

**Wednesday of Ad Te Levavi, A ✠ D 2009**  
**Luke 1:46-56**

*In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

1 You thought Thanksgiving was too early to start singing Christmas carols? That's nothing. The first Christmas carol was sung nine months before the first Christmas.

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

3 Mary's song sets in sharp relief the Church and the world. The Mighty One, the Creator looks upon the humble. He has mercy for those who fear Him. His strong arm scatters the proud and brings low those who exalt themselves. The same strong arm defends and exalts the lowly. He has abundance to feed the hungry with the choicest, but the rich He sends away empty.

4 None of this is some social gospel tripe. His arm is stronger than that; His abundance is more than that. There are only two types of people in Mary's song, as there are only two types of people in the world: those able to be given to and those who refuse to receive. Those are the only options. Lift yourself or be lifted. Exalt yourself or be exalted. Fill yourself or be filled. But those who lift themselves, exalt themselves, fill themselves, trust in themselves, are pleased to compare themselves to others, will find themselves brought low. Repent.

5 At that very instant, when Gabriel came to Mary, when she responded, "Let it be to me according to your word," when the Word became flesh in her virgin womb, the low were exalted. Gabriel came to Mary lofty and exalted, but at the Incarnation, which took place in that encounter, lowly, sin-scarred, damnable humanity was exalted. God took human flesh in her womb. More than relief for the financially impoverished or physically starving is this exaltation of human flesh. God became man to redeem men, not angels, to exalt the spiritually poor and righteousness-starved mess of them.

6 Now Mary, as the representative of the Church, leads the choirs of angels. "O higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim, lead their praises: 'Alleluia!' Thou bearer of the-eternal Word, Most gracious, magnify the Lord: 'Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!'"

7        What does she lead them in singing? The same as she leads you in singing. Her Magnificat extols the Lord for His two defining characteristics: mercy and grace. Her song is the Christian's song, the Church's song. Mary receives the gifts the Lord bestows. Do whatever He tells you. Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; Let it be to me according to your word.

8        Her Son is the Son of God. Nine months from that first carol, He would be born to die. For Mary. For you. He has exalted you, of humble estate, pulling you from sin and death, and making you an heir to all that is His. In Holy Baptism, His strong arm has saved you, exalted you. In His Holy Supper He fills the hungry with the good things of His Body and Blood, the food for eternity, the meal that bestows forgiveness. The Mighty One has done great things for you, and holy is His name.

*In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

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