

We See God in Each Other

From Generation to Generation

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We See God in Each Other, Luke 1: 39-58

Advent Poem: The Visitation by Malcolm Guite

Here is a meeting made of hidden joys
Of lightnings cloistered in a narrow place,
From quiet hearts the sudden flame of praise,
And in the womb the quickening kick of grace.
Two women on the very edge of things
Unnoticed and unknown to men of power,
But in their flesh the hidden Spirit sings
And in their lives the buds of blessing flower.
And Mary stands with all we call 'too young,'
Elizabeth with all called 'past their prime.'
They sing today for all the great unsung
Women who turned eternity to time,
Favored of heaven, outcast on the earth,
Prophets who bring the best in us to birth.

This week we return to Mary's experience. After receiving the news from the angel, she retreats to her cousin Elizabeth's house. When Mary arrives (perhaps unannounced), Elizabeth doesn't just welcome her—she is filled with the Holy Spirit and speaks a blessing upon Mary as her own child leaps and kicks within her womb. She sees how God is at work and names it out loud. In this moment of profound solidarity, Mary and Elizabeth see the divine in one another. This connection inspires Mary to sing her radical hymn of praise, declaring how God's liberating love

remains steadfast throughout the ages. From generation to generation, we can see how God is at work in our relationships. We find God in each other. The way we see the divine in each other impacts how we live and move in the world. When we view every human being as a child of God, we generate a different world.

Debie Thomas essay: Mary's Song

<https://www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/2856-mary-s-song>

"To me, her song demonstrates two things: her baseline trust in the goodness of God, and her imaginative capacity to frame her story as a story worth rejoicing over."

"After Mary sings her joy and God's delight, she finds the keen, sharp edge of her prophetic voice, and bursts into an anthem of hope and justice for the world's poorest, most forgotten, most brokenhearted, and most oppressed people. She describes a reality in which our sinful and unjust status quo is gorgeously reversed: the proud are scattered and the humble honored. The hungry are fed and the rich sent away. The powerful are brought down, and the lowly are lifted up. In short, Mary describes a world reordered and renewed — a world so beautifully characterized by love and justice, only the Christ she carries in her womb can birth it into being."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this: "As long as there are people, Christ will walk the earth as your neighbor, as the one through whom God calls you, speaks to you, makes demands on you."

About the artist Yolanda Lopez

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/18/arts/yolanda-lopez-dead.html>

Questions for this passage developed by Sanctified Art:

1. Mary greets Elizabeth at a literal threshold (the doorway of Elizabeth's home) and goes to her at a threshold moment in her life when all is about to change. Recall a threshold moment in your life. Who were the people who greeted you and

supported you through
that transition?

2. In the Roman empire, there were two main motivations for requiring a census: to count the number of able-bodied men who could be drafted for war, and to determine the number of taxpayers in every location. In other words, the census was designed to

consolidate the empire's military strength and economic power. In contrast, Mary sings about dethroning the powerful and lifting up the lowly (Luke 1:52). How does Mary's song disrupt systems of power and generate a new world? In what ways does the Magnificat comfort you? In what ways does it unsettle you?

3. In the 1970's-80's in Latin America, the Magnificat became an important symbol for liberation theologians as part of their resistance to oppressive regimes. In the 1970's, during the Dirty War in Argentina, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo used Mary's words to

publicly protest the disappearance of their children. German theologian, Dietrich

Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis, called the Magnificat "the most passionate,

the wildest, one might even say the most revolutionary hymn ever sung." Throughout the

generations, Mary's words have become a rallying cry for those deemed "lowly" or

"outcast." This Advent, how can we honor the revolutionary power of her words?