

Blessed Are you Among Women

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In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.
When David the prophet wanted to bring up the Ark of God, in the Old Testament (2 Sam 6), an incident occurred to one of his forces, whose name was Uzzah. Uzzah saw that the carriage that was carrying the Ark of God had started to lean; he was troubled and laid his hands on the Ark of God and took hold of it. God struck him down and he died ("Because he had intruded upon an office which did not pertain to him" - Saint John Chrysostom).

David was afraid, as well as all the people, and did not complete the journey; to move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David. The Ark of the LORD was kept in the house of one of the people called Obed-Edom. The Bible tells us that: "The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months." (2 Sam. 6:11). The same period of time that Our Lady, the Virgin Saint Mary the new Ark of God; remained with Elizabeth.

The Bible says that David heard that: "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." Great blessing came upon the house because of the Ark of God. This is the Old Testament.

In the Gospel that we heard today, on the third Sunday of Kiahk, look at the blessing that came upon the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth because of the Virgin Saint Mary.

Something that cannot be described; Elizabeth said as soon as she heard the voice of Saint Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luk 1:42). So the voice of Saint Mary entered her ear when she said "Peace to you." The voice of peace.

Of course, this isn't just a greeting. She gave her peace from the treasure that she was carrying, from Lord Christ, as written: "He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. (Eph. 2: 17), and "And having made peace through the blood of His cross and reconciled all things to Himself, whether things on Earth or things in Heaven." (Col 1:20)

That's why I'm saying that this meeting and what Saint Mary gave to Elizabeth is not a greeting in the way that people greet one another. It is a true gift, Elizabeth felt it. She said: When I heard this voice of peace in my ear, a major change happened even the child in the womb felt it.

I want to say that the meeting of saints, their visitation to each other and their meeting together happens with the presence of Lord Christ and His descent. And when this peace descends, in the heart before dwelling in the house, the person feels it in a true way. They say "I have peace in my heart.", "I felt a divine peace."

This transcendent peace can cover all disasters, barriers, afflictions, diseases, harassments and adversities. This peace is so great. In reality, it is Lord Christ's personal, distinct peace. When He said "My own peace, which I received from My Father, I leave with you." (John 14:27)

This great gift: sadly, we are strangers to it. It's extremely regrettable that we are not enjoying this complete peace which St. Paul writes about: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts." (Philippians 4:7). Something that transcends the mind! When a person discovers it, their spirit dwells in peace.

Just considering a single day, just see how many times a person may become anxious or disturbed and get upset. How many times in a day? So, so many. Look at our homes and how much this kind of peace dwells in them. There is a kind of disturbance. There is turmoil. There is a loss of this peace. I wish Christ would bless us with it. In our homes, in our dealings, in our meetings, and in our visitations. When we visit each other, you find a kind of commotion.

It goes without saying, that Our Lady the Virgin, carrying Lord Christ, she gives peace from that which she had. And when our Lord sent the pure apostles to the world, He told them "Whatever house you enter give them of this peace. And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it." (Luke 10:6), "And when that peace descends, I will keep it in that house. It is appropriate for you to live there. But if this peace is absent, it is not appropriate for you to live there".

We say that our houses are houses of prayer. Of Course, they are houses of prayer. I have seen many families, when they meet together, their meeting is beautiful. 30, 40, 50 people meeting in the house, praying the psalms and singing praises. Of course, the impression in people's minds is that these spiritual people are boring and that they are depressed and you see them frowning. This view is wrong.

Christians are always happy. They discovered a peace that is absent from the world. So their souls are in peace. But the souls who did not receive this peace are restless, tired. Ask of Lord Christ to place this peace in us. Ask Him often. Say: "Epouro enteti hirini moynan entek hirini" "Oh King of Peace, Grant us Your Peace." We say it often.

Discovering this peace is the opening of the heart to the words of Christ. When the apostles entered a houses, they said "Peace" to the inhabitants of this house. When the heart is opened, accepting the Gospel, you find that peace is present. And you find that joy is present and in the presence of peace and joy and praise, even babies in their mother's womb feel it. Of course, modern science tells expecting mothers, to listen to music; since music is good for the baby. Or to keep the atmosphere surrounding them joyous and happy. This is for the health of the baby.

Let us keep the environment around us, as children of God, healthy for our children. If, the house has fighting all the time, how will the children turn out to be healthy? In a house that is full of peace, they have to turn out healthy. The house that has praise, and thanksgiving, and joy, the children naturally soak that up.

