

The Visitation
Fifth Day of the Novena
May 15, 2020

Today I would like to share with you a few thoughts about one event in the life of our Blessed Mother and what it should mean to us. That event is what we call “The Visitation.” Mary had learned that her cousin Elizabeth was soon to bring forth a child. Even though she herself was pregnant, she hastened to go to Elizabeth to help her. Mary knew the commandment to love others. Now she set out to put this commandment into practice. That is what we, the children of Mary should be doing: imitating our Blessed Mother by reaching out to show our love for others.

During this pandemic we have many ways of showing our love for others, many ways to help others. A woman was worried because she hadn’t heard anything for days from the widow who lived alone in the neighboring apartment. So she said to her son: “Timmy, would you go next door and see how old Mrs. Kirkland is?” A few minutes later, the boy returned. The mother asked, “Is she all right?” The boy said, “She’s fine, except that she’s mad at you.” The mother said, “At me? Whatever for?” The boy replied: “She said it’s none of your business how old she is!” You know, folks, it may not be our business how old someone is, but it certainly is our business about how they are doing! The Lord wants us to make it our business to be concerned about the welfare of the elderly and the sick.

During these times, we can check on our loved ones and neighbors, especially elderly ones and, most especially, those living alone. We can ask them if there is anything we do to help them. Maybe they need someone to shop for them. If someone is living alone we can phone them every so often so that they have someone to talk to. I know an elderly parishioner in Emmitsburg who lives alone and has very little contact with anyone. I phone her every day and give her a “virtual” blessing over the phone. And every time I do, she says the same thing: “Father, you don’t know how much this means to me.” (So, you see, folks! You see? I DO try to practice what I preach!). We can show our love and appreciation and care for medical staffs and first responders by adhering to the rules set down for not spreading the virus. We can wear a mask when in public and washing our hand often. We can express our gratitude to those who put their own health at risk by serving us in places like grocery stores.

There is a legend about Martin of Tours. One cold winter day he was following the Roman Army into a city. There was a beggar at the gates of the city freezing from the cold and asking for alms. Martin had been in the field with the soldiers for weeks.

He had neither money or food. So, he took off the battered old Roman soldier's cloak he had over his shoulders, and with his sword he cut it into two pieces and gave to the beggar. That night Martin had a dream in which he found himself to be an observer of a scene in heaven. He saw Jesus surrounded by a group of angels, and to his surprise the Lord Jesus was wearing the half of a Roman soldier's cloak. One of the angels asked Jesus, "Master where did you get that old dirty and torn half of a Roman soldiers cloak?" Jesus said, "My good servant Martin gave it to me."

In scripture, in what we call "The Last Judgment" scene. Jesus reminds us that He lives and dwells in the person of other people. He says, in effect, "Whatsoever you do to or for others, you do to or for Me." Mother Teresa of Calcutta once spoke of a young Australian girl who joined her order. On the first day, she was sent to the home for the dying. When she came back home she seemed too be so happy. Mother Teresa asked why she was so happy. The girl said, "Mother, I held Christ in my arms for three hours."

That young lady understood what Jesus was talking about. As we end our novena today, let us promise Jesus that we will always try to reach out to those who need help, especially during this pandemic.

O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE.