

**SHARING THE FAITH: WEEKLY EMAIL DEVOTION
FOR THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 20, 2009**

Reading for the week ending December 20, 2009, Fourth Sunday of Advent:

LUKE 1:39-55

³⁹⁻⁴⁵Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,

You're so blessed among women,
and the babe in your womb, also blessed!
And why am I so blessed that
the mother of my Lord visits me?
The moment the sound of your
greeting entered my ears,
The babe in my womb
skipped like a lamb for sheer joy.
Blessed woman, who believed what God said,
believed every word would come true!
⁴⁶⁻⁵⁵And Mary said,

I'm bursting with God-news;
I'm dancing the song of my Savior God.
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—
I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.
His mercy flows in wave after wave
on those who are in awe before him.
He bared his arm and showed his strength,
scattered the bluffing braggarts.
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,
pulled victims out of the mud.
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;
the callous rich were left out in the cold.
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.
It's exactly what he promised,
beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

Faith Questions:

1. “Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true!” Have you ever believed God the way that Mary did? What would happen if you did? What would happen if you lived your life believing that everything God has promised you will come true?
2. Mary was in a very difficult situation. Young, unmarried, and pregnant, she was vulnerable to ridicule and rejection. And yet, Mary accepted her fate with joy: “God took one look at me, and look what happened—I’m the most fortunate woman on earth!” Have you ever been as gracious and joy-filled during a hard time as Mary was? How has God used difficult situations to transform your life? Did you accept it willingly, or only realize it later?
3. What if we all lived our lives the way Mary did—believing what God said, joy-filled even in the hardest times? How would that transform our relationships, our hearts, our world?
4. Verses 46-55 are often called The Magnificat, and are Mary’s song of praise and thanksgiving for the gift God had given her. In fact, the word “Magnificat” comes from the Latin word meaning “magnifies or declares the greatness of.” What would your Magnificat sound like if you were to write one? How are you “bursting with God-news?” How does your soul magnify the Lord?
5. Who do you think Mary’s words were meant for? Were they meant for Elizabeth, for the child in her womb, for God? What role do you think Mary played in making Jesus into the man he would become? What can her words teach us about who God made us to be?

Let us pray:

Lord, like Mary, we are bursting with God-news. Teach us how to believe your promises, show us how to be joy-filled in difficult times. Help us to magnify your name in all that we do, and to be the people that you created us to be.

For whom else, and for what else, shall we pray? (Insert your own prayer here)

Amen.

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