We just aren't aware that all of the deeds and all of the actions in our house; what they call "daily life", leaves a mark on the souls of the kids, even the babies in their mothers' wombs.

Live in peace. "The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom16:20). In the Old Testament, Isaiah the prophet prophesied and said inspired by God: "I will extend peace to her like a river..." (Isaiah 66:12) Like a running river! This peace that God gives is like an abundant river!

But the one who is lacking peace is disturbed by the smallest matter in the world. Any inconvenient situation will make them depressed. Live in peace.

Of course, the meeting of saints our Lady, the Virgin and Elizabeth, this is the perfect model; the great icon of meetings of saints. It is all praise, thanksgiving, and prayer. It is all joy.

We are for each other. Truly. When we get together in spiritual love, we become very strong. "If you bite and devour each other, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Gal. 5:15).

The environment which has peace has oneness of spirit. People are gathered together, they love each other. In harmony, like a harp. The Spirit of God is in them; one Spirit. And in communion, partake of one body. And so, joy and oneness and praise and prayer are characteristics of Christians, it is their life.

St. Mary, when she stood before Elizabeth was only 15 years old; just a young girl. But Elizabeth was old, it is said that she was over 80. The wife of an old priest who had a reputation and pious. Elizabeth stood humbled before St. Mary. She said "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk. 1: 41) I am not worthy.

Our Lady, The Virgin opened her mouth and recited her beautiful praise: "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." (Lk. 1:46) Look at the saints when they open their mouths like this. Words that are Godly, spiritual, that are good and comforting.

Look at them when they are together and look at us when we get together. What our words look like? Getting together they say that they are "having a party." Getting together, joking around, speaking unfitting words that are unbecoming, getting drunk. Are these Christians or what? I don't think they are Christians.

When the saints get together, there is something common; the connection to Christ; the strong relationship. So, their comfort is to build each other up with love. But when we get together like the dwellers of the world, what do you expect the outcome to be? What is gained from it? And then we complain that the kids are not behaving. Well, the kids are part of us. What else will the kids take after?

"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. His mercy is on those

who fear him, from generation to generation." (Lk. 1:47-50). Ask Saint Mary, what great things has He done for you? You were an orphan at a young age, and you served in the temple as if you didn't have a family, and now nobody knows the circumstances surrounding you or what people will say about you. But she is looking to Him a great deal and knows Him, "The Mighty One has done great things for me."

Can you thank God like the Virgin Mary? Can you remember God's works with you? Or are we filled with discontent, complaining and worry? Uttering "Our circumstances are bad; our days are difficult." We have become very distant from God.

Come close and see and learn. Always we thank the Lord God for His Goodness! The matters that are hidden which He did for me that aren't known to people is something that cannot be described.

"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour."
Now, here you are, entering the church. And God has done with all of us blessings and wonders. He gives us His body for communion. So, you are carrying Christ. In a kind of a way. Saint Mary is carrying Christ, so she can give. So, when you take communion and partake of Christ, and walk out of the church, can't you give? From what you received in fullness? From the comfort which you received? Shouldn't you give? When you enter a house and you are carrying Christ, shouldn't you give them the peace of Christ? You must.

Once, someone complained to me, a good, godly person, he said: "I fear the day that my wife goes to church, she comes back angered, she comes back and fights." I wondered "that's strange. How!?" Because the effort that one sometimes makes at church, to stand for 5 or 6 hours. This effort affects the body and the emotions. So, some will come out of church and their energy has run out, and they are tired. This means that they did not receive comfort. The whole action was physical. Standing for 4 or 5 hours, singing or something, and following along with concentration. This weight fell on to the body, so one's nerves are exhausted and they leave the church tired.

Unlike someone who is in the church for 7, 8, even 10 hours, and is full of comfort. They walk out of the church, not wanting to leave, and they leave the church full of peace, full of comfort, you should leave the church satisfied, happy, comforted. Having found peace, your face illuminated. This is the true union with the Lord God, and true closeness to the Lord God, and true communication with the Lord. You leave having received something.

But if a person, is not comforted inside the church, what is in the world will comfort them? That's why I'm saying, please concentrate deeply on the blessing you're receiving. The comfort that we receive from our presence with God, and we leave very, very happy, and very comforted, and finding a great capacity of joy and comfort.

May Christ our Lord return these days with the fullness of grace.

Glory be to God, forever, Amen

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**THIRD
SUNDAY
OF KIAHK**

Fr. Luke

Sidarous

