

Called to Serve Moms in Need



Our Blessed Mother models a profound witness to love and life in the Gospel account of the Visitation. Luke's Gospel tells us that, when Mary learns that her cousin Elizabeth is pregnant, she travels to the hill country "*in haste*" (Lk 1:39). Despite being unexpectedly pregnant herself, Mary responds to this news with urgency.

She embarks on a long and perhaps difficult journey to be with her cousin during her time of need, bearing Christ to her as He lay quietly hidden in Mary's womb. And, although Jesus is veiled from view, when Mary first arrives John the Baptist leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb, recognizing the presence of Christ (Lk 1:44). Mary, with Jesus, spends the next three months at Elizabeth's side.

The witness of our Blessed Mother invites us to become more aware of the needs of pregnant and parenting moms in our own parishes and communities. A woman with an unexpected pregnancy may have any number of fears and challenges: facing judgment from her friends and family, losing her job or housing, or being abandoned by the father of her child.

Following Mary's example, we can ask ourselves how to better know these mothers, listen to them, seek understanding, and help them obtain the necessities of life for themselves and their children.¹ How can we, like the Blessed Mother, lovingly support mothers in welcoming and caring for God's gift of life?

Throughout the whole of Scripture, Mary's words are few. Yet, in her sacred encounter with Elizabeth, a powerful declaration pours from her lips. Mary proclaims to all generations that the Lord *lifts up the lowly, fills the hungry with good things, and remembers his promise of mercy from age to age* (Lk 1:46-56). In both word and deed, Mary speaks a

My soul proclaims
the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.

Luke 1:46-47

message of *hope*—not only to Elizabeth, but also to every mother in need and to each of us.

Mary's witness is an invitation to step out in love and compassion. It is a summons to *make haste* to help vulnerable women who may be isolated and alone. By doing so, we too can bear Christ within us and help others experience His presence.

Inspired by the Blessed Mother's example and guided by the Holy Spirit, may we offer Christ's presence and love to mothers in their time of need through our faithful service and support.

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¹ Lori, Most Reverend William E. 2022. Homily for the Opening Mass of the 2022 National Prayer Vigil for Life. Delivered at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. January 20, 2022. <https://www.usccb.org/prolife/archbishop-william-e-lori-opening-mass-2022-national-prayer-vigil-life>.