Advent Devotional December 22, 2026

Scripture

Luke 1:39–48a

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

46 And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Devotion

Katelyn Fisher '18/'22

Women are remarkable creatures. When faced with the most significant, life-altering, truly cosmic, news of her life, Mary's response is to say, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) I'm grateful, of course, for the witness of Mary's unfaltering faithfulness, but I do wonder about all the internal angst that the writing has overlooked. Mary was fully human, and part of a human's creatureliness is to process and express emotion. I like to imagine that when the text says Mary set out *with haste* to a Judean town, this is a subtle clue that perhaps all is not well in Mary's spirit.

Before she even has an opportunity to share the news with her cousin, Elizabeth already knows. Mary brings the fullness of her humanity to her dear friend—the fear, confusion, and distress—and Elizabeth immediately takes notice, pronouncing blessings over her instead. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, becomes a conduit of God's authority, speaking the truth of Mary's capability to give sanctuary to her beloved Lord within her womb. Elizabeth's ability to speak truth over Mary in a fragile and pivotal moment gives Mary the courage to face the uncertainty with resolve. Knowing she does not go forth into the journey alone, Mary is reminded of the remarkable power she possesses: to declare condemnation against the mighty and extend mercy to the lowly.

May you too be reminded of your own spiritual authority "to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy." (Luke 10:19) Mary and Elizabeth show us that our spiritual authority is not just for defeating enemies, but for sustaining one another. In times of deep distress, may we follow their witness—becoming sanctuaries for each other, speaking truth over the fragile places, and reminding one another of who we belong to.

Prayer

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state 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;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."