

Sharing Comfort The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Friday, May 31, 2019 Zep 3:14-18a; **Lk 1:39-56** (This is Pentecost before Pentecost, a foreshadowing of the gift that is given to every believer, if only we would accept it.)

So Mary set out in haste. What was the rush? Well **Mary is now pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit, and she has no husband.** And this is in a culture that doesn't appreciate freedom, that stones women for adultery. **So Mary has some problems to deal with.** Well how to deal with them? Well stewing about them is not going to help. **So she goes in haste down to Judea.** She lived in Galilee; she goes down to Judea **to visit Elizabeth, who is a woman of faith.** When you are having problems, you have to visit someone with faith; you need the company of people with faith. To be in the presence of people without faith is analogous to being in hell. So she turns to her cousin Elizabeth.

Now **Elizabeth herself is very familiar with what you call the shadow of disapproval.** For years she was barren, and in those days **that culture regarded barrenness as somehow God's punishment on either the woman or the family for some wrong.** So there is a way in which these sorts of cultures, which are in one way religious, but in another way very irreligious, there is a way in which they are judgmental. And even if they don't carry out punitive acts, **they send out punitive feelings, suspicions.** That's what Elizabeth lived with for many years. Now **Mary is going to her because she knows she is going to be in the same boat,** so to speak.

Indeed if it wasn't for the intervention of the angel who went to Joseph and said, "Do not fear to take Mary as your wife," she would have had a very precarious situation. But again, Mary trusted in "the greatness of the Lord." **She says, "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior," and she needed salvation right there and then.** And the Holy Spirit assured her that it would be forthcoming. **She and Elizabeth were able to share in the comfort of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit.** This is Pentecost before Pentecost, **a foreshadowing of the gift that is given to every believer, if only we would accept it.**