

Reflections for 15th August 2021

The Blessed Virgin Mary

Mary's Song

This Sunday is the day in our church year when we are invited to remember Mary, and celebrate her place in the gospel story. Our gospel reading is Luke's account of Mary's song in reply to the greeting of her cousin Elizabeth, after she has responded in faith and trust to God's call for her to become the mother of the Messiah.

Some of us may be familiar with the words of Mary's song as the 'Magnificat' that we say or sing as part of the service of Evensong.

Mary begins her song with words of praise – glorifying and 'magnifying' God for his loving attention to her, and to all God's humble servants in every generation.

Then Mary expresses her faith that God will fulfil his promises to his people. She praises God in anticipation for things that have not yet happened, and she speaks as if God's promises for the future have already been fulfilled.

And she looks forward with hope for the world to change as it comes to reflect the values of the kingdom of God. Her words envisage our normal expectations being turned upside down, as the proud are scattered, the rulers brought down, and the rich sent away empty, while the hungry are filled, and the humble are lifted up.

So Mary's story and Mary's song offer us a pattern that may guide us in our response to God's call on our lives – inviting us to respond with praise and thanksgiving, to have faith and trust in God's promises, and to live in hope that change will come, as we see signs of the kingdom of God at work in our world.

Revd John Waller

Almighty God,
who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary
and chose her to be the mother of your only Son:
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood
may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Bible readings: Isaiah 61. 10-11; Galatians 4. 4-7; Luke 1. 46-56

Story: 'Mary and the Angel' (based on part of Luke chapter 2)