

My soul magnifies the Lord!

The archaic meaning of magnify is “to proclaim,” and so we get some translations which say “magnify” and others which say “proclaim” for the beginning of Mary’s great Magnificat. Either definition could be the one the writer meant. Or both of them!

This is true even in English. I knew a man who people referred to as a “giant” in his industry. Not only was he one of the best in his field—he was nearly 7 feet tall! The play on words made people smile.

So magnify means proclaim—but it also mean to enlarge, enhance, increase, expand, amplify, intensify.

My soul magnifies the Lord!

Could Mary’s soul magnify—enlarge—God?

Can ours? “Can our souls enlarge, enhance, increase, expand, amplify, or intensify the greatness of God?”

This question reminds me of a story Mother Teresa was fond of retelling:

Someone had told her that there was a family nearby with several children, but the children had no food. Mother Teresa prepared some rice and brought it to the family. While handing the rice to the them she could clearly see their need.

But after receiving the food, the mother immediately divided it and disappeared. When she returned, Mother Teresa asked her, “Where did you go?” The woman answered, “To my neighbors who are Muslim. They also have no food.”

Several things in this interaction made an impression on Mother Teresa. First—the mother of the hungry children accepted the food with obvious gratitude for exactly what was given. She didn’t say—“Oh, you shouldn’t have come all this way to bring this!”

She was grateful. She fed her children and then immediately went to share the largess with a person she knew who was also hungry—a Muslim mother.

Mother Teresa’s original gift was expanded by a second act of generosity.

In fact, you could say that Mother Teresa’s generosity caused the other mother’s heart to expand, and so she felt the urge to give generously, too.

She didn’t keep the rice for her family--thinking only of her own children—her heart expanded. Her world expanded—she shared what little she had with someone who was also hungry.

Mother Teresa thought about and told this story often in the years following this. It made a profound impression on her.

How does our giving of what we have and are—spur others to also give. What makes love multiply, magnify—when we accept it and then give-- from it—to others?

Meister Eckert a 14<sup>th</sup> century mystic says this:

*“We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly, but does not take place within myself? And, what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace if I am not also full of grace?”*

And there’s the question: How can we be full of grace?

Remember: the story of Christ is not finished until our part of is complete. We help bring about the realm of God.

So we remember Mary. Yes, she is theotokos—God bearer, but she speaks for all of God’s children, all the children beloved of God. All of us.

She knows that God loves everyone- not just the powerful, those whose bellies are full, those who have always had enough, but God also loves those who have been forgotten by those who run the world.

While Mary bears the child of God, she brings the children of the world to God.

She speaks for all the people, all God’s children who are still vilified today: the outcast, those who are marginalized, the poor, the unpowerful people.

You couldn’t ask for a better woman to be the mother of the Christ child.

*Meister Eckert continues....*

*“What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of Man is begotten in us.”*

Did you hear that? God is also manifest in each of us. And how might that look? How is God born anew in each of us?

How can we birth Christ in our midst, and how do we magnify God in our own souls, in our own lives?

I’m not sure, but it begins with Mary. Her story, like all of ours, is wrapped up in the story of Jesus, the story of God turning this world upside down for Love. Amen.