

## December 21

**Priest:** In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." (Lk 1:39- 45)

### Reflection

**Lector:** Mary and Elizabeth were deeply rooted in faith and love of God, and both responded wholeheartedly to God's plans. They are a sublime sign of hope for the whole human race. Families all over the world look to their example as they await the blessing of a new baby in their own homes. May they build a foundation of love for the child to come and correspond with joy to God's plans. Mary, the Morning Star, heralds the coming of her Son; Elizabeth is the first to understand. Her own son leaps for joy in her womb, and the two women embrace because God is in their midst.

### Antiphon

**Priest:** O radiant dawn, splendor of eternal light and bright sun of justice, come now and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. (cf. Zech 3:8; 6:12; Is 9:2; 60:1-3; Wis 7:26; Lk 1:78; Heb 1:3)

### Magnificat

**All:** My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever. (Lk 1:46-55)

## Intercessions

**Priest:** Ruler of Jacob's house, teach us to guard what is good in ourselves,

**All:** that we may cherish all that you have given to us, for you are our salvation.

**Priest:** God of power and might, help us to be patient and steady our hearts, because the coming of the Lord is at hand;

**All:** drop down dew from above and let the clouds rain down the just one.

**Priest:** Lord, the one foretold by the prophets,

**All:** be mindful of your promises to Abraham and his children.

**Priest:** Messiah, king of glory, you are the fulfillment of the Scriptures,

**All:** grant that all people may recognize you as their Savior and Lord.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Priest:** Christ goes before us. He is the Lamb without sin who will open to us the gates of heaven. He is the high priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. He is the king of justice and his reign is eternal.

You who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end.

**All:** Amen.

*The final Marian hymn on page 8.*