

Weekly Gospel Readings

The 3rd Sunday of Kiahk

Mary Visits Elizabeth

On this Sunday (12/24/23), the Third Sunday of the blessed month of Kiahk, the Church reads [Luke 1:39-56](#). In this reading, St. Mary visits St. Elizabeth after receiving the news that they are pregnant with the Son of God and the one who will prepare the way for Him. From this encounter, we see many virtues of St. Mary—her humility, obedience, and eagerness to minister to others.

In this commentary, we will focus on the latter virtue—St. Mary’s eagerness to serve. It is written that after Mary received the news of the incarnation, she immediately “arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah” ([Luke 1:39](#)) to minister to Elizabeth. As a woman out of wedlock, all logic would indicate that she should remain at home in hiding until giving birth to Christ. Yet rather than focusing on herself and her public image, St. Mary quickly goes out to take care of and learn from her elder cousin. Instead of basking in the glory of being the Mother of Christ, St. Mary puts her ego aside and remains true to her foundation of ministering to those around her.

This virtue of being eager to serve others is described by Christ later in the Gospel of Luke through the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this parable, Jesus tells a story about a man who is attacked by robbers, beaten, and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest and a Levite, pass by without helping. However, a Samaritan, a member of a group traditionally considered enemies by the Jews, stops to aid the wounded man. The Samaritan tends to his wounds, takes him to an inn, and pays for his care. The Samaritan does not hesitate to serve the man in need, despite the historical animosity between the Jews and Samaritans. As St. Ambrose explains, “The good Samaritan did not forsake the wounded man between life and death; because he saw in him a faint breath of life and hoped for healing him.”

As Origen the Scholar explains, “The privileged go forth to the less privileged.” We are privileged with the gift of the Holy Spirit that motivates us and inspires us to minister. When we serve others, we must do so hastily, not thinking about the potential inconveniences of this service. If we serve with an open and sincere heart, both those who are being served and the servant will benefit. When Judgement Day comes, let us strive to have the Lord look at us with a loving heart and say, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” ([Matthew 25:35-36](#)).

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version
- Catena Bible Commentaries
- Commentaries on The Gospel According to St. Luke by Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty