

The Visitation

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,

"Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
And why has this happened to me,
that the mother of my Lord comes to me?
For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting,
the child in my womb leaped for joy.
And blessed is she who believed
that there would be a fulfilment
of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Today is Monday of the Fourth week of Advent with the beautiful liturgy readings from the Song of Solomon and Luke's account of Mary's visit to Elizabeth her kinswoman.



I love the homeliness of the depiction of the Visitation by Claudia Williams. I imagine the oven, though out of view, is probably lit to cook what is being prepared.

Mary's grip on the door handle is firm yet gentle. She is momentarily stopping at the threshold to look at Elizabeth with love and excitement.

Her cheeks look flushed as if she had been hurrying.

This chimed for me with the opening verse of the first reading from the Song of Solomon:

'The voice of my beloved! Look, He comes leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills.' Mary was carrying the beloved and she had journeyed over the hills of Judea to see Elizabeth.

Elizabeth has her back to us. She had kept herself hidden for five months but now Mary's visit has thrown light for her on the mystery she is enwrapped in. There's something freeing for both women in their encounter with one another.

The key on the table is it the key to the door that Mary is standing at?

O key of David come!

O Key of David, and sceptre of the House of Israel

You open and no one can shut; You shut, and no one can open.

Come and lead the captive from prison,

Those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

To whom will I bring light and understanding to today?

Am I available to receive greater freedom today?

Sheila Barrett, DMJ