

Besides the loving service that Mary rendered to her cousin, there was another reason for her staying that long: the advantage which her visit afforded to the great prophet. For, if her very greeting brought such blessings at the beginning of her visit-- the infant leaping for

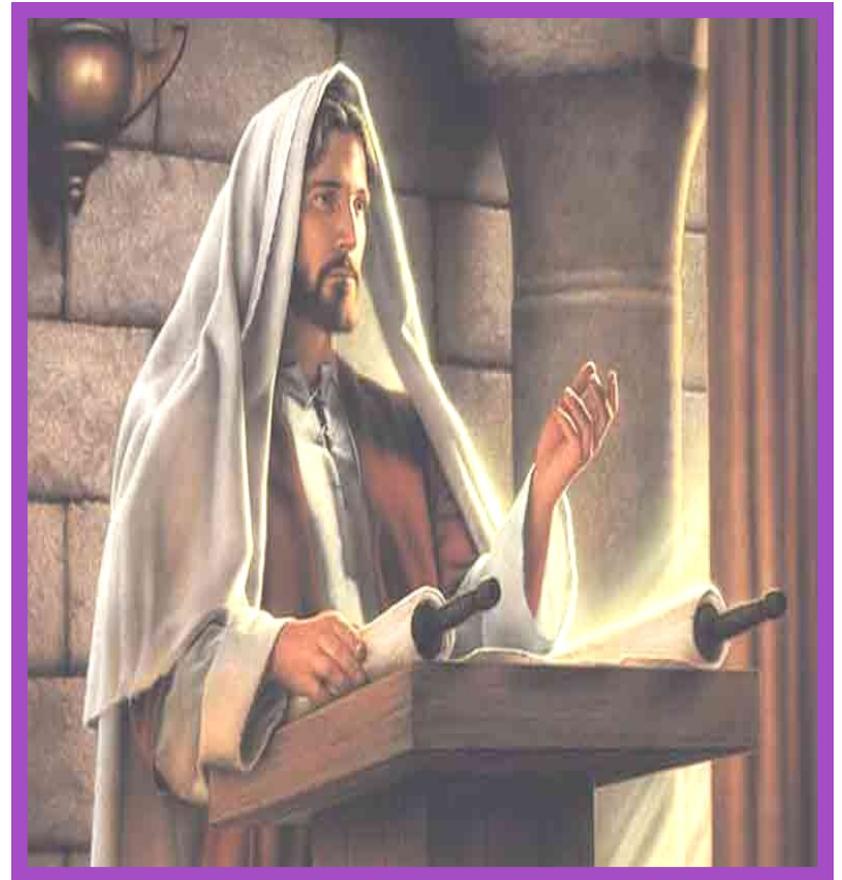


joy in the womb and his mother being filled with the Holy Spirit -- we can readily surmise how much more benefit must have accrued from Mary's continued presence for so long a time. It meant that the prophet was being anointed and trained like a good athlete in his mother's womb; for his strength was being built up for an uncompromising struggle.



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**SERMON ON
THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
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JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

JULY 2ND

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Commentary of the Gospel of Luke 1:39-47

by: Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

We should reflect upon the fact that the superior comes to the inferior, to help the inferior: Mary to Elizabeth, Christ to John. Later on, too, the Lord came to be baptized that He might sanctify John's baptism. And quickly were the coming of Mary and the blessings of the divine presence made known. Notice the precision and the propriety of each word. Elizabeth was the first to hear Mary's voice, but John the first to perceive grace. She heard in the natural order; he leaped because of the mystery. She perceived Mary's coming; he, the coming of the Lord. The mothers spoke of grace; the infants caused grace to operate within their mothers; they were beginning the mystery of the Redemption in the meeting of their mothers. And through a twofold miracle the mothers prophesied by the spirit of their children.

The infant leaped,
the mother was filled. The
mother was not filled
before the son; rather,
when the son was filled
with the Holy Spirit, he filled
his mother also.



"And how have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" That is, how did such a great good befall me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? I perceive the miracle, I recognize the mystery: the Mother of the Lord is pregnant with the Word, she is filled with God. "And Mary remained with her for three months and returned to her own house." It is good that both points are brought out: Mary performed this service, and she observed the mystical number.