DAY 11

LUKE 1:46–56

And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

This song is known by many as the Magnificat, which is a Latin word meaning "to magnify." Mary's Magnificat is a strong message from an even stronger young woman.

When Mary said yes to God's invitation to become an integral part of the world's redemption, her life became much more difficult. Even as Mary rightly foresees that "all generations will call me blessed," justifying an out-of-wedlock pregnancy to her husband-to-be and to her family would be no small task. In Mary's world, at this time women were regarded more as property to be controlled than as people with God-ordained agency. The life Mary offered in humble service to God was on the line with those she loved the most.

Gabriel's call, however, touched something deep within Mary, igniting a fire in her bones that would not be quenched by the disapproving judgment of people in town. This young woman grasped that God's salvation was more than a private possession. The redemption which will soon emerge from her womb will turn the power structures of this world on its head. The mighty will be brought low. The lowly will be lifted up. The proud will be scattered and those on the margins will find the favor of our God. It's easy to look at the world and those in power and believe that the way things always have been is the way they always will be. But Advent offers the opportunity we need to join Mary in proclaiming that salvation brings a new future. Advent extends beyond our personal lives to impact the world around us. Jesus brings an upside-down Kingdom to reign. How and where might we begin to join this work?

Let the four tenets of Advent Conspiracy be our guide: Let the way we worship be overflowing. Help us to spend wisely and support causes that truly matter. May we give intentionally and relationally. And may the way we love and serve others be a true reflection of Christ.

REFLECT

Like Mary, how can you magnify the Lord today? In what ways can you intentionally get to know the stories of your neighbors and outsiders in your city? How can knowing these stories help you to better love and serve other people during Advent?

PRAY

My soul magnifies you, O Lord. You are the only one who can bring lasting freedom and peace into our broken world. Help me understand how your salvation is needed in the recesses of my soul and in the recesses of my city. I am your servant; use me in accordance with your will. Help me to express your love boldly to all the people I encounter today. Amen.