In the passage that we read earlier from the *Gospel of Luke*, we read this beautifully written *Song of Mary*, commonly known as the ***Magnificat*** meaning “magnified” in Latin. It is one of the ancient Christian hymns sung by the church, especially among the Roman Catholic communities. It is a song of praise describing the unexpected **mixed emotion of Fear as well as Faith** from the expecting mother-to-be Mary.

Interestingly on this final Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve is only 4 days away, our text focuses on paying tribute to the earthly mother of Jesus, because it is important for us to remember that Jesus also had an earthly mother. Although He was fully God, He was also fully human as well. Today we focus upon Mary and her faithful response to God’s calling in her life to be the bearer of God’s Son. How would you feel if you are being called upon to carry out such a role – a role that changed the whole course of human history.­­

We do not know whether Mary actually sang this song, it could’ve been a song written later on about Mary. But through the words that were sung, we could empathize Mary’s authentic fear, as well as her excitement and jubilation. By saying “Yes” to God, she subjected herself to judgement by society. She could’ve been publically humiliated or even outcast by her community. Joseph could’ve called off their engagement and simply walked away, and leaving Mary as a single pregnant teenager. But we must give Joseph a lot of credit for not doing that. Joseph too honored his end of his Promise to Mary! He stayed with her throughout this ordeal. More importantly, Mary honored her promise to God that she would bear God’s Son in her womb. Imagine what would’ve happened if she had said “No!”

But God had greater plans in mind beyond what our human eyes could see. Throughout the history of humankind, we saw that **God had chosen ordinary people to carry out extra-ordinary tasks.**

In our story today, we’ve read about both Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth, both found themselves being pregnant only a few months apart - one being a much older woman who had been barren and past beyond her child-bearing age and the other was an unwedded teenage virgin. Talk about irony or perhaps God’s sense of humor! None of these made any sense whatsoever!!! But as we all know that with God, all things are possible.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In the case of Mary and Elizabeth, God believed in them and they believed in God by offering their body and their lives to be used by God. This was their response to God’s calling in their lives. How many of us are willing to do just what Mary and Elizabeth did?

God blessed both Mary and Elizabeth through their faithful commitment and the roles that they played in God’s plan of salvation for humanity. This was all orchestrated through God’s Divine promise.

As we saw that through other calling narratives of notable figures such as Moses, Isaac, Samuel, David, other prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, God did not randomly assign people to take on responsibilities that they could not handle. God made a promise to them the He would stay with His people until the very end.

Furthermore, God also did not choose those who are the most qualified or traditionally viewed as the favored ones either. **God gave grace to the humbled and strength to the weak. God moved those who are situated on the fringe of society and placed them in the center of God’s activities and plans. God flips things inside out and upside down.** This was all part of God’s happening.

Mary demonstrated her courage and willingness to take bold risks when she accepted her role to be the bearer of God’s Son. ***“Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”[[2]](#footnote-2)*** **Here am I, Let it be….according to your word!** What a powerful statement of courage and faith that often gets overshadowed by the birth narrative and the rest of the Christmas scene! **Here am I, Let it be….according to your word!**

By faith, Mary believed the angel’s words and agreed to bear this God-child fulfilling the prophecy of a Messiah*. “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."[[3]](#footnote-3)*

Mary’s action and faith testimony demonstrated to the rest of humanity that even under humanly impossible circumstances, God is able to do the extraordinary and seemingly impossible things.

*"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God”,* the angel proclaimed. “*And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.”[[4]](#footnote-4)*

Like Mary and Elizabeth, many of us today may also be living in great fears, both internal and external. We have inner fears that we do not want others to know about perhaps we are ashamed of it ourselves. We fear for the safety of our children, our family and our loved ones. We fear for crimes and violence both abroad and in our own backyard. We fear for our work….of not having enough or having too much of. We fear for the environment and the world in which we live, how we have exploited and neglected over the years. We fear of being lonely and friendless, especially during the holiday season. We fear for the uncertainty of our future…what’s going to happen tomorrow? The list goes on and on…we do not have all the answers either.

