

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Our Lord remembers the barren.

First it was Sarah (Gen 11:30).

And she laughed at God—she gave up hope long ago.

Then it was Rebekah (Gen 25:21), Isaac’s wife;

but again, the Lord heard her prayer and gave her a child.

And then came Rachel (Gen 29:31), another in the line of barren Patriarch wives.

So Elizabeth stands in good company—even among the barren.

And it may be that some of you stand with her, too.

But do not fear, for He remembers the barren.

And then there’s the virgin.

The prophet Isaiah said long ago:

**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,  
and shall call His name *Immanuel*.”** (Isa 7:14)

She’s far from barren, in fact, she’s the opposite of barren,  
and yet today she and Elizabeth stand side-by-side.

The barren and the virgin are both with child—

and that in itself is “*marvelous in our eyes*” (Ps 118:23).

But there’s more.

Elizabeth is the mother of the last prophet.

John is the last Old Testament figure.

The voice that prepares the way.

Mary is the mother of God.

Jesus is the New Testament.

He is the voice of God, the eternal Logos, the Word Incarnate—He is the Way.

So, when these two pregnant women come together—these unique mothers—

we see the coming together of the old and the new.

Elizabeth – in her old age, former barrenness, with her priestly husband, and prophetic son –  
is an icon of the old and aging Israel.

Whereas Mary – in her youthful virginity, and with her divine Son –

is an icon of the new and everlasting Israel of God.

As Sarah was the alpha mother in Israel—the first of the barren—  
 so Elizabeth is the omega, the last of the barren—the fulfillment of the barren.

The time is coming.  
 The curtain's about to close,  
 the veil will be rent in two.  
 The old will pass away and the new will come—  
 and it's all felt in this meeting of the barren and the virgin.

And because of this encounter, the infant prophet, still unborn, leaps for joy!  
 Life exists in the womb!  
 The savior is recognized and adored, even in His first trimester.

Just as John leapt for joy in the presence of his Savior, so also should we.  
 And just as Elizabeth blessed Mary and the Fruit of her womb, so also should we.  
 And just as Mary's soul magnified the Lord, and as her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior—  
 so also should we!

For this gracious visitation between the barren and the virgin is a lot like our own visitation with  
 God in Christ.

We are the barren—both of body and of soul.  
 We are those who bring forth no fruit of our womb by ourselves—  
 no good works, no joy, no wisdom or kindness or self-control—  
 even though that's what we've been created for.

And yet, barren as we are of the good we ought to do,  
 our Lord remembers the barren.

He doesn't leave us in our cold, numbness.  
 He doesn't leave us lifeless.  
 He doesn't sit idly watching, neutral to our cares or concerns.

Our Lord remembers the barren.  
 He remembers those who suffer,  
 who wonder "how long, O Lord?" (Ps 13:1),  
 who have no control, no power, no strength.  
 He remembers those who feel the shame of barrenness,  
 who have nowhere to go, no one who'll understand, no direction or passion.

Our Lord remembers us in our sin, our lifeless bodies, our brokenness.

And in this meeting between the barren and the virgin,  
 He answers all our prayers.

Every Advent prayer for our Lord to come is answered in the Incarnation of Christ.

Every prayer of expectation, of looking forward to better things to come,  
all of it is answered in Mary's womb.

And when we enter the presence of the fruit of her womb,  
we also leap for joy!

John the Baptist certainly prepared the way for the Lord.  
He taught us joy—  
even joy from the womb.

So let us rejoice in the gift of life.  
Life to the barren.  
Life to the virgin.  
Life to us!  
Even eternal life in Christ our Lord.

Let us, like Elizabeth, bless Mary as mother of God,  
and bless the fruit of her womb, Jesus Christ.

And let us, like Mary, magnify the Lord.  
For He truly has done great things for us, and holy is His name.

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