**When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting**

**MONDAY DICEMBER 21 (Lk 1,39-45)**

Never before in Israel had happened such a thing. In the Old Covenant it was always the Lord who gave his Holy Spirit, without ever any human mediation. So in the Book of Numbers: *“So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. Gathering seventy elders of the people, he had them stand around the tent. The LORD then came down in the cloud and spoke to him. Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, he bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied. Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, were not in the gathering but had been left in the camp. They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; yet the spirit came to rest on them also, and they prophesied in the camp. So, when a young man quickly told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp," Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses' aide, said, "Moses, my lord, stop them." But Moses answered him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the LORD were prophets! Would that the LORD might bestow his spirit on them all!" Then Moses retired to the camp, along with the elders of Israel.”*  *(Cfr. Num 11,1-35).* None of this happens in the house of Zacharias. The virgin Mary greets Elizabeth. His breath is filled with the Holy Spirit. As soon as it reaches her ear, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and also the child she carries in her womb. The Angel’s word to Zacharias is fulfilled: “*But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb” (Lk 1,13-15).* In the Holy Spirit, without her having previously known anything of the mystery that is before her eyes, Elizabeth confesses that Mary is the Mother of her Lord and that the Child is the fruit blessed by all awaited: the Christ of God. Everything is by vision in the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, the eyes are glass and the mind is clay.

*During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."*

Jesus pours out his Holy Spirit as the fruit of his obedience to the Father from his pierced side as he lies dead on the cross. In the Last Supper he breathes it on the Apostles and also opens their minds to understanding the Word: *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (Jn 20.21-23). Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And (behold) I am sending the promise of my Father  upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."(Lk 24,45-49).* If the Apostles do not grow through their obedience to the Word, in grace and in the Holy Spirit, their voice will never be the breath of the Holy Spirit and no heart will be able to open itself to welcoming the Gospel. A Gospel proclaimed without the breath of the Holy Spirit is similar to a seed deprived of its germ of life. A farmer will also be able to sow tons of flour in his field. But no stalks of wheat will sprout. So it is with the Ministers of the Word: either their breath will be the breath of the Holy Spirit and the Gospel will be given with its seed of eternal life or they will sow a dead Gospel. A dead gospel will never give life.

Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints, make of the Christian fa true breath of the Holy Spirit.