

Magnify and Proclaim the Lord

Mary's song in Luke 1: 46-55 has always been one of my favorite songs that we sing at St. Matthew. This prayer is included in the Holden Evening Prayer, which we frequently utilize during Advent and other times of the year. It is ideal for "Evening" church because it is quiet, solemn, and mediational. I know many of the children in our church have grown up looking forward to this special evening service.

So, what is the Magnificat prayer and what lessons can we learn from it? The name of the Magnificat prayer comes from the first words of Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum" (My soul magnifies the Lord, or, My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord). The Magnificat is a canticle, a Christian song of praise that in this case is taken directly from the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Scripture.

Mary recites the prayer during the Visitation with her cousin Elizabeth, who greets her with the familiar words, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). What is the message of the Magnificat? Echoing the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we might meditate on the following thoughts:

1. How will we magnify the Lord's presence in our lives? How will we proclaim the greatness of the Lord?
2. What tempts us to be proud, mighty, or stronger than others?
3. How can we serve others on behalf of God?

The Magnificat Prayer

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever. Luke 1:46-55

As we prepare for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ, during Advent and sing Mary's beautiful Song of Praise, let's consider how, like Mary, we can magnify and proclaim the Lord, how we can seek compassion and forgiveness rather than pride, and how we can have the heart of a servant and look for ways to serve others to glorify and praise the Lord.

Dear God, thank you for giving us these timeless, beautiful words of Mary to inspire in us her humility, mercy, compassion, love for God, and willingness to serve. Help us to find new ways to be a servant to others during this Advent season and bless our lives as we prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen