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## Scripture

Luke 1:39-48a (48b-56)

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

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

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

<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

<sup>56</sup>And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

## Devotional

Moving into adulthood is a time of transitioning from "it's all about me" to "it's also about others." Christmas celebrations illustrate this transition well. As children we experienced the happy torture of anticipating the moment of opening our gifts. With age we realize (hopefully) that Christmas is a richer celebration when we divert some self-attention to attending to others.

This “adult Christmas” is modeled for us in the story of Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, told in Luke 1:39-56. Elizabeth is honored to have “the mother of my Lord come to me.” But she is mostly happy for her much younger relative Mary, calling her “blessed” for believing. The six-month-old baby in her womb, the future John the Baptizer, is equally happy, moving vigorously at the sound of Mary’s greeting. He is already playing the role of Jesus’ forerunner, happy to point away from himself to Jesus.

And what of Mary? In her words to Elizabeth known as the “Magnificat,” she proclaims God’s greatness. Echoing the words of Hannah, Samuel’s once-barren mother, and other powerless heroes from Israel’s past, she sees God’s favor to her as a sign of God’s wider purpose in the world. In Christ God is lifting high the lowly who fear him and taking down from their thrones the proud, the rich, and the powerful who do not.

### **Prayer**

O God, give us a spiritually mature vision of Christmas. Help us to celebrate well the blessedness of our Savior Jesus Christ, not only for our own selves but also for all the lowly of heart, the downtrodden, who continue to revere you. Amen.