WORDS of FAITH

OUR PRAYERS: The Magnificat

Deep in every human heart is a desire for the living God that expresses itself in prayer. In the Catholic tradition, some prayers have become classic expressions of what the human heart seeks. Words of Faith: Our Prayers explores prayers that for centuries have revealed a faith that fosters a deep, personal, growing, and loving relationship with Jesus Christ. These prayers teach us much about who we are and about the God to whom we belong.

—**Keith J. Egan,** Series Editor

We Pray

† 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.

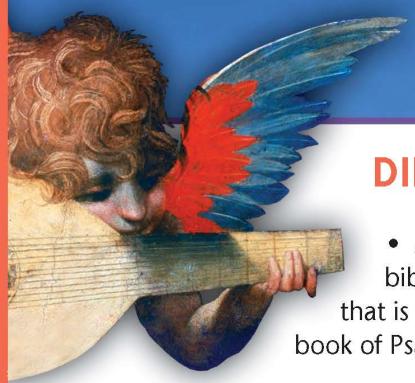
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me;
and holy is his name.

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

He 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 has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

–Liturgy of the Hours



DID YOU KNOW?

- A canticle is a biblical hymn or song that is not part of the book of Psalms.
- There are three canticles in the Church's daily liturgical prayer:

All three canticles are found in chapters 1 and 2 of Luke's Gospel.

The *Canticle of Zechariah* at Morning Prayer (Lk 1:68–79)

The *Canticle of Mary* at Evening Prayer (Lk 1:46–55)

The *Canticle of Simeon* at Night Prayer (Lk 2:24–32)

We Practice

The name of this prayer, comes from the first words of it in Latin: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*, which means: "My soul magnifies the Lord." Also known as the Canticle of Mary, the prayer comes directly from the Gospel of Luke (1:46–55). These words are spoken by the Virgin Mary during her visit to Elizabeth, her elderly cousin, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth greets Mary with the words: "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). Mary responds with the words of the Magnificat.

The Magnificat is prayed every day in the Liturgy of the Hours. Sometimes called the Divine Office, this is the Church's official daily prayer. Priests and those in religious life pray the Hours daily. Many lay people also pray Morning and Evening Prayer and some parishes celebrate them communally.

The Magnificat is prayed during Evening Prayer, known as Vespers. An ancient tradition of the Church tells us that it was probably evening when Mary arrived at Elizabeth's house, thus the connection with this liturgical Hour.

By Robert M. Hamma, Editorial Director at Ave Maria Press.
Series Editor, Keith J. Egan, PhD, is President of the Carmelite Institute; Adjunct Professor of Theology, University of Notre Dame; and Aquinas Chair Emeritus, St. Mary's College.

We Believe

In the New Testament there are only four times when Mary speaks: to the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation, to Elizabeth at the Visitation, to the boy Jesus when he is finally found in the Temple, and to Jesus at the Wedding Feast at Cana. The account of Mary's visit to Elizabeth contains the longest record of her words and gives us a wonderful insight into her faith and trust in God.

Mary begins by proclaiming her joy at God's greatness and her gratitude for all the things God has done for her. She calls herself God's "lowly servant" and in this way identifies herself with the "poor ones" of the Old Testament (in Hebrew they are called the *anawim*). These are people who are often oppressed but do not lose faith in the Lord. They are the ones singled out for God's favor and who fear the Lord. "Fear" here does not mean terror or fright, but a sense of profound awe, humble trust, and steadfast confidence.

The Magnificat is something like an overture sounding many of the key themes of Luke's Gospel.

The next verses describe God's faithfulness. God lifts up the lowly and casts down the mighty; he scatters "the proud in their conceit." He fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty. Mary's Magnificat foreshadows Jesus' own words and deeds. For example, in announcing his ministry Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah (61:1) and says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor" (Lk 4:18).

In the final verses of this great canticle, Mary recalls God's faithfulness in coming to the help of his people and remembering his promise forever.

