

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Mary and Elizabeth Final Days of Advent, December 17-23 Saturday,
December 21, 2013 8:15 AM **Sng 2:8-14; Lk 1:39-45** (Wisdom is a female version
of deity in the Old Testament, and often associated with the Blessed Mother in the New
Testament, and also often associated with the Holy Spirit.)

Today we are reading from the **Song of Songs** and the type of literature this is is a poem; it's actually a love poem. It's a love poem written from the female point of view. This is an expression of what was called "Wisdom." **Wisdom is a female version of deity in the Old Testament**, and often **associated with the Blessed Mother in the New Testament**, and also often **associated with the Holy Spirit**, since you may notice that the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother are often intertwined in the theology, in the piety of the Church. So we have to think about how God is way beyond our categories and concepts. This particular aspect of divinity was not well developed in the Old Testament, and in the New became absorbed by Marian devotion and piety.

In the gospel today we have a story of Mary, the earthly Mary, not the heavenly **Mary**. And she is **on her way in haste because she is pregnant** and as yet she really has no husband. She is betrothed, but she is not married, and that is a very dangerous place to be. So where does she go? She goes **to her cousin, Elizabeth**. Elizabeth knows what it's like to live under the shadow. By being barren all those years **Elizabeth herself talked about the "reproach of men," that suspicion that there must be something morally wrong with her**, spiritually defective for her to be barren all these years. Of course those thoughts to us seem totally bizarre because we know a little bit more, just a little bit more, about life than they did. But what's underlying is not bizarre. **People do judge others, and people do despise others, and often for no reason because they just don't understand.**

So these two women, Mary and Elizabeth, represent all those who are despised because people don't understand, and they call us to attention.