

**Mary's Magnificat**    Final Advent Days    Monday, December 22, 2014    8:15 AM  
1 Sm 1:24-28; **Lk 1:46-56** (God doesn't call anybody without empowering them to respond.)

People of course ask, "Well, did Mary really say this?" The answer is we don't know. We know that Luke, and only Luke, provides us with this beautiful poem. **In this poem we see the whole gospel already taking shape; the themes of the gospel are already here:** good news, especially for the lowly, for the humble, for those who suffer. Justice: the lowly are raised; the rich are sent away empty. The hungry are filled with good things; the powerful are pushed down. I think Luke intends this to be the theme song of his gospel, and it serves that purpose.

The important thing for us is to realize, which humanly we don't, how **God's compassion zeros in on, is attracted to, human suffering.** There is no point in trying to explain why this should be so. We cannot understand the nature of God. We simply see it revealed in Christ. We see in Christ, in fact, the creation of, I would say, the creation of a whole family of emotions. Jesus' emotions are truly human, but they are human in a very specific way because they reflect God's nature—**Jesus' emotions are human, but they reflect God's nature.** That's the very idea of **the Incarnation: the humanity of Jesus reflects divinity and reveals it.**

It's a very good question you could think about, and I don't know the answer, but: **Were these emotions Jesus expressed, such as compassion, actually in the human repertoire before Christ?** I don't know. I doubt you see an example of it in literature. Did they exist at all? Did these emotions Jesus expresses exist before him? I don't know. **Maybe already Mary is expressing them because she is already pregnant with the Word of God.** So maybe that is also part of Mary's role *is* to reflect this divine way of looking at life, feeling about life and, yes, respond to life, because this is something people find it hard to believe, but **God does react to and respond to us in our situation.** St. Thomas talks about **cooperant grace**, cooperant, **God cooperating.** It sounds odd. Why would God cooperate? But that's what God does. He doesn't pull strings. We are not puppets. **He cooperates with our freedom. He also calls us according to his own providential plan. That's operant grace.** But he also cooperates. **God wants this inter-reaction, this interplay.** We see it

already in Mary, while all along all the people involved are free, they freely giving their freedom to God to freely guide them and direct them according to what is best, what is providential, what is most caring. **So already the whole idea of the Incarnation is at work even in Mary, because the Incarnation is taking place within her.**

It's very important that we see that because God is attracted to the pains of human life, the suffering of human life, if you will, the humiliations of human life, **it is absurd for us to think that poverty or pain or suffering is some reason not to respond to God.** And yet I have heard people say that often. The good news is God is with us; God is for us; God desires to help us. But that involves, that entails, that we respond. And we cannot say, well, we cannot respond because we are in pain, or we can't respond because we are suffering, or we can't respond because we are poor, or we can't respond because we are suffering injustice. That doesn't make any sense. **God doesn't call anybody without empowering them to respond.**

So Mary leads the way, in one way. She leads the way in her own way to respond to God. **But we all have to find our way to respond to God,** and we have to respond! We are not called on to be passive recipients of salvation. We are not called on to be spectators at this divine drama. That's not the point. No, **we are all called on to be participants,** and there is no reason possible for us not to participate.