

Mary, the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Today is Mother's Day, a day when we remember our Mothers, and or celebrate being a Mother. Or that special person in our life, not necessarily a Mum. Let us be mindful that God has called some to be Mothers and some not! Some of us have great Mothers, and some, unfortunately not so great. Some of us have loving memories of our Mothers, and some not. But today, let us remember Mary, for what she was chosen for, to be the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, a Hero among the best.

Prayer of St Anselm:

And You, Jesus, sweet Lord, are You not also a Mother?

Truly, You are a Mother, the Mother of all Mothers, who tasted death in Your desire to give life to your children. Amen.

Mary's Song

Luke 1:46 – 56. This passage is often used in the weeks of Advent, leading up to Christmas. But I thought I would use it for today, just this once. In Luke 1:31, Mary has just received the news from the Angel of the Lord 'that she will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call Him Jesus'. Mary at this point was staying with her cousin Elizabeth. Let us read.

Luke 1:-46, and Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - Holy is His name.

His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful, and to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as He promised our ancestors.”

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about 3 months and then returned home.

The passage is known as the MAGNIFICAT, and it is a song of Praise to the Lord. A song of Praise and Thanksgiving for what God has done for Mary and the people of Israel. Throughout the Bible we can see people giving Praise to God for what He has done for them. These last few weeks we have seen the people of God praising him for what He has done. If we look through the Psalms in particular, they are a great example of people praising God, in particular King David, singing songs of praise. And that, maybe, is why Mary felt able to do the same because she knew scripture. Mary felt compelled to lift her voice in Praise and Worship to the Most High God, her Lord.

How amazing that must have felt, to have that compulsion to just sing out your praises to God. Even at such a young age as Mary was, the intimate relationship she must have had with God, so deep and so loving. I have not seen anything written about Mary's parents, but they must have taught her the scriptures well, because she is the CHOSEN ONE!

This passage comes in three parts. The first being:

WHAT GOD DID FOR MARY

As we look at this passage, we can see that Mary refers to the Old Testament scripture. v.50, **His (God) mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation.** v51, **He has performed many mighty deeds with his arm. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.** v55, **to Abraham and his decedents forever, just as He promised our ancestors.** Mary hid God's word in her heart. She wanted to magnify God, not herself. She wanted to give thanks for all that God has done and what He is going to do.

You have often heard me talk about the importance of prayer and giving thanks to God for all that He has done for us. Well Mary was doing the exact same thing. So, what has God done for Mary? Well first it is important to mention that Mary was a sinner just like us. LK 1:47-48, **'and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed.** At that time Mary was nothing special, except the fact that she was carrying Baby Jesus of course. Other than that, she was a young girl aged about 12,13, 14yrs old, trying to make her way in the world. I bet she did not think this was going to happen to her when she woke up that morning? Her only defence was to trust in her Lord.

The Catholic Church, however, hold Mary in High Esteem. Here is just a short extract from a catholic writer. **'The Catholic Church holds Mary in such esteem because, in the Gospel of Luke, Mary herself says that all generations shall call her blessed (Lk 1:48, as we have already mentioned).**

So, every time Catholics speak in praise of Mary, they believe they are fulfilling biblical prophecy.

On the other hand, most non-Catholic Christian communities rarely speak of Mary as highly and, when they do, it is usually about her in the Christmas season, as perhaps a necessary part of the apparatus to

bring about the birth of Jesus. But Catholics are generous in their praise of Mary to fulfil that prophecy that all generations will call her blessed. Blessed is on a regular, sometimes daily basis. Catholics repeat that other strongly associated scriptural verse, “Blessed are you [Mary] among women and the fruit of your womb [Jesus]” (Lk 1:42).

In closing, the writer thinks it is safe to say that a devout Christian has nothing to fear in letting Mary into his or her life. We can never forget that Mary’s last recorded words in Scripture are, “Do whatever He [Jesus] tells you” (Jn 2:5). When we let Mary into our lives, we can be assured that she will make it her direct business to draw us quickly into a deep, intimate, personal relationship with Jesus, so that we are doing what He tells us every day of our lives.

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Personally, I’m not sure that Mary wants us to worship her in that way, but hey I’m only a Baptist, what do I know?

I wonder what people would say today if they heard that a girl of Mary’s age was pregnant? Probably the same as they did then.

