



The Magnificat

A SONG OF MERCY

**The Magnificat is the most passionate, the wildest,
one might even say the most revolutionary hymn ever
sung.**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The Magnificat is...one of the most famous songs in Christianity. It's been whispered in monasteries, chanted in cathedrals, recited in small remote churches by evening candlelight, and set to music with trumpets and kettledrums by Johann Sebastian Bach. It's the "gospel before the gospel," a fierce bright shout of triumph thirty weeks before Bethlehem, thirty years before Calvary and Easter. It's all about God, and it's all about a revolution.

NT Wright

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

Isaiah 63:7

The power of the most High will overshadow her means something different than merely the Holy Spirit coming on her: God himself, the creator, will surround her completely with his sovereign power....Mary is the supreme example of what always happens when God is at work by grace through human beings. God's power from outside, and the indwelling spirit within, together result in things being done which would have been unthinkable any other way.

NT Wright

Blessed among women was she, and highly favoured of the Lord; but we can enjoy the same favour; nay, we must enjoy it, or the coming of a Saviour will be of no avail to us. Christ on Calvary, I know, takes away the sin of his people; but none have ever known the virtue of Christ upon the cross, unless they have the Lord Jesus formed in them as the hope of glory...Oh! you can never know the joy of Mary unless Christ becomes truly and really yours; but oh! when he is yours, yours within, reigning in your heart, yours controlling all your passions, yours changing your nature, subduing your corruptions, inspiring you with hallowed emotions; yours within, a joy unspeakable and full of glory— oh! then you can sing, you must sing, who can restrain your tongue? If all the scoffers and mockers upon earth should bid you hold your peace, you must sing; for your spirit must rejoice in God your Saviour.

Charles Spurgeon

A SONG OF JUSTICE

**Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD;
awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago.
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced
the dragon? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the
waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the
sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?**

Isaiah 51:9-10

What is the testimony of Mary? The testimony of Mary is that even in the shadow of the empire there is a space for hope and that sometimes in that space, God calls us from the shadows to join him in his great work of salvation and liberation.

Esau McCaulley

Mary teaches us that an inner life characterized by hope is necessary to sustain the work of justice in the world.

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages.

Frederick Douglass

PONDERING

We are amazed in the biblical sense when we simply let energy flow through in the same way as a wire conducts an electrical current, when we simply take in the energy of the group around us or the energy of spontaneous emotion and, without holding, carrying, or transforming it, act on it as it flows through us. That can sometimes be harmless or even good, at a rock concert or a football game, but it can also be mindless, negative, and dangerous. Amazement lies at the root of hype, ideology, groupthink, mob mentality, gang rapes, and crucifixion. Crowds do not think: they act out of a blind energy, and that carries immense dangers...To ponder, biblically, is the opposite of this. We ponder when we do not let the energy of the crowd or spontaneous emotion simply flow through us and become the basis for our actions. Instead, we hold and carry and transform that energy so as to not mindlessly re-transmit it. And this capacity lies at the root of deeper maturity and deeper virtue.

Ronald Rolheiser

SUFFERING