



Dominican Sisters International Confederation

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Solemnity of Pentecost / Feast of the Visitation 2020

I write this reflection on the Feast of Pentecost, which this year happens to fall on 31 May, the Feast of the Visitation. But although we miss out on a celebration of Mary and Elizabeth in the liturgical calendar, in celebrating *The Spirit*, *their spirits* can never really be very far from us. Don't you agree? Two women at opposite ends of the chronological spectrum; one a young maiden, anticipating a future of hope and promise with her husband-to-be; the other, a woman advanced in years, who had lived a full life and was perhaps simply expecting, hoping, to live out her years in peace and quiet. But *the mystery of grace* ultimately has its way, for *it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it finds us*. And so, it was with Mary and Elizabeth, no less than it is with us today.

Two women whose plans were disrupted; interrupted; impeded; shattered; turned-upside-down; intruded upon by one who slipped into their normal course of affairs, sight unseen. How alone they must have felt; how confused; how upset, and even angry. They were each being thrust from their relatively well-organized and predictable worlds, into a much bigger flow of life which counted on their *YES* but held no answers to their questions. They must have wondered...What to do? Where to go? Who to trust?

Two women, at opposite ends of the chronological spectrum. The young maiden knew the one to count on would be the woman advanced in years, who had already borne the heat of the day, even as she prepared for the highly unanticipated next chapter in her life. And so, Mary embarks on a *visitation*. And as they visited, Mary and Elizabeth found in each other a *kindred spirit*, engendered by *The Spirit*. The same *Spirit* who disrupted; interrupted; impeded; shattered; turned-upside-down; intruded upon their precious hopes and plans for the future. Two women whose plans were disrupted; and whose lives were transformed. In their mutual embrace, they found security and strength; in their shared conversation, they found insight and clarity; and in their shared silence, they found the grace to patiently wait on God. *Grace met each of them where they were and did not leave them where it found them*.

So many parallels can be drawn with our lives today, as we gently ease out of lockdown and quarantine, and begin to resume some of the normal activities of our daily lives. Our plans have been disrupted; interrupted; impeded; shattered; turned-upside-down; intruded upon by one tiny, invisible element of nature that has thrown the world into chaos. And, like Mary and Elizabeth, we are being thrust into a much larger flow of life, which holds no ready answers to our questions, and counts on our *YES*. And we wonder...What to do? Where to go? Who to trust? It is my hope that we appreciate more than ever how important it is that we have each other – and that we can count on each other as we navigate an even more uncertain future in the post-COVID-19 world.

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DSIC The Solemnity of Pentecost

Among the disruptions caused by COVID-19, were plans that the Coordinating Council and I had hoped to implement in celebration of the 25th anniversary of DSI. Instead, the pandemic has thrust us into a much larger flow of life, in which safety and precaution, and matters of life and death have rightfully taken precedence. We will need to draw on our deepest wisdom as we discern how best to move forward as DSI, post-COVID-19. But there will be more regarding this at another time. For now, let's simply celebrate with gratitude the vibrancy and the potential of *The Spirit* within us and among us. Perhaps the psalmist says it best: *When you send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth.* This same *Spirit* animated Mary and Elizabeth, and the new life they each carried for the sake of the world. My prayer is that we will open wide the doors of our hearts for *grace to meet us where we are*, knowing that *The Spirit will not be far behind.*

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Mary and Elizabeth be our guides!

In prayerful solidarity,

Your sister,

Margaret

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