

The Visitation Novena

Oh how I love the Visitation! I find it to be the most relatable of all the Mysteries because it comes closest to touching my own life. I will probably never ascend to heaven on a cloud or be asked by an angel to bear a child, but I know what it is like to be recognised for who I am at the heart of my soul. Don't we all? And when we are truly seen, doesn't it feel like a miracle and a Mystery?

Mary's journey took her from her home in Nazareth to her cousin Elizabeth's doorstep where she was recognised by another woman who had probably known her since childhood - not just in the sense of recognising a kinswoman, but recognised for the sacredness of her calling, of who she now carried in her womb, of her purpose and who she was becoming. There was a quickening. For me this is the Mystery that allows us to relate and relax - we are no longer alone.



When we gather to pray the rosary in our WOTR circles, we explore the Mysteries as we go through the decades, and then we pray for our hearts' desires.

This can feel strange, especially at first - we come together and speak of things we may not talk about anywhere else. I feel vulnerable when I expose my praying heart to others, but when I do, I am seen, just as I see others. There is a thrill of recognition that travels between us as we pray for our hearts' desires. That thrill is a bodily experience of Visitation, evidence of our quickening.

We experience the Visitation when we show up. We can't be recognised if we don't take the important step of showing up; there can be no Visitation until we show up. It's that simple. We can't be recognised until we arrive. When we show up, we can be seen.

I wanted to write a stunning piece to close out this novena but the harder I tried, the more I felt myself retreat into a deeply quiet state - which actually felt deliciously welcome in the midst of the crazy chaos of both our world and my private life. And in that quiet, I realised that this is the essence of the Visitation for me: when I am seen so deeply that I am recognised, I can relax because I know I belong. I can be myself, with no need to impress.

My novena petition has been to be shown how I can help, to know how and where I can offer my particular talents, including those that are still gestating. My answer has been that I simply need to show up. Small offerings can be as important as grand gestures. If we all show up by bringing our own gifts to the table, we will have diversity and collectivity and community.

Art: *Visitation* by Therese Quinn