

Mi. 5:1-4;
Ps. 79;
Heb. 10:5-10;
Lk. 1:39-45

DANCE OF JOY



Let us close our eyes and remain quiet for a few moments, trying to picture Mary's arrival in Ein Karem, a small town near Jerusalem, where her relative Elizabeth lived with her husband Zechariah. Mary was pregnant so it probably took her about a week to make the trip on foot (not a

very prudent thing to do!). The last miles were undoubtedly the most tiring because Ein Karem is located in the hill country of Judea. Even the donkey that accompanied Mary was most likely panting with fatigue, laden as he was with gifts for the girl's elderly cousin. We can imagine her looking ahead, hoping each curve in the road would be the last. Yes—finally!—there it was: the town square, filled with children shouting and playing and women bargaining with shopkeepers in the nearby market because times were hard and they wanted the lowest prices possible for fruit and vegetables.... Mary spotted two old men sitting on a bench on the opposite side of the square, surveying the comings and goings and commenting on them as if the whole world were contained in that small space.

Let us zero in on the scene: Mary sees Elizabeth in front of one of the market stalls and raises her arm, calling out to catch her cousin's attention. Both women are pregnant, but Elizabeth is further along so her belly is bigger. Her time for delivery is fast approaching. Mary's pregnancy is not as advanced so the bulge of her womb is still very slight.... The gazes of the two women interlock for an endless moment. Then Elizabeth drops her shopping basket and with a cry runs toward her young relative. Mary, on her part, lets go of the donkey's reins and hastens to meet the older woman. They throw themselves into one another's arms laughing, hugging and kissing each other. Elizabeth's womb leaps as if in a dance of joy. It seems as if the two unborn infants are trying to communicate with each other, dancing with exhilaration....

Yes, the whole world is truly concentrated on that spot at that moment.

Prayer

Lord, each of my days
seems just like the previous one.
I stopped dancing a long time ago.

As far as I can tell, Lord,
one place is just like another.
There doesn't seem to be any place
still able to make me dance with joy.

But I've been told that your Spirit
makes all things new.

I've heard that he makes people dance with joy.

Give me your Spirit, my Lord and Redeemer.

Open my heart to receive him
and allow him to enliven my journey.

Amen.

