

## Elizabeth



Elizabeth was of priestly descent and a relative of Mary the mother of Jesus. She was married to Zechariah, a priest descended from Aaron the first high priest. Childless into her old age, Elizabeth gave birth to a son, John, through a miraculous intervention, even though she was barren and Zechariah was sterile. Her child grew up to be the prophet who prepared the way for the promised and long expected Messiah.

Her story stands at the very beginning of Luke's Gospel and unfolds in counterpoint to Mary's story. The joining of both women's stories, whose central theme is the salvation and liberation of all people, occurs through the deliberate intervention of God.

**Reading: Lk. 1: 5-24;67-80**

### **Meditation**

I look at you Elizabeth and your husband Zechariah..... You are 'blameless in the eyes of God'...you have carefully kept the commandments of God....You long for a child and you have spent so long waiting....But you are childless...This is difficult for you to accept.... Hope of a child grows fainter and fainter as you grow older and older....Yet despite your barrenness God listens to your prayer.....One day as Zechariah attends to his duties in the temple an angel appears to him.... What is Zechariah's response? .... He is terrified.....When the angel assures him that his prayer has been heard... Zechariah doubts what he is hearing and asks.... 'How can this be, for I am old and my wife is well advanced in years?'

.... Then Gabriel tells him .....'Because you do not believe my words which will all come true in time you will be silent, unable to speak, until all this has happened.'

He is struck dumb.....To the people it is obvious that something out of the ordinary has happened in the temple, but he is unable to communicate it.... And perforce he has to keep it to himself.... He returns home and Elizabeth soon conceives..... There they are.... Both reduced to silence.... Zechariah because of God's punishment, and Elizabeth because she is in awe and wonder at the wonderful intervention of God.....Nothing is impossible to Him....Soon the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and says 'Mary, do not be afraid.....you will conceive and bear a child, and you shall name Him Jesus'.....Seeing that Mary still had difficulty believing this news he offered her proof....He said 'Your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son .....for nothing is impossible for God.'..... What joy Elizabeth experiences when Mary comes to visit her.....Imagine the conversations these two holy women have about their expected sons.....The dreams they have for them...What a wonderful reward is the conception of their baby for Elizabeth and Zechariah.... after years of waiting.....they are to give birth to a son who will be the precursor of Jesus....At length the child is born and when Zechariah writes on a tablet 'His name is John' his speech returns to him....He speaks then giving glory and praise to a Loving God.

### **Prayer:**

Blessed are You  
O maker of miracles,  
for giving women  
of every age  
so many reasons to hope.  
May the dawn of a new world  
be born among us women.  
May we be with You, spinning the future,  
boldly believing in You.  
Weaver of dreams,  
as we dream of peace.  
Please make our dream come true. Amen