

## Weekly Gospel Readings

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Kiahk

## Mary Visits Elizabeth

*“...and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.” [\(Luke 1:40-41\)](#)*

On this Third Sunday of the blessed month of Kiahk, the Church reads from [Luke 1:39–56](#). This Gospel recounts the visitation of St. Mary to her cousin St. Elizabeth after both had received the divine news of their miraculous pregnancies, the Incarnation of the Son of God and the one who would prepare His way. From this sacred encounter, the Church highlights many virtues of St. Mary: her humility, obedience, faith, and profound love expressed through service.

In this reflection, we focus especially on St. Mary’s eagerness to serve others.

Immediately after receiving the announcement of the Incarnation, we are told that St. Mary “arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah” [\(Luke 1:39\)](#). The Fathers pause attentively at the word “haste”. St. Ambrose explains that Mary’s urgency is not anxiety or fear, but the natural movement of grace: “She went with haste, for the grace of the Holy Spirit knows no delays.”

By all human reasoning, a young woman found to be pregnant outside of marriage would have every reason to remain hidden, protecting herself from shame, accusation, and danger. Yet St. Mary does not retreat inward. Instead, she hastens outward toward service.

Yet rather than focusing on her own circumstances or public image, she goes to care for and learn from her elder cousin. St. Cyril of Alexandria emphasizes that Mary’s greatness is revealed precisely here, not in claiming honor, but in love expressed through action: “She bears Christ within her and hastens to share the joy, not seeking honor for herself, but proclaiming the mystery through love.”

She does not cling to the glory of being the Mother of God, but lives out that calling through humility and ministry. In this way, St. Mary becomes the living icon of the Incarnation itself: God’s grace moving outward for the life of others.

This same virtue of eager and selfless service is later illustrated by Christ Himself in the Gospel of Luke through the parable of the Good Samaritan [\(Luke 10:30–37\)](#). A man is assaulted, beaten, and left half-dead by the roadside. A priest and a Levite, figures expected to help, pass by without compassion. Yet a Samaritan, a member of a people despised by the Jews, stops to care for the wounded man. St. Ambrose reflects on this scene with striking tenderness: “He did not abandon him half-dead, because he saw in him some signs of life, and hoped for his recovery.” The Samaritan does not calculate inconvenience, risk, or social boundaries. He responds immediately to suffering, just as St. Mary responded immediately to the needs of Elizabeth. In both cases, love recognizes life and moves toward it.

Origen the Scholar, reflecting on Mary’s visitation, notes that divine grace never turns inward selfishly. Rather, it presses the believer toward service. Commenting on (Luke 1:39), he writes: “Mary, having received the Word of God, does not remain idle... the grace given to her urges her to serve... the privileged go forth to the less privileged”.

From this teaching, the Fathers consistently draw the principle that those who are spiritually privileged are sent forth to serve others. As Christians, we are privileged through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that privilege carries responsibility. True ministry is marked by readiness and haste—not hesitation.

As we journey through Kiahk and contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation, let us imitate the haste of St. Mary and the compassion of the Good Samaritan. And when the Day of Judgment comes, may we hear the Lord say to us with love: “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:**

1. Bible, English Standard Version
2. Catena Bible Commentaries
3. Commentaries on The Gospel According to St. Luke by Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty
4. St. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, Book II, §19, NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 10.
5. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke*, Sermon IV, PG 72:525–528.
6. St. Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, Book VII, §79, NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 10.
7. Origen of Alexandria, *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, Homily VII.4, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., *Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 94.