

## **SCC REFLECTION: CHRISTMAS Year C. Lk 2. Night and Dawn Masses Fr Donal McIlraith**

**TEXT. Lk 2:1-20. The Visitation.**

### **Christmas Luke Texts. Lk 2:1-20**

#### **Luke.2**

[1] In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled.

[2] This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'i-us was governor of Syria.

[3] And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city.

[4] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

[5] to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

[6] And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered.

[7] And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

[8] And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

[9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

[10] And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people;

[11] for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

[12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

[13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

[15] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

[16] And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

[17] And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child;

[18] and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

[19] But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.

[20] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard

and seen, as it had been told them.

## **Reflection.**

1. Up to now our Advent scripture journey has focused on John the Baptist. As we draw closer to Christmas, the Church puts the figure of Mary before us. John was the voice in the wilderness that pointed out Jesus but it was Mary who actually gave us Jesus. In today's Gospel, we see Mary at work as a missionary, almost unconsciously bringing Jesus to people. The angel Gabriel had told her that her elderly cousin Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant, and Mary sets off in haste to visit and help her cousin, "in haste" means no time wasted. It shows she believed Gabriel.
2. Mary's journey was about 100 miles (140 kilometres?) and would take about 4 days on foot. Today the place of the visitation is considered to be Ain Karim about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. When Mary enters the house and greets Elizabeth strange and wonderful things happen.
3. In the annunciation to Zechariah back in Lk 1:15, Gabriel had announced the birth of John and said, "He will be great and... will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb." This means that John was conceived with original sin like the rest of us but was sanctified, without sin, when born. This is the first effect of Mary's visit. "The babe leaped in her womb." Elizabeth too was filled with the Holy Spirit and declared both Mary and Jesus blessed- the phrase we use in the Hail Mary. The Spirit comes from Jesus in Mary's womb.
4. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth expresses her amazement that Mary should visit her and identifies Mary, not only as the mother of the Messiah but the very mother of God, "my Lord." Back in 2 Sam 6:2-11, the ark visited and stayed at the house of Obed Edom for three months and some think there is an allusion to this in this passage. Mary is like the Ark of the Covenant.
5. John, the prophet, is full of joy because his Lord, Jesus, has visited him. He expresses this joy and shows that he is indeed

full of the Holy Spirit by jumping in the womb. How precious children in the womb are. Elizabeth declares that Mary is a beatitude (blessed is she) because of her faith.

6. The better we understand this passage, the better we can pray the second joyful mystery of the Rosary.