We Live

The Magnificat is first and foremost an invitation to pray and to praise. When we say the Hail Mary, we pray *to* Mary; when we say the Magnificat, we pray *with* Mary. Consider making the Magnificat part of your daily prayer practice, perhaps in the evening. In this way you will join with the whole Church as it prays with Mary who is our model for servant discipleship.

The Magnificat is "the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church."

—*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2619

If we pray the Magnificat, we must be willing to live the Magnificat. Like Mary in Luke's Gospel, we are called to rejoice and trust in God's promises and to be humble enough to let God create wonderful things out of our emptiness. This prayer keeps the needs of the poor before us. It challenges us to fill the hungry with "good things" and to "lift up the lowly." Like Mary, we are called to proclaim with our lives (to magnify) the greatness of God's mercy and love.

- Make a list of the good things God has given you. Make another of how you can share those gifts.
- Create time for a lonely neighbor, coworker, or fellow parishioner.
- Prepare a meal for a family dealing with sickness or grief.
- Begin or end these actions by gratefully praying the Magnificat.

With children . . .

Create a Magnificat Tree by using an actual tree branch or cutting one from colored paper. Cut out leaves on which children can write good deeds they do that show the greatness of God. Keep yet-to-be-filled leaves nearby as a reminder to live the message of Mary's prayer each day.

A BIT OF HISTORY

The Magnificat is very similar to a prayer in the Old Testament called Hannah's Song (1 Samuel 2:1–10). In the story, Hannah is childless and prays fervently for a son, promising to dedicate him to God if her prayer is answered. She eventually gives birth to the prophet Samuel. (It is Samuel who anoints Saul and David as the first kings of Israel.) When Hannah presents her son in the temple, she gives praise to God in a canticle that begins:

My heart exults in the Lord,
my horn is exalted in my God.

Like the Magnificat, Hannah's song speaks of how God comes to the help of the poor and simple, and of Israel as God's chosen people. It speaks of the reversal of fortunes between the mighty and the powerless, the full and the hungry, the barren and the fertile.

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Nihil Obstat: Reverend Michael Heintz, PhD, *Censor liborum*
Imprimatur: Most Reverend John M. D'Arcy, Bishop of Fort Wayne–South Bend, May 29, 2009

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, December 17
8:00 a.m. + Tom Mullin by The Carty Family
5:00 p.m. + Pauline & Anthony Dorrzapf by Mary & Tony Dorrzapf

Sunday, December 18
7:00 a.m. + Rose Conroy by Genie & Joe Conroy & Sons
8:30 a.m. + Paul McGuinness, Jr. by The Tiufekchiev Family
10:00 a.m + Margaret Kerfoot by The Toole Family
11:30 a.m. + Tom Howard by his Family
1:00 p.m. + Al Katein by Nancy & Tim Outlaw
3:30 p.m. - Spanish Mass
5:00 p.m. - Living and Deceased Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish

Monday, December 19
6:30 a.m. + Lois Ann Tonnessen by John & Lynn Murphy
8:00 a.m. + Maria Nguyen by Phu Tran

Tuesday, December 20
6:30 a.m. - The Redd La Madrid Family by Cris Beltran
8:00 a.m. + Edward Frey Delaney by Elizabeth Frey Delaney

Wednesday, December 21
6:30 a.m. + Consolacion Manalac by The Manalac Family
8:00 a.m. + John & Ann Cornett by The Metcalfe Family

Thursday, December 22
6:30 a.m. + Eileen Hand by Mary Carey
8:00 a.m. + Marcel LeBlanc by His daughter Gabrielle

Friday, December 23
6:30 a.m. + Roy Marshall Croson by Adams-Green Funeral Home
8:00 a.m. + Jane Grillo by The Grillo Family

Saturday, December 24 - Christmas Eve
8:00 a.m. + Maria & Sabin Supuran by Adriana & Jeff Simpson
4:00 p.m. - Living and Deceased Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish
6:00 p.m. + Joseph Francis Paraiso by The Family
7:30 p.m. + Steve & Ligaya Valentin by The Hobbs Family
9:00 p.m. + Betty Smith by Adams-Green Funeral Home
Midnight + Wayne Norman by The Norman Family