BUT GOD SAVED HER.

Just like us, Mary was saved by Grace because she Knew God, and trusted Him as her Lord and Saviour. In the original text Mary says 6 times what God has done. He has been **Mindful**, His **Mercy** extends, He has performed **mighty deeds**. He has brought down **rulers**, He has filled the **hungry**, He has **helped** His servant Israel, and Mary knows that God will fight for her.

v49, **For the mighty one has done great things for me, Holy is His name.** The reference **Holy is His Name**, not only refers to God’s name, but it also refers to His character, **HE IS A HOLY GOD**; and Mary knew this.

What God has done for us. This part of Mary's Song includes all of God's people who fear Him. From generation to generation, we have all experienced God's love, help, guidance and mercy. Mary names 3 specific groups in this passage, the **HELPLESS v51, the HUMBLE v52, and the HUNGRY v53**. The issues that were around in Mary's day were that common people struggled with the injustice and Civil rights. The people were very often discouraged and downtrodden, and it was exceedingly difficult to fight the system. Sound familiar?

Lk 4 16-19, He (Jesus) went to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went to the synagogue as was his custom. He stood up to read as the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it is written the Spirit of the Lord is on Me because He has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recover sight for the blind to set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Mary saw the Lord turning things upside down, the **weak** de-throne the mighty, the **humble** scatter the proud, the **nobodies** are exalted, the **hungry** are filled, and the **rich** end up poor.

What God did for Israel.

Despite Israel's destitute condition, Israel was, and still is, God's chosen nation. They are still God's servant, and God was and is, going to help Israel fulfil His purpose. He (God) shall save His people from their sins, He would remember His mercy, and keep His promises, as we can read in Ps 98:1-3

Sing to the Lord a new song for He has done marvellous things. His right hand and Holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made His salvation known and revealed His righteousness to the

nations. He has remembered His love and His faithfulness to Israel all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

We can read similar verses in Genesis, 12:1-3, 17:19, 22:18, 26:4 and 28:14.

As Mary prepared to leave her cousin Elizabeth to return home, she showed signs of her pregnancy. What would happen when people saw her? How would Joseph react? What would the neighbours say? Israel was God's chosen people and now the arrival of the Saviour was imminent. God was preparing a nation through the obedience of a young girl. Through Mary, the saviour of the world was about to be born. This plan, years in the making is nearing its climax. Baby Jesus is about to join the rest of humanity, **God was about to rescue the WORLD!**

So, where does that leave us today? Does it leave us with yeah, yeah! Cracking story Mike, but we have heard it before, same old, same old. Or are we challenged how God works through ordinary people. Through Mary, through You and me. If God can work through Mary, then He can work through any of us, if we choose to let Him. What would have happened if Mary said NO, sorry God, but I am not sure about this. The gift of carrying your Son into the world is not my cuppa tea.

Has God asked you to do anything? He calls us all to pray, He calls us all to share the Good News. So, do we need to ask the question 'why are some of us reluctant to share our faith? Have we become so familiar with our relationship with God, that we think it really is not that important anymore?

Has church become so familiar? If we sing familiar hymns and songs; when we can get back into church, and we listen to familiar scripture, do we switch off? And today, maybe for you, this is a familiar day, doing the same things as you normally do. But what if, today, what if today, God wants to use you, will you let Him? Will you put yourself

in a place where you can be used for God? Or is this just another day where you feel deflated, brow beaten, by the News, by the pandemic? the uncertainty of what will happen.

Brothers and Sisters, Mary was a young Lady barely in her teens, carrying the Lord Jesus Christ. And we think we have got problems? We need to get real and start to stand up for what we believe in, and proclaim the Gospel, which literally means **GOOD NEWS**. We have the power and the authority to change people's lives if we keep in step with the Holy Spirit, He will guide us, if we allow Him.

And there is the challenge for us today. Will we allow the Holy Spirit to move in His Church and help bring this nation to a place of true tolerance and Love? Something to think about!

Let us Pray. Father God, we thank you for our Mothers. We pray where there is love, let there be more love. Where there is separation, bring together, if only in a phone call. Where there is pain, bring healing, where there is dispute, bring resolve. Father God, thank you for Mary and her obedience and trust to follow You. We thank you for the gift of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.