God made an ultimate promise to us all to overcome all of our fears, through the lowly shepherds out in the wilderness. *"Do not be afraid; for see -- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,1 the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"[[5]](#footnote-5)*

Both Mary and Elizabeth have demonstrated to us that we too can turn our Fears into Faith trusting that our sovereign God is ultimately in control. **According to the Promise**, God remains actively involved in this world. God has not given up on God’s people just yet. Through this Promise, God re-affirmed and renewed the covenant that was once established to our forefathers, as God declared **“*I will walk among you, and [I] will be your God, and you shall be my people.[[6]](#footnote-6)***

God has heard the cries of the innocents by sending His incarnate Son Jesus Christ, who is the Prince of Peace, into the human world that is marred by violence, hatred and bloodshed. **It is through this troubling and turbulent time that our greatest fears are being overcome by God’s promise of true JOY and real PEACE in our hearts.**

In light of the string of recent tragic events where senseless evil and violence seems to have overtaken a community with fears all around us, we need not look further for the expected HOPE and PEACE that can ONLY come through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Who would’ve known that this innocent newborn child, born in a lowly manger because the world did not make room for him, would came into this fractured society to restore HOPE and instill PEACE in our broken hearts?** If there’s any time when our world needs a Savior, it is NOW!

Friends, even through the darkest night and glimmer of hope, we can still find this **light of Christ that has come into our midst as a revelation to God’s promise to this world.** This Christ light will outshine all the darkness of evil of this world and will restore hope for our futures.

Earlier before we lit the 4th candle of Advent – which is the candle of LOVE…this candle of love is also a candle of God’s fulfilled promise. It is Christ’s Love that binds us all together in perfect harmony and restore our relationships in this fractured and broken world that we live. Christ is the perfect love from God that would cast out all of our fears.

During this Advent Season, let us prepare to invite Christ once again into our lives, in the midst of many fears that are surrounding us in this troubling world – a world that’s seemingly flipped upside down and inside out. Fear Not! For God has called us out and challenged us out of our comfort zones and granted us peace and assurance of God’s Promise, just like Mary and Elizabeth.

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,*

*and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*

*for he has looked with favor*

*on the lowliness of his servant.*

*Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;*

*for the Mighty One has done great things for me,*

*and holy is his name.*

*His mercy is for those who fear him*

*from generation to generation.”[[7]](#footnote-7)*

God has interrupted our routines by coming into this world in human form **according to God’s promise**. How do we embrace God’s unexpected interruptions and surprises in our daily lives? We are still living in the full spectrum of God’s promise each and every day.

Sometimes we just don’t see it because we are too caught up with ourselves. We are too busy cluttering our lives with our personal ambitions and agenda, while leaving little room for Christ. We’ve been obscured by our own view of God’s promise, blinded by our own fears, worries, and insecurities, or perhaps our own pride and accomplishments.

**Through His Son Jesus Christ, God has claimed us by holding up His end of the Promise and God is challenging all of us today to reclaim ours today!**

This is what Christmas is all about. This is why God came to be with us through our Lord Jesus Christ. This miracle birth appears too difficult to believe. Things may NOT make much sense at all…but this is how God’s radical love works! It’s about a promise made fulfilled through a lowly infant born of a carpenter and an unwedded teenager – a refugee family from the Middle East seeking asylum in their pursuit of fulfilling their hopes and dreams.

May Mary’s Song be a “Magnificent” display of our faith and be our prayer of courage in overcoming all the fears in our lives. Thanks be to God. In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Matthew 19:26* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Luke 1:38* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Luke 1:45* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Luke 1:30-32 and 35* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Luke 2:10-14* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Leviticus 26:12* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Luke 1:46-50* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)