

Prayer Service for Mother's Day

LEADER: On this holy Mothers' Day, let us rejoice and proclaim the goodness of all mothers who continually manifest their love for their children in all the tasks of daily life. Let us remember especially those mothers of Nigeria, of Syria, and other mothers who face threats to their lives and to their integrity as women in order to accomplish these same daily tasks. Let us be in solidarity with them on this day.



“Let us rejoice in Mary, our mother and sister, and know her presence at our side as she once stood at the side of her son, Jesus. May she be with all mothers who are trying to nurture their children in difficult situations and to protect these children from violence. With the strength of Mary, may all mothers and all those who nurture others speak out so all children may grow up in peace.

READER 1: The mission of Mary ... is to undo the despairing lie we believe about ourselves. The mission of Mary is to show the poor, the homeless, the rejected and all other oppressed people, through faith, their own special beauty and power in the place where they stand, at the foot of the cross...”¹

READER 2: “As a refugee Mary had learned a lot about hospitality. She knew how to receive people in such a way that they could receive themselves. She knew about cultureshock and the way one could get through it.”²

READER 3: “And I thought of Mary who did not assume the worst even when the evidence gave her every reason to do so. This expecting mother. Expecting abundance even when her people were being impoverished by a colonial exploiter. Expecting light even in the epoch of confusion and darkness. Expecting the Messiah and his kingdom even when her people were most afflicted and in bondage.”³

READER 3: “At the foot of the cross, Mary was standing up against all that brings down the poor. She stood on Calvary’s hill as a witness. She stood in protest.”⁴



PRAYER SERVICE

THE VISITATION

READER 4: A Reading from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:39-56) [*Read the scripture passage aloud. When the reading is finished, pause for silent reflection. Then read the passage below written from Mary's perspective.*]

REFLECTION:

READER 5: “Tomorrow I set out through the hill country to be with Elizabeth. Our ages have not separated us for she has been my confidante, my mentor, my friend. Her faithfulness and trust in Yahweh have now been blessed. How my joy is increased that Elizabeth and I carry life within us and are able to praise God together! She shares my joy, but she will also understand my confusion and awe, as well as my questioning.

What can all of this mean? What lies before us? What will be asked of the children within our wombs? Elizabeth must be feeling some of the same emotions, doubts, fears. I can hardly wait to embrace her. The journey took longer than I expected. How often I had run across the fields and skipped along the hillside! This time my steps were slower. I needed to stop and rest, marking each mile and bend in the road. The child within me kicked and stirred for want of rest. As I caught sight of the house, my excitement increased.

How radiant Elizabeth looked, how filled with joy! Her advanced years laughed at the wonder and marvels God wrought in her life. As we embraced each other, the babies within us danced, and the presence of the Most High overshadowed us, and God's promise was fulfilled. Today I return to Nazareth. My time here has come to an end and I must be about the Lord's work. It was good for me to have been here. Elizabeth needed help, my companionship, and I needed to experience again her care, her love, her friendship, her wisdom. We are one now. We take delight in the trust Yahweh has placed in us. As she nears the time of her delivery, I anticipate the birth of my own child and wonder about the destiny of each child. Her trust gives me strength; her faithfulness, courage. I am at peace. I shall miss her.⁵

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. In what ways has Mary been a model of inspiration or courage in your life?
2. Who are the women in our world today who need our prayer and support as they journey through unimagined trials?

CLOSING PRAYER: “Mary, Elizabeth offered you her love and support as you took on your vocation of motherhood. Help us to be like Elizabeth, to recognize the son of God in others, to offer them love and support in all ways. We pray for all mothers, especially those in need who live daily with the threat of violence. Grant us the voice to speak out for them as well as to hold them near our hearts. In Christ's name, we pray.” Amen.

[This prayer service was prepared by Sister Janet Cashman, S.C.L.]

1 Daino, Peter, SM. Sabat Mater. New York: Alba House, 1988, p. 12.

2 Ibid. p. 36.

3 Ibid. p. 66.

4 Ibid. p. 70.

5 Ibid p.12

