

Dec. 20, 2015 "LIVING IN A HARSH WORLD", based on Luke 1:39-45.

Despite commercialization and sentimentality, Advent-Christmas is a most magical time.

- Takes mind off harsh realities – murders, robberies, suicides, terrorism, famines, etc.
- Meeting of mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah. Both pregnant in unlikely circumstances.
- Is Christmas a time to take minds off the miseries of life? Is it all true or just made up? Is religion just a fairy tale to make us feel good?

Mary and Elizabeth live in a world of harsh realities, just like us today.

- There were terrorist groups then as now – Herods, Zealots to match the Assads and Isis of now
- Private realities also rivaled ours – childless mothers and unwed mothers who were shunned by proper society

In the midst of all this harsh reality, Elizabeth and Mary continued to believe and hope in the Lord.

- God came to them because they needed and believed in God
- Faith enabled them to respond to God's initiative
- God continued to teach them how to live amidst life's challenges

God teaches us as well, if we believe and follow God's leading, despite what happens around us!