

World of Magnificat

“So Mary trusted God more than what her eyes could see,” we are in post pandemic situation where we have to look at the world with a new perspective for this I have chosen the world of magnificat as a guide for my perplexity.

Good evening dear Fathers and brothers I am glad to share with you some of my reflections on Mary’s magnificat as a new world view to follow. The magnificat has become one of the great hymns of the church. It is actually saturated in the Old Testament.

Stanley Jones said that the magnificat is the most revolutionary document in the world.

Mary’s Magnificat has been read as a revolutionary manifesto. It shows us Mary as a daring prophet, full of joy and confidence in her vocation, cheerleader of God’s people on their path to liberation. Yet the world that Mary describes in the magnificat is the same as it always has been. The Magnificat is about a change in our way of seeing, not about a change in the way things are.

The Magnificat asks us to take a fresh look at the world and see something we’ve never seen before. It asks us to imagine how we would live if we really and truly believed that the God of Jesus Christ was present in this world, just as it is.

This is what St Augustine describes in his famous prayer in *The Confessions*, ‘Late have I loved you’: You flashed, You blazed. And my blindness fled. The Magnificat is what Mary saw when God flashed and blazed through the hidden ordinariness of her life.

So, the transformation that enables us to inhabit the world of the Magnificat is not a revolution but a healing of sight. Mary tells us what the world looks like when grace enables us to see through and beyond the trappings of worldly institutions and hierarchies, to the topsy turvy truth of God’s kingdom among us.

Plato’s philosopher sought to discover the source of truth by rising up from the depths of the earth, to the pure and blinding abstraction of the light, the idea, the form. The earliest Christian theologians spoke of a God who reverses that journey. In a Christmas Day sermon, Saint Augustine preached on Psalm 85, verse 11: ‘Truth has sprung from the earth, and Justice has looked forth from heaven’. Here is what Augustine said: Truth, which is in the bosom of the Father (Jn 1:18), has sprung from the earth, in order also to be in the bosom of his mother. Truth, by which the world is held together, has sprung from the earth, in order to be carried in a woman’s arms. Truth, on which the bliss of the angels is incorruptibly nourished, has sprung from the earth, in order to be suckled at breasts of flesh. Truth, which heaven is not big enough to hold, has sprung from the earth, in order to be placed in a manger.

Jesus brings God down to earth, and Mary’s Magnificat tells us what that means. If we seek God, we must make a downward journey with God, into the fleshy depths of the human condition, into the chaos, into the mess, into the margins. Where human power is least visible, where human glory is least manifest, where human hunger is most urgent and human poverty is most extreme, there we must seek the power and the glory, the abundance and the riches of God. If Christians had taken the Magnificat to heart, maybe Marx wouldn’t have been necessary at all.

The Magnificat also ushers us into a hidden world of love, subsisting beneath all our institutions, laws and structures. And love can never be institutionalized, politicized or organized. Beyond its worldly pomp and ceremony, its hierarchies and trappings of power, Christianity becomes true to itself when it inspires one human being to reach out to another in mutual vulnerability and love, and to ask, ‘Who art thou?’ This is what Mary did when she set out to visit her elderly cousin Elizabeth. It’s what we do whenever our own experience of difficulty, struggle and loss makes us open and attentive to the suffering of others

French philosopher and mystic Simone Weil says: The fullness of love for neighbour is simply the capacity to ask the question, ‘What is your agony?’ It is to know that the afflicted exist, not as a unit in a collection, but in all their humanity, exactly like us. ...

The Magnificat tells us that God looks upon our vulnerability and sorrow with that kind of attentiveness, and we are called to do likewise. We might heed William Blake's words from his great poem Jerusalem: Labour well the Minute Particulars: attend to the Little Ones; And those who are in misery cannot remain so long, If we do but our duty: labour well the teeming Earth. He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars.

This theme of doing good by minute particulars is the connecting theme that runs through Dostoevsky's great novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. There we read of a doctor who sorrowfully acknowledges that 'the more I love mankind in general, the less I love people in particular. ... On the other hand, it has always happened that the more I hate people individually, the more ardent becomes my love for humanity as a whole.'

The kingdom of peace that Mary proclaims is a kingdom of the vulnerable, and that means that it acts as a magnet for all the wrath and violence of human power.

The Kingdom that Mary reveals is not a kingdom that takes the crucified down from their crosses. It demands something much more difficult. It asks us to stand with the crucified and to share their suffering, to stay with them when everybody else has run away, to keep faith outside their tombs on Holy Saturday when even God is dead, to tell their stories and refuse to abandon the dangerous memories that disrupt our settled histories.

The Magnificat is not just about human powerlessness and humility. It's also about the power and glory of God. Jesus is fully human and fully divine. This is not a form of knowledge to be grasped but the confession of a mystery to be surrendered to and a faith to be lived.

My friends, The Magnificat is a world that is not of this world, and yet it's to be found nowhere but in this world. We are called to be in the world but not of the world. We are citizens of heaven, St Paul tells us. That's a citizenship that nobody can take from us, a border that nobody can defend with barbed wire fences or watchtowers. During the post pandemic situation, if we look around us and ask our fellow citizens of God's kingdom, 'What is your agony?' I don't think we'll find that question in any citizenship test, but it's the only passport that gives us entry into that mysterious kingdom of love which is hidden in plain view among us and around us, and which becomes visible to those who are attentive, who see the world through the eyes of grace.

As we are in the spirit of Marian month let us offer ourselves—our souls and bodies, like Mary did—to God's service, not as begrudging servants but as those who can join with her in joyful acclamation: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit exalts in God my Savior."

Let us make an effort to pray the magnificat meaning fully. let us allow God to reshape our perspective and our worldview.

Thank you