

The Friday of Ember Week in Advent
St. Luke 1:39-47
December 20th, 2024
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Fort Myers, FL
Pastor Jerald Dulas

My Soul doth Magnify the Lord

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And Mary said, ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends in Christ, on Wednesday of this Ember Week in Advent we heard the angel Gabriel make the announcement that a Baby Boy was to be born to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Child would be called + Jesus. He would be conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He would be holy, and He would be called the Son of God. St. Mary in her great faith gladly received the word of the angel, and confessed that what the Lord God willed, that should be to her. For this reason, the Blessed Virgin Mary is called the highly favored one. For, she would give birth to the Messiah, the Savior of the world. He would redeem mankind from their sins and iniquities, and grant that forgiveness to all those who cling to Him in faith. This is where we left off on Wednesday.

Today, on the Friday of the Ember Week in Advent, we hear the continuation of that Gospel reading from the first chapter of the Evangelist St. Luke. What does the Blessed Virgin do after she hears that she was to be the Mother of the Lord God? St. Luke tells us that she went with haste to her relative Elisabeth; to the home of Zacharias the priest. She was six months pregnant with the forerunner of the Christ, St. John the Baptist. We heard that story in the first week of the Advent season. Zacharias was told by the angel Gabriel that he and his wife would be parents in their old age, when Elisabeth was considered barren, and they were both well-stricken in years. They would receive the answer to their prayers for a child. They would be given an answer to their prayers by receiving a miracle birth.

Today, we see the meeting of the forerunner of the Christ, in the womb of Elisabeth his mother, meeting the Christ Child, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. John the Baptist is only six months in the womb of his mother. Our Lord + Jesus is only a few *days* old having been conceived in the womb of St. Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. Two infants, not even having been born yet, meet. Two infants, neither of which would have a strong chance of surviving outside of the womb, especially our Lord Who is only a few days after His conception into our flesh, meet.

St. Mary greets her relative Elisabeth, and what is the reaction of everyone? The baby in the womb of Elisabeth leaps for joy. Moreover, Elisabeth is filled with the Holy Ghost and lifts up her voice in a loud cry, exalting the fruit that is in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And St. Mary's reaction?

She also lifts up her voice in praise and song. She sings what we have come to know as the Magnificat. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." This is the song which we sing at the Office of Vespers. It is especially appropriate for us to sing during this season of Advent.

We are even in the midst of the time of the "O" antiphons when an appropriate antiphon is sung prior to and after the Magnificat. Today that "O" antiphon is *Clavis David*, "O Key of David and Sceptre of the House of Israel! Thou openest and no one closeth, Thou closest and no one openeth: Come and lead out of the fetters of the prison house the captives who sit in darkness and the shadow of death."

Therefore, my dear friends, consider what we have here. We have the meeting of two unborn babies in the wombs of their mothers. We have two expecting mothers bearing two sons. One bears the forerunner to the Christ, and one bears the Christ Himself. What is everyone's reaction? It is joy and jubilation. What is the reason for such a reaction? Why does St. Mary's soul magnify the Lord? Why is St. John the Baptist leaping with joy in the womb of his mother Elisabeth? Because the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world, has come. The Lord God has taken frail flesh and become a man.

Why does He do this? Why is He to be praised with song for this? Why is there such joy at this event? Because our Lord has come as the Lord Emmanuel. He is God with us. He is, as we sing in the "O" antiphon for today, the Key of David. He is the One Who can open and shut the gates of Hell and Heaven. He binds into Hell all those who reject Him. All those who trust in their own works and merits, who imagine that they are saved by their own virtue and righteousness. They remain bound in the fetters of the prison house of darkness and the shadow of death.

But for those who by the working of the Holy Ghost, Who has created faith in them through their hearing of the Word of God and believing on it, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, is the One Who unlocks the fetters binding them in the prison house of sin and death. He opens up to us the gates of Heaven. By the atonement of our sins, and the sins of all mankind, on the tree of the holy cross, we are justified by faith in Him. When we cling to Him and His works and merits, we are made right with the Lord God. We are no longer bound in the chains that lead into eternal death.

This is the Baby that is incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. The Lord God dwells with us. The Redeemer and Savior of mankind dwells with us. It is a cause for great joy and the singing of praises. Our souls like St. Mary's also rejoice in the Lord God our Savior. Our souls are also caused to magnify the Lord, for our Savior has come to be with us. The One Who will defeat sin and death is among us. His work of redemption has begun. What a great reason for St. John the Baptist in the womb of Elisabeth to leap for joy at! What a great reason for Elisabeth to cry with a loud voice the praise of the fruit of the One in St. Mary's womb! What a great reason for the Blessed Virgin to sing, and give to the Church, the Magnificat! What a great reason for us to be joyful and full of songs of praise at what our loving and merciful Savior has done for us poor, miserable sinners.

Let us, therefore, my dear friends, give thanks and praise to our Redeemer and Savior. For He has come to free us from the bonds of sin and death, by offering up His life as a ransom for ours. Let us cling in faith to His works and merits. For by His perfect fulfilling of the Law, and His innocent suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross, our sins have been atoned for. He offers to us the gifts that He won for us on the cross in the blessed means of grace. In Word and Sacrament, we receive all that He won for us on the holy cross. Therefore, we can greatly rejoice and sing with St. John, and Elisabeth, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. For our souls doth magnify the Lord, and our spirit rejoice in the Lord God our Savior. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of

the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!