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Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
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VATICAN - AVE MARIA Rev Luciano Alimandi - "Our Lady and the Visitation"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - One of the outstanding events in the life of Jesus and Mary is undoubtedly the one narrated by Luke in the chapters dedicated to the childhood of Jesus: the Visitation (cfr. Lk 1, 39-56). It is moving to contemplate the journey undertaken by Blessed Virgin Mary to visit Elizabeth, Mary who carried the infant Jesus "under her heart", to say it with a famous German Advent hymn.
That journey became memorable for Christian communities, for the Church, in the early days and down through the centuries. Contemplating the Visitation we discover all the many visitations she has made to carry the Presence of Christ to everyone as on her way she turns all towards the good, the Supreme Good,.
How could John the Baptist become the Precursor without that Visitation? Christ, carried by Mary, visited and sanctified His cousin. Our Lady, like the Monstrance, does not keep for herself the splendour of the Truth and the Love of the Saviour, on the contrary she shows it, she gives it as only a Mother can. Those two mothers, Mary and Elizabeth, so similar and yet so different from one another, with their encounter brought about the encounter of their sons. In that explosion of joy, wrapped in Mystery, Elizabeth cried "how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me"! (Lk 1, 43)
"The Mother of my Lord": what an exceptional title the Holy Spirit put on the lips of Elisabeth! There is no competition between Mother and Son. Elisabeth understands him so well that she praises the Son together with the Mother.
Our Lady of the Visitation is the Mother of Divine Mercy: mercy which she more than anyone else experienced. Yes, wherever she goes, whoever she visits, Mary carries with her the ineffable gift of God's unconditioned Love: Love not conditioned or lessened by our sins because God "makes his sun rise over the bad and the good" (Mt 5, 45).
We can say that the "womb" - the physical womb of our own mother and the immaculate womb of Mary and the Church -, are places of mercy par excellence, where we have the vital experience of the deepest and most personal caring; here we are safe we are protected, "tranquil and serene like weaned infants" (Ps 131, 2); nothing troubles us because we are totally immersed in life.
The Gospel command to "become like children" (Mt 18,3), a compulsory path for our conversion to God, must pass through Mary and the Church: the only womb which protects us and enables us to experience the saving encounter with the Lord Jesus. This Woman, who became a womb for the Lord Jesus, by the same Lord was empowered to "visit" and to "welcome" each of us as in the womb. With Elisabeth therefore we repeat gratefully and joyfully: "how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?". (Agenzia Fides 5/7/2006 - righe 34, parole 477)

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