Sunday, December 25 - Christmas
8:00 a.m. - Bong Family by Cris Beltran
10:00 a.m - Priests, faculty & staff of St. Joseph Parish & School by The Ezenwa Family
11:30 a.m. + Yolanda & Martin Roncaglia by The Durant & Clardy Families
1:00 p.m. - Mary Cahalane by Patrick & Jen Cahalane Family
3:30 p.m. - Spanish Mass

Newly Baptized

In Baptism we are reborn as children of God, made members of His Church, and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. With this in mind, we welcome this child of God who was baptized Dec. 11, 2016:

McKenna Elizabeth Tisch daughter of Robert & Megan

Peace and good! As we continue to celebrate the Advent Season, we focus upon the prayers we commonly pray. The first three weeks of Advent we reflected upon the prayers – **The Sign of the Cross**, the **Lord's Prayer (Our Father)**, and **Come, Holy Spirit.** This week we reflect upon the prayer – the **Magnificat**.

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, we read the following insights into the **prayer of the Virgin Mary**.

> Mary's prayer is revealed to us at the dawning of the fullness of time. Before the incarnation of the Son of God, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, her prayer cooperates in a unique way with the Father's plan of loving kindness: at the Annunciation, for Christ's conception; at Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, his Body. In the faith of his humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance he had awaited from the beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made "full of grace" responds by offering her whole being: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." "*Fiat*": this is Christian prayer: to be wholly God's, because he is wholly ours. (2617)

The Gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana, the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast - that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross, that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living." (2618)

That is why the Canticle of Mary, the *Magnificat* (Latin) or *Megalynei* (Byzantine) is the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church; the song of the Daughter of Zion and of the new People of God; the song of thanksgiving for the fullness of graces poured out in the economy of salvation and the song of the "poor" whose hope is met by the fulfillment of the promises made to our ancestors, "to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." (2619)

Enjoy the reflection on the cover of this week's bulletin.

Advent Blessings!

Reference:

Father Tom, TOR

Catechism of the Catholic Church. (1997). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

The Parish staff wishes to thank the following parish ministries:

We thank **our parishioners who participated in the Advent Penance Service** on Saturday, December 10th. A special thanks to the **visiting priests, friars, director of music, the Knights of Columbus, the Parish Staff, and all those involved in planning this celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation**. Advent blessings!

We thank **our parishioners** for their support of the **Christmas Catholic Charities** collection this past weekend. Your generosity allows the "works of mercy" to be shared with those in need. Many blessings!

We thank **our Religious Education students and families** who donated toys for children living in our local community. We thank you for your generosity and kindness!

We thank **our parishioners** who supported the **LINK Holiday Food Drive** overseen by the **Men's Society** and **Knights of Columbus**. This food drive is another way which we live out the "works of mercy". Many blessings!

We thank **our parishioners** who ministered at the **Annual Diocesan Youth Appreciation Mass and Dinner** held here at the parish on December 13th. We thank the youth who volunteered as **altar servers** for Bishop Burbidge; those who served as **greeters** at the dinner; the **parents** who had oversight of the youth volunteering; and our **Parish Facilities crew** who prepared with the set-up for the gathering. Bishop Burbidge thanked the parish community for their willingness to host this gathering for our "Franciscan" and Christian hospitality.

We thank **our parishioners** who donate to the **Poor Box in the Church**. The funds support the "works of mercy." Many blessings!

We thank **our parishioners** who supported the **Christmas Poinsettia Sale** overseen by the Boys Scouts. Many blessings!

LINK HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

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The parishioners of St. Joseph have once again responded to the needs of our community. This weekend we collected approximately 3,000 pounds of food and $3,480 in monetary donations. Your generosity will go a long way in assisting LINK in their Holiday food distribution to those less fortunate in our immediate community.

STEWARDSHIP
TIME • TALENT • TREASURE

The Diocese of Arlington has asked us to support an increased offertory program during the fall months. Our program began in November. You will receive the following information regarding this program:

- weekly bulletin reflections on the gift of stewardship – Time, Talent, Treasure;
- letter from the pastoral staff focusing on the increased offertory program; and
- request from the pastoral team for each of us to reflect upon the time, talent, and treasure which we share with the parish community.

