

Encouragement as we wait for Jesus

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Advent 4 – Magnificat – Luke 1.²⁶⁻⁴⁵ Encouragement as we wait for Jesus

In Advent, we get ready for Christ's coming, and Mary's Song is a wonderful model for getting ready. Her soul and spirit erupt in a spontaneous outburst of wonder and delight. This morning, as usual, we recited her *Song* out of context. We might have found her delight surprising; *an unmarried, pregnant teenager in Roman Palestine!*? But today's Gospel gives us the context of her *Song*. And the context is a wonderful affirmation of Mary's calling from her wise, faithful old cousin, Elizabeth.

It's people like Elizabeth – someone very like a lot of you – who have the power to enable young, vulnerable people like Mary to open their souls and spirits to the coming of Jesus. We can be enablers; people who recognise it when God is calling someone to an extraordinary task; we can help them greet their calling with joy.

Elizabeth freed Mary to give her testimony: that God cares for her: *You, Lord, have looked with favour on your lowly servant.* Elizabeth set Mary free to recognise that she was called to join in God's greatest work.

The God we meet in Mary's *Song* is a God who is involved. God's acts described here are at once vigorous, political and tender. God is a tempest raging through the petty conceits of our inner worlds; God is disgusted by oppression and willing to fight it. But God is passionate for the restoration of the lowly; that the hungry must be fed.

Mary proclaims a God who is trustworthy and unchanging. God's promises made to people centuries earlier remain good to all their descendants forever. Just so now; where we see a Church filled with praying, attentive, open-hearted elders who discern and encourage the gifts of their young people, we see an outpouring of all the marvellous blessings Mary proclaimed as she waited for Jesus to come!

Mary's prophetic song is a wonderful model of prayer and proclamation to emulate. Acting on what God says, giving testimony, praying prayers that reveal God's heart; these were the right things for Mary to do while she was waiting for Jesus. They are still the right things for us to do as we wait for him to come again. Amen.