



RACE

Along the Paths of the World

**Mary set out
and traveled to the
hill country in haste**
(Lk. 1:39)

I Advent

LET
your heart fly!

II Advent

LISTEN
to his word

III Advent

GIVE
the best
of yourself

IV Advent

RACE
along
the paths
of the world

Perhaps you too have found yourself racing to joyously welcome a special person without thinking about the obstacles in your way. The heart does not stop when faced with possible bottlenecks and steep ascents in the road. Love always forges ahead, even when the result is bloody feet and a sweaty brow.

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, the evangelist Luke recounts the marvelous encounter of two people who personally lived the profound experience of meeting and recognizing themselves in each other.

Mary of Nazareth, a Jewish girl from an insignificant village, was devoted to the Word, heart and soul (cf. Lk. 1:38). She set out for Ein Karem in search of Elizabeth, her relative, the wife of a priest of the Abijah division—a woman completely dedicated to scrutinizing the signs of the times (cf. Lk. 1:43). Mary and Elizabeth came from two different worlds but although separated by great distance geographically, they were united in their passionate search for the God of the promise and of history. They were permeated by the voice of the Spirit, who enveloped them and made his presence felt in their intense *shalom* (salute of peace), in the warm hug they gave each other, in the profound gaze they exchanged, in their mutual self-giving.

When they came face to face, each received a little piece of heaven, a luminous fragment of her own identity, a blessing, a magnificat. They were two women destined for the future, women who knew how to generate life, women in exodus, capable of leaving behind their own safety so as to see in the lives of others the salvific meaning of events.

How true it is that in order to perceive the world objectively, we need the point of view of the person traveling beside us. So what are you waiting for? Race along the paths of the world as a witness to Love. Run! Never stop! Don't look behind you! And as you race ahead, don't forget to welcome the gift that others have prepared for you.... Their faces will reveal to you what you still don't know about yourself and that will urge you on toward the light.

Francesca Pratillo, fsp

Echoes of the Psalms

*I run the way of your commandments,
for you have given me freedom of heart.
Guide me in the way of your commandments,
for my delight is there.*

(cf. Psalm 119:32-35)