

3 Advent B

December 13, 2020

St. Patrick

In the Scriptures for this Sunday, did you catch Mary's entrance in our Advent—*this* Advent?

Oh, you might tell me that Mary wasn't named in this Sunday's passage from Isaiah. You are correct. The Apostle Paul doesn't mention her at all in the passage from his First Letter to the Thessalonians. (In fact, in all of his letters St. Paul never speaks of Mary by name.) And, the Gospel says nothing at all about Mary.

St. Patrick's: Mary made her entrance this Advent beautifully and boldly. It's in the Responsorial Psalm, sung between the first and second readings. We heard her great song in St. Luke's Gospel, beginning with these words: **“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”** I made mention of the breviary last Sunday. Every deacon, priest, and layperson who prays the church's official prayer—well, we pray Mary's song every night.

It's the most Mary says in all the four Gospels—this song. She's an impoverished servant teenage girl instead of a woman of prominence. Mary rejoices—*Did you hear why?*

Mary is full of joy because of God's “wondrous reversals” (1)—always turning upside down everything we take for granted because of the coming, the Advent, of *her* Son Jesus. Listen to Mary's song, her “Magnificat,” as it is called in Latin:

The Almighty “has shown the strength of his arm; he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”

Yes, in Mary's song, the rich and powerful are sent away empty, and God fills the hurting and hungry with good things. In her song, those are “wondrous reversals.”

Dangerous words by someone who sounds like a radical. In fact, in the Catholic Central American country of Guatemala, in the 1980s the repressive government banned any public recitation of Mary's song.

When Great Britain had rule over India, at one point that government prohibited Mary's song to be sung. On the final day of British rule, the Hindu Mahatma

Gandhi asked that Mary's song be read wherever the British flag was being lowered. (2)

Mary Song says it clearly: The Almighty **“has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.”**

Yesterday, Mexicans all over the city and our nation and in Mexico celebrated their most treasured feast—Our Lady of Guadalupe. Since 1531 those of Mexican descent especially identify with Mary. In the image left on Juan Diego's cape when she miraculously appeared, Mary had dark skin and Indian features. She spoke in the native language of the Indian people then under Spanish domination. Within six years of her apparition, nine million Aztecs were baptized. (3) The Mexican people love this Mary because she still **“fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty.”** She's still one with them.

St. Patrick's: In this past election, and way before it, there has been a bitter debate of what our priorities should be as a people and as a nation. Mary makes her entrance this Advent and sets the record clear: The Almighty **“has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”**

If we really hear Mary's song, that's really a radical vision. Jesus' Mother wants *us* to make it *our* vision.

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- (1) Expression given by Reverend Carolyn Sharp, as quoted by Jason Porterfield in “The Subversive Magnificat: What Mary Expected the Messiah to be like” @enemylove.com.
 - (2) See “Next time you recite the Magnificat,” by Rose Eureka Cross @catholic chemistry, October 18, 2018. See also Craig Greenfield, “Here’s what you need to know about the REAL war on Christmas,” his December 16, 2015 blog.
 - (3) See Robert Ellsberg, “Juan Diego,” in *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), pg. 537.

General Intercessions

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

Reader/Deacon: Please give as your response to each petition, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

Animate us, your Church, to sing joyfully Mary’s song of praise in our prayer and in our daily example; we pray to you, O Lord—

This weekend the Mexican community celebrates the great feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Open our hearts to see the dignity and gifts of all Spanish-speaking people, and empower them to enhance our shared common good; we pray to you, O Lord—

Bless our Jewish sisters and brothers as they celebrate their Hanukkah festivity this week; we pray to you, O Lord—

Give healing to the ill and to all suffering from Covid-19; sustain those in the medical calling and all first responders; give all of us care in protecting others from the coronavirus; and give prevention from the disease to those being given the vaccine; we pray to you, O Lord—

Show your mercy and compassion to those experiencing grief, fear, and the dark night of the soul; we pray to you, O Lord—

Raise to new life those who have died, and bring us all together to everlasting life, especially Valerie and Donald Peterson, and all others who have died from Covid-19; we pray to you, O Lord—

