

Magnificat Homily  
Preached by Rev. Patrick A. Hunnicutt  
(As an accompaniment to Bach's Magnificat, which followed)  
December 11, 2011

Focus Text: Luke 1: 46-55

Mary's Magnificat delivers us into that sublime moment when a servant becomes more than one who serves. She becomes one who magnifies. And that has made all of the difference.

It is the difference between duty into devotion, between meekly conceding to a power greater than herself and joyfully embracing the One whose power enlivens her with strength and might.

What we have heard –what we *will* hear -- are not the whimpers of the indentured servant who scrubs the floors while the glamour girls powder themselves in preparation for the ball that only the 1% may occupy. No, Mary's words are the melodious wonderment of one who can hardly believe that *her* blistered feet are the ones striding across the dance floor.

Waltzing, gliding, soaring, Mary praises the One who welcomes *in* those typically shut *out*, who seeks out the hungry and their empty places and fills them with good things, who with the strength of his arm shows a mercy that spans generations.

Mary's music emanates from a place of joyous belief. But that's not where she started.

When the angel, Gabriel, announced that she, a virgin, would bear the Son of God, she hummed the minor chords of resistance. "How can this be?" she asked.

To lift her up that towering half step into the major key of acceptance, Gabriel trumpeted the great power of the Holy Spirit, who would overshadow her, just as the Most High had filled the empty womb of her old and barren cousin Elizabeth. "Nothing is impossible for God," sounded the holy messenger.

Her ears assaulted by holiness, Mary chose to submit. "Here am I, the servant of the Lord. Let it be..."

And if the story ended there, we would have a concession speech, not a song.

But in our story, Mary moved with haste and visited her pregnant cousin. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, felt her baby leap in Mary's presence. She anointed Mary with favor and said, "Blessed is she who *believed*, that there would be fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

*Blessed is she who believed.*

Like a Sacrament, Elizabeth's blessing was both a sign and seal of Mary's transformation through the work of the Spirit. Elizabeth's words both articulated what had changed for Mary and were the vessels of that change, as she went from "how can this be" to the music of one who truly and joyfully *believed*.

It is our hope that the music that we now hear will be like such a sacrament, both signifying and stirring in us the transformation that God weaved in Mary. That we would become more than just servants who dutifully serve, but those whose faith and service magnify the One who claims even us to bear Christ into this world so that all may dance, and sing.

For the Mighty One has done, and is doing, great things for us, and holy is God's name.

Blessed are those who believe.

Amen.