As shared in the previous reflections, we often speak of stewardship in the context of **"the three t's": time, talent, and treasure**. Stewardship is a way of life and our relationship with Christ is at the heart of it all. I offer the following description of stewardship – **sharing treasure**:

A good steward of treasure purchases goods and services prudently and knows the difference between needs and wants. A good steward sets aside part of his or her income for the Church and makes a gift to the Lord that is prayerful, proportionate, planned, and sacrificial. The faithful steward gives in a significant way, all in gratitude for the Lord's gift upon the Cross. (Mahan, 2008)

We invite each member of our parish community to consider making an increase in their regular support for our parish. We hope each parishioner will play a conscientious role in shaping the future of St. Joseph Parish. This past week, several parishioners asked me the following two questions:

How much should I increase my offering?

Only you can decide what is appropriate for you and your family. A meaningful increase by all of the faithful of our parish will make an impact on the Parish and its proclaiming the Gospel.

What if I cannot increase my offering at this time?

While it is our hope that this increased offertory program will have a significant, positive impact on our offertory, I am particularly interested in hearing from our parishioners of how they can share the **gifts of their time, talents, and treasure**. Not everyone is in a position to increase their financial support. However, everyone can respond by sharing their time and talent.

May each of us pray how we can share our **time, talent, and treasure** in our response to embracing the Gospel. We invite everyone to pray for the success of this appeal. Many blessings!

In the peace of Francis of Assisi,

Father Tom, TOR

Poinsettias for the Altar

Boy Scout Troop 913 will be accepting dedications for the flowers that will adorn the Saint Joseph's altar during the Christmas Season. Boy Scouts will be in the vestibule of the church after Masses this weekend, December 17-18. Recommended donation for dedications is $15.00. This is a lovely way to remember loved ones during this blessed season.

THE YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER

"Revolving Our Lives Around Christ"

High School Open Gym / Board Game Night (Dec. 18th):

We have our monthly game night /open gym for high school teens from 6:00-7:45 p.m. in the St. Joseph's Gymnasium.

Snacks will be provided. If playing basketball, you must have on non-marking sneakers. All high school youth of the parish are welcome to participate.

Collection: December 8th - Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)
$ 6,358 plus Faith Direct $ 3,230

Our Lady of Guadalupe $1,259

Collection: The weekend of December 11

Offertory $21,167 plus Faith Direct $14,587

Second Collection: Catholic Charities Christmas Collection
$ 5,494 plus Faith Direct $ 5,639

Thank you for your continued support and kind generosity.

The historical location of the Christmas celebration (1223). It was in a small cave next to a small hermitage where the friars lived.

The Nativity Scene – A Franciscan Tradition

Peace and good! As many of you know, I was a pilgrimage leader for the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program. This ministry provided me with many blessings and opportunities to "walk in the footsteps" of Francis of Assisi with pilgrims from Franciscan-sponsored Health Care Institutions, Franciscan-sponsored Colleges/Universities, and friars from our Province.

As pilgrims, we "walked in the footsteps" of Francis of Assisi and learned much about his conversion moments, as well as, his personal relationship with Christ. Whether Francis was seeking counsel from the pope in Rome, taking his Gospel message to towns and villages, tending to lepers in the valley below Assisi, or looking for prayerful solitude in mountainside hermitages, Francis was open to the grace of the Holy Spirit. His life was a continuous spiritual journey.

One particular journey pilgrims take is a trip from Assisi to Greccio. Greccio is the site of one of Francis' mountain retreats. The focus and importance of experiencing Greccio is to gain a better understanding of Francis' understanding of the Incarnation – the birth of Christ. This is the site of Francis' reenactment of the Christ Child's birth. Francis' journey to Greccio was one of expectant hope in receiving and sharing God's love. The pilgrims and pilgrimage leaders also traveled to Greccio in a spirit of expectant hope to celebrate God's love.

