

# Reading Luke in Lent

## Gospel of Luke 1: 39–56



### Mary visits Elizabeth

39 In those days Mary arose  
and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,  
40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.  
41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary,  
the baby leaped in her womb.  
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,  
42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry,  
'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!  
43 And why is this granted to me  
that the mother of my Lord should come to me?  
44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears,  
the baby in my womb leaped for joy.  
45 And blessed is she who believed  
that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'

### Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat

46 And Mary said,  
  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
50 And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.'  
  
56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

## Reflection

The encounter between Mary and Elizabeth is filled with joy. John the Baptist's leaping in the womb is the first of his prophetic gestures — pointing towards Jesus. Elizabeth pours blessings on Mary; for the child in her womb and for her faith. Mary responds with a hymn of praise to God — the Magnificat. It recalls the psalms and canticles of the Old Testament, especially the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1–10), but is also a vision of the coming kingdom which her son will inaugurate.

- The joys of family and friendship can be taken for granted.
  - For whom do you pray for God's blessings?
  - What aspects of contemporary society do you hope to see turned upside down?

## Prayer

Who are we, Lord God,  
that you should come to us?  
Yet you have visited your people  
and redeemed us in your Son.

As we prepare to celebrate his birth,  
make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your Word,  
and move us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works.

We ask this through him whose coming is certain,  
whose day draws near:  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.  
Amen.

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