear to all those who sing it and consider its words. The proud the Lord scatters in the imagination of their hearts. The mighty He puts down from their thrones. He sends the rich away.

A proud person, by definition according to the Greek word, (ὑπερήφανος), is one who considers himself to be above other people. He has an inflated understanding of his worth and merits. He despises others, and even treats them with contempt. Yet, our society wants to consider “pride” as a good thing; something to be praised and encouraged. In its corruption and evil our society even has a whole month dedicated to pride. The proud the Lord scatters away from Him to live apart from Him in the imagination of their own hearts. He gives them over to their pride to teach them what their pride will get them in the end.

A mighty person, by definition according to the Greek word, (δυνάστης), is a prince or potentate. They are those who rule over other people. Like the proud person they too think of themselves above other people. How could they not when everyone who is subject to them is beneath them? The Lord God puts down the mighty from their thrones. There can be only one throne, and that throne is occupied by the Triune Lord God. He is the only One Who is worthy to sit on a throne. For the Lord + Jesus humbled Himself to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He took upon Himself our flesh, and lived in with parents who were a lowly carpenter and a maidservant, in order that He might fulfill the Law and pay the penalty of our sins by exalting Himself upon the throne of the tree of the holy cross to suffer and die for us. He is worthy to sit on the throne for He became like one of His subjects in order to exalt all of His subjects; those who cling to Him in faith and are called blessed of the heavenly Father.

A rich person, by definition according to the Greek word, (πλουτέω), is a person who has an abundance of possessions. They have a storehouse of resources. These our Lord God sends away hungry. They are sent away hungry, because just like the rich man from the parable a couple of Sundays ago (the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus), they do not share the abundance of their resources. They hoard their possessions to the detriment of their fellow man. The rich man in that parable from the First Sunday after Trinity had all of his good things in abundance all of his life. However, his possessions did not keep him out of the torments of Hell. Like the proud and the mighty, the rich also consider themselves to be above other people.

All three of these groups have made themselves out to be their own gods. They worship themselves. They have no need for another god. They have no need for a Savior. They have no need for the baby in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; no need for the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. This is why the Lord God has cast them away from His presence. They may be blessed with earthly things—praise, fame, possessions—but they lack the truly important spiritual things which bring true blessing.

We who cling in faith the Lord + Jesus and His promises are truly blessed. For although we are unworthy—although we are indeed and truly poor, miserable sinners—our Lord regards our lowliness and calls us blessed. The Blessed Virgin Mary is also blessed. She is called blessed from generation to generation. She is our example. She is the first catechumen; the first to hear the promise of the Lord and believe. We have also heard the promise of our Lord and Savior; we have also believed the word of the angel, the messenger, the preacher, who proclaims to us the promises of the Lord God, and we also, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, will be blessed from generation to generation. Indeed, we will be blessed with eternal life in Heaven. We will live in our Lord's Kingdom forever and ever. There we who are lowly sinners in this life will be highly exalted. There we will never go hungry but will be filled with abundance. There in Heaven we enjoy His mercy forever and ever. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!