

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS – A SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNICATION
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 19 DECEMBER 2021



A PARISH SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNICATION IN 2022

Over the next year, I invite our parish community to explore how we share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and to discern where the Holy Spirit is prompting us in new ways to share the Good News.

Looking online to discover who already had developed resources, the Salesians generally, and in the church in Papua New Guinea in particular, already have prepared such programmes.

Next year, we give particular attention to how Jesus shared the Good News. We will see how the early Christians shared the Good News.

We will explore Church initiatives across the world cultures, noting how they share the Good News in the modern era.

We will reflect on the giftedness of people within the parish family.

Thank you to Debbie, our Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson for including this item at our next meeting in February.

MARY AND ELIZABETH

In today's Gospel, let us reflect on the ways in which Mary and Elizabeth shared the Good News with each other.

Elizabeth had been in seclusion in the first five months of her pregnancy. In the sixth month, we hear that

'the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.'

*The virgin's name was Mary.
And he came to her and said,
'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.'*

It is revealed to Mary that

*'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
therefore the child to be born will be holy;
he will be called Son of God.
And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son;
and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.
For nothing will be impossible with God.'*

Mary's response has inspired so many people ever since.
She humbly said

*'Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.'*

We discover the courage of Mary who set out with haste

- to share her own sacred story,
- to draw on her kinswoman Elizabeth's experience and advice,
- and to assist Elizabeth in her needs.

We learn from Mary about trusting in God and responding quickly.
It was not easy at the time for a woman to cover such a distance alone.
Mary did not search for an excuse to delay, she did not procrastinate.
This Gospel passage does not explain the details about how she travelled.
It concentrates on the urgency, the haste.

Let us share the Good News of today's Gospel passage

GOSPEL OF LUKE 1:39-44

*'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 leapt 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 leapt for joy.
And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment
of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'*

Mary responds by praising God.

In her prayer of praise, Mary begins by proclaiming

*'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.'*

Mary and Elizabeth made time to share their 'sacred mission'.

Mary stayed three months with her kinswoman, before she returned home.

Imagine

- the faith sharing in those three months,
- their pondering God's plan
- their sense of awe
- their maternal intuition
- their praising God
- their giving thanks to God
- the practical ways of supporting each other,
with Elizabeth, later in her pregnancy
and Mary, early in pregnancy.

May we be inspired continually by God
this Christmas and in the Year of 2022
as we share the Good News of God's love.

May Christmas be a time of spiritual fulfilment in each of us.
A recognition of the Light of God shining upon the darkness within us.
This Christmas, may the Holy Spirit fulfill in us
what God has shared with us
directly and indirectly through others.
May we leap for joy this Christmas.
May we recognize the love of Jesus in our neighbour.

As we gaze upon the Christmas Crib,
and see the figure of Jesus so small and vulnerable as a new-born baby,
we gain insight

- into the humbleness of God who came among us.
- the trust of God in Mary and Joseph to keep the baby Jesus safe.

God sets us the example of humility.
May we humbly share the Good News of Jesus this Christmas.
May our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour,
as we reflect on our own lowliness.

We say to our loving God today,
and to our loving God during our final preparations for Christmas,
the words of Mary

*'Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.'*

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121921.cfm>



Visitation of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth by Mariotto Albertinelli - 1503