While many may think of Francis' experience at Greccio with the celebration of the Christmas manger scene, let us remember that Francis' journey invites us to discover and share God's presence among us.

Christmas at St. Joseph Catholic Church

Over the past twenty years, parishioners of the parish have enjoyed the beauty of our nativity scene each Christmas season. The nativity scene has been the work of the friars, facility staff, several benefactors, and a few individuals who in the past built the background for the nativity scene.

The parish has 30 Fontanini statutes which make up our understanding of the Christmas story each year. The majority of these statutes have been donated by parishioners. This year, the parish staff has been working with several individuals to create a new background for the nativity scene. We look forward to sharing the work of these artists with you this Christmas.

It is with sincere gratitude that the friars and Pastoral Staff thank the benefactors who have purchased the Fontanini statutes and the parishioners who have built the nativity scenes used in the past. If you wish to donate to the Christmas Nativity background scene, please feel free to put your donation in to the collection basket on Sundays or mail to the parish office.

Father Tom, TOR

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

Masses for Christmas Eve,
Saturday, December 24
4:00 p.m. Mass in Parish Hall
4:00 p.m. Mass in Church
6:00 p.m.; 7:30 p.m.; 9:00 p.m. (choir)
Bi-Lingual Midnight Mass in Church
(Spanish Choir)

Masses for Christmas Day,
Sunday, December 25, 2016
8:00 a.m.; 10:00 a.m.; 11:30 a.m;
1:00 p.m. ; 3:30 p.m. Spanish Mass
(No 5:00 p.m. Mass on Christmas Day)

Saturday, New Year's Eve
December 31, 2016
Vigil Mass for New Year's Day
5:00 p.m.
Feast of the Solemnity of Mary
the Holy Mother of God

Sunday, New Year's Day,
January 1, 2017
Feast of the Solemnity of Mary
The Holy Mother of God
7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m.,
11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m.,
Spanish 3:30 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish Advisory Council

- **Tisha Hilliard, Secretary**
- **Cindi Conroy, SJS Liaison**
- **Jim Nash, Fin. Comm. Liaison**
- **Mark Overberg, Chairperson**
- **Greg Bengzon**
- **Marylou Bergeron**
- **Frank Bowen, Vice Chairperson**
- **Terry McNulty**
- **Tom Reilly**
- **Cheryl Wilson**

Do you have ideas for the parish or concerns about parish life? Email the Parish Advisory Council at pac@sjcherndon.org.

Attention CYO Basketball Alumni… The annual Christmas tournament is scheduled for Monday December 26, 2016. All current high school freshmen through seniors that played CYO basketball for St. Joseph are encouraged to join their former teammates in competition against the other alumni classes. Alumni Coaches are also asked to return to lead their former teams to victory. The following is the schedule for the games:

5:00 Game 1: Freshman Boys vs. Senior Boys
6:15 Game 2: Sophomore Boys vs. Junior Boys
7:30 Game 3: Girls Game
8:45 Game 4: Boys Championship Game

WMET 1160 AM Guadalupe Radio Network
Tune in to hear popular EWTN programming like "Catholic Answers Live," "Kresta in the Afternoon," and "Morning Glory" on WMET 1160AM every day. Guadalupe Radio Network's mission is to draw all people to the knowledge and love of Jesus and His Church through the medium of Catholic radio, in full accord with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Check out www.grnonline.com for a full program schedule.

Are you Seeking More?!

Join Us in January!

Wednesdays, 1:30-3pm - ***The Book of Revelations*** ~ Jeff Cavins, presenter ~ a walk through Revelations, the Kingdom Yet to Come (10 weeks)

Fridays, 9-11am - ***Catholicism: The Pivotal Players*** - Bishop Robert Barron's newest series, exploring six players who've shaped Catholicism & civilization (St Francis of Assisi, St Catherine of Siena, St Thomas Aquinas, Bl. John Henry Newman, GK Chesterton & Michaelangelo)! (6 weeks)

Please contact Amy at speetjens@verizon.net or 703.318.7311 for more information, to signup and to order materials. Come grow & learn together!!

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