

“Mary Shows the Way”

Luke 1:46-55

St. Mary, the Mother of Our Lord – Trinity, Girard

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SID President

Introduction

Two of our Scripture Lessons today seem to have given us a little bit of Christmas in the middle of August

- When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born...

- Gospel brings us “Mary’s Song” when she knew she would be the mother of the Savior.

All this is because on our church calendar, August 15 is the day the Church remembers St. Mary, as the Mother of Our Lord.

à But why should we remember the blessed virgin Mary?

à As Lutheran Christians with the Word of God at the center of our life together

o We do not worship or pray to Mary, as some do...

because the Word of God tells us to worship God alone, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

o Nor do we place Mary on the same level with Christ, such as many do in the Roman Church.

So WHY do we remember Mary?

à We bless and honor her, we give thanks to God for her, both because she is THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD, and because we see her as a PRIME EXAMPLE of true faith in Christ.

I have expressed it in my theme for this day

– MARY SHOWS THE WAY

Mary Shows Us the Way

à The way to receive God’s Word and the gifts of God’s grace

à The way to confess our unworthiness and praise God

à The way to look to Jesus for everything...

In the portion of Luke's Gospel that comes before our text,  
We have the familiar story of the angel Gabriel coming to Mary.  
à You know the story of the angel's conversation with Mary...  
The story ends with Mary saying:  
o I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me as you have said.

Once the angel has explained what God will do for her and in her, Mary simply receives  
in faith what God has said, and what God will give.  
à So Mary shows us the way to receive God's Word, and the gifts of God's grace.  
o You could also say that Mary is showing us here, HOW TO BE THE CHURCH.

à The Lord speaks His Word, and we are called to say, with Mary, Let it be to me as you  
have said.

à Here's how to be the Church... The Lord comes to us with His gifts, and we are called  
simply to receive them in faith.

o We hear the word – Your sin is forgiven you – and we say: Let it be to me as you have  
said...

o We receive the gifts of Christ – This is my body... This is my blood – Let it be to me as  
you have said.

o We remember our Baptism – We were buried with Christ by Baptism into death, so  
that as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may walk in newness of life – Lord, let it  
be to me as you have said...

Example of my mother – 80 years old, talking about her body.

She's going to turn that one in and get a brand new one. And so will you. And so will I.

That's the Church's faith – with Mary showing the way: Lord, let it be to me as you have  
said.

Once it had been made known to Mary that her cousin Elizabeth was also expecting a  
child, Mary went to visit her...

And after Elizabeth blessed Mary, asking, Why is this granted to me that the mother of

my Lord should come to me?

Mary responded with her song – the Magnificat – our Gospel text

In her song, Mary continues to show us the way

First – the way to praise God

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

à Mary is not looking to herself AT ALL, but she magnifies THE LORD, rejoicing in God HER Savior.

à She is not saying – Look at me! – Look at what I have! Not even, look at what I have from God.

à No – She points only to God

So the Church today – you and I – are called to look only to what God does for us.

Here's the next part of her song:

For He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. An older translation does it this way – He has regarded the humble... For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

Martin Luther explains: “Mary... does not glory in her worthiness nor yet in her unworthiness, but solely in the divine regard, which is so exceedingly good and gracious that He deigned to look upon such a lowly maiden, and to look upon her in so glorious and honorable a fashion.”

It was not Mary or her humility that was the thing, but that God looked on her, that God regarded her.

What this means is that Mary counts herself completely unworthy of the honor given to her that she should be the mother of the Savior.

Yes, all generations shall call her blessed, but only because He who is mighty has done great things, for His mercy is on those who fear Him.

Here's another interesting take on this from Martin Luther:

“Mary confesses that the foremost work God did for her was that He regarded her,

which is indeed the greatest of His works, on which all the rest depend and from which they all derive. For where it comes to pass that God turns His face toward one to regard him, there is nothing but grace and salvation, and all gifts and works must follow.”

This attitude, where we look for everything Jesus has done for us, can help us see together what God is really doing here with Trinity Lutheran Church, between Girard and Virden.

We have done some work together here, pastor and people, so I know what you have been thinking about your congregation.

We're only a small congregation. We can't do much.

We can hardly make it as a congregation.

Of course, when you look at your congregation through human eyes, that's what appears to be true. But that's not how God looks at you.

Mary's word here teaches us to see how God regards you, how God looks on the humble estate of His servant, Trinity Lutheran Church... How the mighty one has done great things for you,

Not because we deserve it, But solely because of His mercy.

DO you see, then, how Mary SHOWS US THE WAY to look to Jesus for everything. He has shown strength with His arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

It's not Mary, but Mary's child.

Mary is just like us, born in sin of sinful parents, but the Holy Spirit covered her, set her apart and made it so that she gave birth to Jesus, pure and holy, not touched by sin, as we are.

This is what fulfilled all the old promises, that...

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the law.

And then... All of this came true, all of this came to a head, as Mary watched when they nailed her son Jesus up to the cross.

That's where Jesus – showed strength with His arm, nailed to the +

That's where Jesus – scattered the proud, by His humble death

That's where Jesus – brought down the mighty, and where Jesus exalted the lowly...

At the cross, that's where He fills the hungry with good things, those who are hungry for righteousness and forgiveness.

That's where God remembers His mercy, in the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

That's where God gives us the right to call Him Father, and where we become His beloved sons and daughters. Where we receive His eternal inheritance.

So also NOW... with her song, MARY SHOWS US THE WAY

à The way to receive God's Word and His gifts in faith

à The way to confess our unworthiness, not pointing to ourselves, but only to what God has done.

à So Mary then, shows us the way to look to Jesus for everything.

Conclusion

And with all of this, as we receive the Word of God as Mary did, as we confess, as we look to Jesus...

Then this Scripture in our Old Testament Lesson becomes true also for us.

I will rejoice greatly in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

There is THAT MOMENT in a wedding, when the bride steps out.

But in a far, far greater way, the Word of God and the example of Mary, teach us to believe, that's now how God looks on us.

Just as God REGARDED Mary, so in Jesus, He has clothed YOU with the garments of salvation, He has covered YOU with the robe of His righteousness. He has prepared YOU as His lovely bride forever.

Tell the STORY of BEVERLY...

She could not believe...

But the good news began to come through for her when the Lord helped her to see...

You are the bride of Christ. And, as Mary said, Let it be to me...

You are the one He loves ... Let it be to me...

You are the one He regards... Let it be to me, as you have said

And that's how MARY SHOWS US THE WAY!

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior... for He has regarded the low estate of His servant.

In the name of Jesus! Amen.