

July 2

FOR THE VISITATION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

141.1 First Point

Let us admire the promptness with which the Most Blessed Virgin went to visit her cousin Saint Elizabeth as soon as she learned the will of God. She undertook this journey without delay in spite of the difficulties of the road, which was full of mountains.⁶⁷³ She had nothing in view except to do what God desired of her, and this was what she had most at heart. Her promptness drew down God's blessings on her visit and was a cause of the great things which God performed through her.

We should consider ourselves blessed when we are visited by God through his inspirations. Let us be faithful to them, because to this fidelity God usually attaches a great number of graces. He does this only in so far as persons do what he shows he wants us to do when he gives us his inspirations. God sends us his holy inspirations only to make us prompt to put them into practice with the intent to accomplish his holy will exactly.

141.2 Second Point

God urged the Most Blessed Virgin to go to visit Saint Elizabeth because he wished to sanctify John the Baptist by the presence of Jesus Christ, his Son, and to deliver him from original sin while he was still in the womb of Saint Elizabeth, his mother.

As Saint John the Baptist was destined to be the precursor of Jesus, it was quite fitting that he be sanctified in advance by a very special grace of Jesus Christ, who was necessarily to be the Savior of all,⁶⁷⁴ and whose coming John was to proclaim.

It was for this same reason that God inspired the Most Blessed Virgin, as soon as she had conceived, to go without delay to visit her cousin, so that Jesus Christ might make known his coming to Saint John and thus perform for his precursor his first miracle while still enclosed in Mary's womb.

God also wanted Saint John to pay homage to Jesus by leaping for joy⁶⁷⁵ at the approach of his Savior.

Let us beg Jesus to be willing to visit us and to perform some miracle of grace in our favor by encouraging us to do some important violence to ourselves in order to practice some virtue for which we experience much repugnance.

141.3 Third Point

In this visit God was not content to confer an extraordinary grace on Saint John, thanks to the presence of Jesus, his only Son. He also wished by means of the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin to give himself to Saint Elizabeth in such a way that she also would be at once filled with the Holy Spirit⁶⁷⁶ and know that Mary was the Mother of God.⁶⁷⁷ This made Saint Elizabeth realize how great a happiness she enjoyed and how much she had reason to be surprised that the Mother of her Lord had come to visit her.⁶⁷⁸

Admire how advantageous this visit of the Most Blessed Virgin was to Saint John and to Saint Elizabeth. Since you have the honor of being visited by God every day in prayer and often by Jesus in Holy Communion, make sure that their visits to you may not be without effect, but that both may procure for you abundant grace which will help you advance in virtue every day, and tend in some particular way toward perfection. Do not fail to examine from time to time what benefit you have derived from these visits.

This feast was originally and appropriately part of the Advent period and seems, by being moved to May 31 (in the present calendar of the Church), to have been placed in relationship with the celebration of the birth of Saint John the Baptist on June 24. The Franciscans apparently began observing the feast in the thirteenth century; it was only about a hundred years later that it became part of the liturgy of the universal Church. Saint Francis de Sales wanted his Order of the Visitation to take Our Lady's visit to her cousin as the model for their service to the poor in their homes, but he was ahead of his times and the Church insisted that his nuns stay cloistered. De La Salle's emphasis on fidelity to the inspirations of God, which he stresses in this meditation, is a salient component of his spirituality.

673 Lk 1:39-40
674 1 Tim 4:10
675 Lk 1:44
676 Lk 1:41
677 Lk 1:42

678 Lk 1:43