



Lifted

Sunday 22nd December – Fourth Sunday of Advent



Magnificat by Ben Wildflower (Woodcut Print) <https://benwildflower.com/>

Scripture: Luke 146-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for you, Lord, have looked with favour on your lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.

You have mercy on those who fear you
from generation to generation.
You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Alternative text from the English Language Liturgical Commission

To reflect

Today is the last Sunday in Advent, a day that can be the day before Christmas or six days away, the actual day itself disrupting the pattern of Sundays in the way that the birth of Jesus disrupted the world.

In the readings today we hear the Magnificat – Mary's Song, it is taken from Luke 1.46-55 and is spoken by Mary after being greeted by her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth is pregnant with John the Baptist and this is Mary's response after Elizabeth has praised her for her faith. Mary rejoices in being the one who will give birth to the promised Messiah, glorifies God for God's mercy and power, Mary looks forward to the world being transformed by God through the Messiah and Mary exalts God because God has been faithful to the promise made to Abraham.

Lifted features in the part of the Magnificat where Mary speaks of the world being transformed due to the Messiah – that the lowly will be lifted up whilst the powerful will be cast from their thrones. These were powerful words being spoken by someone seen as lowly by society at the time.

What is the transformation in the word that you are praying for as this Advent Season come to a close?

Advent Antiphon: O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations)

O King of all nations,*

Lord for whom they long, O Cornerstone that binds in one Jew and Gentile:

Come and save your people, whom you have moulded in your image.

To Pray – A Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Heavenly Father, who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour:
now fill us with your grace, that we in all things may embrace your will and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis: Magnificat' by Wayne Marshall, one version is by the Girls Choir of Pembroke College, Cambridge. This is a contemporary setting of the Magnificat.
- 'Gloucester Service: Magnificat' by Kerensa Briggs, one version is by the Choir of King's College London. Another setting of the Magnificat.
- 'Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben (Heart and Mouth and Deed and Life), BWV 147' by Johann Sebastian Bach, one version is by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. This is a cantata written by J.S. Bach in 1716 (updated in 1723) for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, written for the readings set on that Sunday in the then Lutheran lectionary. The popular English title for this cantata is 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring'.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.