

## TIME FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

### Introduction to the celebration (Animator)

We are gathered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is together that we begin this new pastoral year, under the guidance of the Spirit, the Spirit who is always at work, as we heard earlier in our various life stories.

Our God, who is a God of relationships, asks us to dare to meet, to dare to be close to one another, in fraternity, in a new way. May his Spirit dwell in us and guide us in our mission.

Let us first listen to a moving encounter between Mary and Elizabeth. It took place a very long time ago, but today she comes to join us in our reality.

### Word of God (Reader 1)

The Visitation - Luke 1, 39-45

**39** *In those days Mary set out and went with haste into the mountainous region, into a city of Judea.*

**40** *She entered into the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.*

**41** *Now when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped within her. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,*

**42** *and cried with a loud voice, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*

**43** *From where is it given to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me?*

**44** *For when your words of greeting came to my ears, the child in me shuddered with joy.*

**45** *Blessed is she who believed that the words which were spoken to her from the Lord would be fulfilled. »*

**(Soft music playing)**

### Reflection (Reader 2)

It is for Elizabeth that Mary is there. Mary came to see the miracle that God did for Elizabeth and in return, Elizabeth perceives the miracle of God for Mary.

These two women are drawn to each other to witness their joy.

In our moments of doubt, in our moments of despondency, when the future seems blocked, we are invited to look back, to remember God's fidelity that overthrows the powerful. To remember the past in order to reopen the future.

This memory is an anchor for faith, it nourishes perseverance and trust. It is at the heart of Christian life, it is the foundation of hope. Like Mary, we are invited to set out on a different path... differently.

Mary sets out in haste, as if set in motion by the breath of the Spirit. And it is said in the text that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit comes into our lives without warning. And this encounter changes things.

The Spirit is accompanied by the great breath of the beginnings, the intoxication of the departures towards one cannot foresee where... This experience of Spirit is different from the routine of daily life. This experience of the Spirit differs from the routine of daily life, yet it is essential to the Christian life that is woven from day to day. The encounter with the Spirit is a summit experience. **It allows one to find one's way through the meanders of ordinary life where the fraternity dreamed of by Jesus is built.**

This experience of the Spirit bears much fruit. The fruits of life in the Spirit are positive effects that improve human relationships. Saint Paul speaks of love, joy, peace, patience... This atmosphere of fraternity is a new language where, sooner or later, it requires witnessing, in word and deed. The Spirit is then our defender par excellence. He has many strings to his bow. His action is sometimes impalpable, sometimes powerful, disturbing and disruptive. This variety of effects can explain our difficulties in understanding its existence, its presence and its action in our lives.

Let us be aware of what we ask when we sing: "May the wind carry us away, may the wind send us...". "Let us remember that the Holy Spirit is God-who disturbs, God-who takes the place!

**(Soft music)**

### **Blessing and symbolic (Animator)**

May the God who made himself close bless you!

Dare to be close, with all your creativity, under the breath of the Holy Spirit!

### **Sending (animator)**

May the Father, source of life, inspire in each one of you a passion for the proclamation of the Good News. **R/ Amen.**

May Jesus open the way and teach us to be creative. **R/ Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit make us recognize that we are all called in a different and particular way. **R/ Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. **R. We give thanks to God.**

### **Song : May the wind blow us away!**

May the wind blow us away

May the wind send us

Friends open the door

Let us be sowers of joy

1.

In our turn, let's hit the road

From a daily life to be transformed

It's a look, it's a listen

Two small steps that you must dare to take

2.

In our turn, let us be carriers

A Word to Share

And by our voices, to every heart

Words of peace will be sown

3.

It's our turn, let's be lights

When darkness comes

Facing grey days, long winters

It is the treasure of friendship.

6.

In our turn, let us be disciples

Don't be afraid to announce it

To all men, to all peoples

Christ is alive, risen!